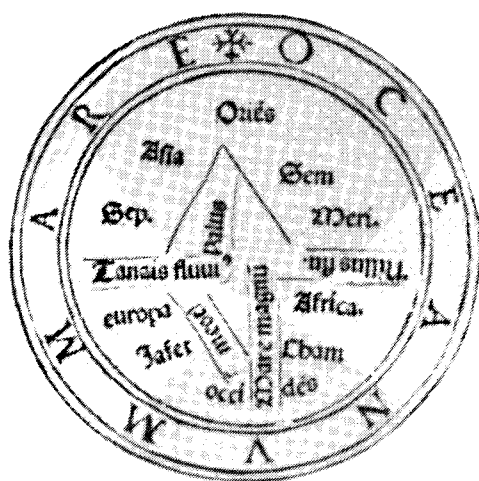


W. W. Rostow

The Coming Age of Regionalism

A "Metaphor" for our Time?



THE problem which has been posed is to find "an appropriate metaphor for our time". I was, for a period, uncertain of my answer. After toying with a series of possibilities, my reflections came to rest on four authentic major forces shaping the present and future of our

societies. But none could properly be called dominant. None constituted a single "image" or "metaphor" which satisfied the criteria: it had to relate to the other major dynamic forces in a significant way; to suggest useful directions of action or policy; and to be sufficiently credible to avoid the charge of utopianism. It was the application of these criteria that finally yielded the fifth formulation, which met my criteria to a sufficient degree to justify entering it in "the Metaphor Sweepstakes".

(1) My first candidate was **The Age of the Fourth Technological Revolution**. Evidently one of the most powerful forces at work in the world is the group of technologies which moved from invention to innovation in, roughly, the mid-1970s. This group embraces micro-electronics, genetic engineering, the ubiquitous laser, and a range of new industrial materials. One of its results is a remarkable revolution in communications. For reasons that need not concern us, there has been a tendency over the past two centuries for major innovations to cluster. These clusters were: in the

1780s, Watt's improved steam engine, power-driven textile machinery, and Cort's method for fabricating good iron from coke rather than charcoal; then, starting in the 1830s, came the railroad-steel complex which dominated the next half-century or so; straddling the turn of the century, electricity, the internal combustion engine and a new batch of sophisticated chemicals moved on stage. In its various elaborations this cluster did not decelerate until the mid-1960s, although continuity was broken by the Great Depression and, to a degree, accelerated by World War II.

As for the present technological revolution: its unique links to areas of basic science which themselves are experiencing revolutionary development, the extraordinary diversification of each of its components, and its applicability to virtually all economic sectors may render it even more powerful than its three predecessors. If it sustains the historical rhythm of such revolutions, it may well continue to unfold and shape our societies down to the middle of the next century.

(2) The second metaphor candidate was **The Age of the New Tigers**: that is, the foreseeable emergence as technologically mature societies of a formidable group, including not only South Korea and Taiwan, but India and China, Brazil and Mexico, and a good many others in Asia, Latin America, and even the Middle East if that region can make its way to an approximation of peace. A good deal of modern history is taken up with the profound effects of this kind of transition on the world economy, politics, diplomacy, and war: for example, when the United States, France, and Germany joined Great Britain as technologically mature societies; and then when Japan and Russia joined the Atlantic states in command over then existing technologies. An age of nuclear weapons can not afford the brutal and graceless adjustments symbolised by the two World Wars and the Cold War. The global community clearly must try to do better in bringing the foreseeable newcomers into the rights and responsibilities that go with technological maturity.

(3) The third candidate was **The Age of Environmental Threat**: that is, the struggle, just beginning, to preserve a viable habitat for humanity in the face of the surge of population and industrialisation apparently on the cards over the coming decades.

Quite aside from the shameful deterioration of lakes and rivers, oceans, seas, and beaches by short-sighted policies, four major forms of environmental degradation may be

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under way: the attenuation of the Ozone Layer; and elevation of temperatures brought about by the Greenhouse Effect, with possibly important net negative consequences for the food supply; the progressive destruction of forests from Acid Rain and other causes; and the consequences for human beings of increasing concentrations of harmful chemicals in the environment. In no case has scientific knowledge permitted firm predictions of the pace of deterioration, or the timing of acute regional or even global crises. Nevertheless, even temperate analyses suggest that net deterioration in the environment continues in all these dimensions.

Despite the lack of an adequate understanding of degenerative environmental processes, a *prima facie* case exists for taking these problems very seriously indeed. Rightly or wrongly, global population is estimated by the United Nations and the World Bank to rise between 1984 and 2025 from 4.75 billion to 8.30 billion. Of this increase, 95% will occur in the developing continents where the major expansion of industry and energy consumption will also take place. One cannot help but conclude that it will require much greater forehandedness, technological ingenuity, resources, and international cooperation than the human race has yet mustered to weather successfully the foreseeable further strains on the environment.

(4) The fourth possibility was, simply, **The Decline and Fall of the Cold War**. It is, of course, a rather precarious historical process, not an event. If the past teaches us anything, it is that history is never linear; there will be setbacks (like the current retrogression of China). Nevertheless, a number of relatively independent forces are at work, gradually, sporadically, but relentlessly rendering the Cold War an irrational framework for the policy of the Soviet Union or, indeed, for any other government. These forces include the three other candidates for reigning metaphor. For example, "the Fourth Technological Revolution" is proving difficult for socialist societies to grasp. Their institutions lack incentives to innovate—a quite serious matter in a world of rapid technological change which often yields a 30% per annum obsolescence rate.

Although all the evidence is not yet in, history may have rendered a verdict on John Stuart Mill's assertion that, in the test between Socialism and Capitalism, the choice would, in the end, hinge on "which of the two systems is consistent with the greatest amount of human liberty and spontaneity."¹ The character of the Fourth Technological Revolution has forced this issue towards decision. Although Karl Marx despised John Stuart Mill, present circumstances suggest that Mikhail Gorbachov was correct to take Mill seriously and link *glasnost* with *perestroika*.

Similarly, Moscow has been shaken by a gathering awareness that economic and technological capacity, backed by nationalism, diffuses power rapidly in the global community and renders the notion of domination by any one country an increasingly impossible dream. This perception was sharpened, in particular, by the recent movement of Japan from third to second economic power in the world, and by the

momentum of China, India, and other late-comers evidently on the road to technological maturity.

Finally, the Soviet government began to acknowledge to itself, its citizens, and the world the scale of the environmental degradation which had been permitted to develop in that country. Soviet scientists at international gatherings began to assert quite openly that problems in the global environment belong high on the international agenda, and that the Soviet Union was prepared to join others in dealing with such problems in a thoroughly un-ideological way.

THESE, THEN, were my four initial possibilities: a powerful and pervasive technological revolution; the impending movement of a new group of societies to mature power status (including the two most populous, India and China); the challenge posed by a deteriorating global physical environment; and the beginning, at least, of the disintegration of the Cold War as the framework for relations among nation-states.

Simply to list them suggests why I had to search for a unifying fifth; after all, I was asked to find one metaphor, not four. Out of the mists finally emerged such a unifying theme: **The Coming Age of Regionalism**. The reason for its emergence was, I think, simple. As I contemplated the forces at work in the four other metaphors and the policies required to maximise the chance of constructive outcomes, it became clear that while all had global implications, intense regional as well as global cooperation would be required. Something essential seemed missing between a United Nations organisation in New York and nation-states incapable of shaping their destinies in a highly dynamic, interdependent world.

In short, I concluded that the political structure of the global community would require greatly strengthened regional institutions if we are to deal successfully with the agenda history has set for, say, the next half-century. But what is the relationship between regional structures (or the elaboration of existing structures) and the task of taming the four basic forces loose in the world? I start with the great task of bringing the Cold War to a soft landing—to a peaceful resolution.

THE ENDING OF THE COLD WAR requires the defusing of regional confrontations in the Caribbean, the Middle East, South and South-east Asia, and Africa; strategic arms-control agreements; and a European settlement. The latter is, I would guess, the most important because it will require important arms-control measures and make easier the settlement of several critical regional conflicts.

The Cold War started—and I suspect it will end—in Europe. Its conclusion poses several grand problems:

(1) The freeing of the countries of Eastern Europe to make their own political and economic dispositions, including non-military association with Western Europe.

(2) Assuring that such reorientation will not threaten the

¹ J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, ed. J. M. Robson (University of Toronto Press, 1965), p.208.

military security of the Soviet Union, the United States, or the peace of Europe itself. This process will require the conversion of NATO and the Warsaw Pact into arms-control negotiating and supervising bodies—a kind of regional Security Council for Europe.

(3) A settlement of the question of German reunification. I believe it would be wise for Germans and others to leave the question of German unity for the end of the process. Approached head-on now, the issue is likely to prove so contentious that it could obstruct not only the ending of the division of Europe and the substitution of arms-control for military confrontation, but also the movement towards Western European unity. A consensus on German unity is much more likely to emerge when a great East-West democratic Europe exists under arms-control agreements secure for all concerned, and at least one more generation separates us from 1945.

For purposes of my present argument, however, the point is, simply, that the remaking of Europe is likely to require regional economic arrangements associating East and West Europe, as well as a strong and reliable arms-control régime in which both the United States and the Soviet Union would participate.

New technologies have had a kind of domino effect on regional organisation. I believe it is fair to say that they are the rocket fuel for the second-stage booster of Western Europe towards unity, symbolised by 1992. Look back, for a moment, to the early 1980s. These were the days of Euro-pessimism. A cover-story of *Newsweek* early in 1984 was devoted to the European sense that the region was falling hopelessly behind the United States and Japan in generating and applying the new technologies. President Mitterrand returned from a West Coast trip to Silicon Valley asking how France—quite comfortable since Colbert with large, set-

John Stuart Mill's Prediction (1852)



THE "FATAL CONTRAST" to which Professor Rostow calls our attention in a passing reference is one of the most astonishing passages in modern political literature. It is, in its way, a confrontation of "Mill v. Marx" on the subject of the final conflict between Bourgeois Democracy and Communism, between Capitalism and Socialism, between an Open and a Closed Society. And it was prophetically

formulated in the year 1852, almost a century-and-a-half before it became the conventional wisdom in Central and Eastern Europe from Moscow and Budapest to Prague and East Berlin.

The passage is to be found in John Stuart Mill's "Principles of Political Economy, with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy". The book was first published in two volumes in London in 1848, but the section on Communism (Book II, ch. I, section 3) was recast in its present form in his revision for the third edition of 1852. Like all good liberals, he hesitated, reconsidered, revised, giving the impression of dithering all the way; but then no man is a prophet in his own century.

M.J.L.

... THE QUESTION of Socialism is not, as generally stated by Socialists, a question of flying to the sole refuge against the evils which now bear down humanity; but a mere question of comparative advantages, which futurity must determine. We are too ignorant either of what individual agency in its best form, or Socialism in its best form can accomplish, to be qualified to decide which of the two will be the ultimate form of human society.

IF A CONJECTURE may be hazarded, the decision will probably depend mainly on one consideration, viz. which of the two systems is consistent with the greatest amount of

human liberty and spontaneity. After the means of subsistence are assured, the next in strength of the personal wants of human beings is liberty; and (unlike the physical wants, which as civilization advances become more moderate and more amenable to control) it increases instead of diminishing in intensity as the intelligence and the moral faculties are more developed. The perfection both of social arrangements and of practical morality would be, to secure to all persons complete independence and freedom of action, subject to no restriction but that of not doing injury to others: and the education which taught or the social institutions which required them to exchange the control of their own actions for any amount of comfort or affluence, or to renounce liberty for the sake of equality, would deprive them of one of the most elevated characteristics of human nature. It remains to be discovered how far the preservation of this characteristic would be found compatible with the Communistic organization of society. . . .

BUT IT IS NOT by comparison with the present [1852] bad state of society that the claims of Communism can be estimated; nor is it sufficient that it should promise greater personal and mental freedom than is now enjoyed by those who have not enough of either to deserve the name. The question is, whether there would be any asylum left for individuality of character; whether public opinion would not be a tyrannical yoke; whether the absolute dependence of each on all, and surveillance of each by all, would not grind all down into a tame uniformity of thoughts, feelings, and actions. . . .

NO SOCIETY in which eccentricity is a matter of reproach can be in a wholesome state. It is yet to be ascertained whether the Communistic scheme would be consistent with [favourable to] that multiform development of human nature, those manifold unlikenesses, that diversity of tastes and talents, and variety of intellectual points of view, which not only form a great part of the interest of human life, but by bringing intellects into stimulating collision, and by presenting to each innumerable notions that he would not have conceived of himself, are the mainspring of mental and moral progression.

John Stuart Mill

piece government-run engineering projects—could duplicate the wild, fragmented, creative frenzy he observed in California. The British created a Committee of University Vice-Chancellors to recommend more fruitful relations between the universities and private industry. A sense that more complete Western European economic unity was needed—including much larger Research and Development concentrations—came to suffuse the establishments in Brussels. And so the goals for 1992 were set and European industrial firms, banks, and governments began to act as if it were really going to happen; so also did American and Japanese firms interested in the European market.

All this had quite a lot to do with the US-Canadian economic agreement and the current seriousness of the movement to organise “the Pacific Basin” after a quarter-century of rather wordy and sterile round-table symposia held in charming places throughout the region.

There is an element of caricature in my stylised portrait; but it does seem to be the case that the pace of Japan and the United States in creating and absorbing the Fourth Technological Revolution spurred Europe to set high targets for 1992. The image of 1992, in turn, helped create the US-Canadian economic agreement. Both developments generated a new urgency about a Pacific Basin organisation in Tokyo, Washington, Seoul, Canberra, and elsewhere. And, to complete the circle, a certain amount of alarm arose from Brussels when Europe was excluded from the Brunei talks on the Pacific Basin which took place early last summer.

Although the results may prove salutary, the competitive moods and attitudes generated in this sequence may have been overdone. Competition, including inter-regional competition, will surely persist; but I am inclined to believe there will be no “Fortress Europe” or “Fortress North America” or “Fortress of the Pacific Basin”—not only because of the globalisation of movements of capital and communications, but because of the highly diversified character of the new technologies. No one country is going to dominate as Great Britain dominated the early phase of factory-manufactured cotton textiles and the United States dominated the early phase of the mass automobile. The rapidly expanding volume of high-tech foreign trade and transnational production deals already attests to this proposition. As the United States, Japan, and Western Europe move towards approximate equivalence in high tech, I suspect the judgment of Takuma Yamamoto, President of Fujitsu Ltd., will prevail: “We are entering an era of cooperation because we all have to. . .” (*New York Times*, 23 June 1989). And before long that cooperation will have to adjust to embrace the high-tech giants of the new technologically mature societies, as is already beginning to happen with some of the great South Korean multinational corporations. Nevertheless, regionalism may relate in two helpful ways to the new technologies.

(1) First, it may help move Latin America towards an economic unity long sought but further from reality now than it was a quarter-century ago. With the exception of Brazil and Mexico, its countries are too small to generate the critical mass of scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs to play the creative role in high tech of which their most talented men and women are capable. In a sense, most of Latin America suffers from a more acute version of the

problem which has helped drive Western Europe toward the higher degree of unity now being attempted.

(2) The kind of regional organisation required for the Pacific Basin, or which may be revived in the Western Hemisphere, is quite different from that envisaged for Western Europe for 1992. The latter is a grouping of societies at roughly similar stages of growth and technological virtuosity. Organisations for the Pacific Basin and the Western Hemisphere must embrace and meet the interests of countries at quite different stages of growth. One essential function of such multi-stage organisations will surely be to help build up the technological absorptive capacity of the less developed countries of their regions and accelerate the efficient application of the new technologies where relevant. Indeed, a similar process might emerge—as now appears possible and practical—if organised economic links should be built between Western and Eastern Europe.

NOW A QUITE DIFFERENT, potentially helpful linkage: the possible role of regional organisations in rendering constructive the transition of the major countries now on the march to technological maturity. Take China, for example. The Chinese government has given a great deal of thought over recent years to a Pacific Basin organisation. Its interest in participation is suggested by its agreement that Taiwan would also be a member, as is already the case in the Asian Development Bank where both governments are represented. Over the long pull there are few courses of action more likely to assist a peaceful process of mutual adjustment between China and the rest of the Pacific Basin Community than the patient build-up, on both sides, of the habits of principled economic cooperation in an organisation containing and respecting the interests of powers great and small.

India, for the time being, has its own high-priority task of regional organisation to accomplish; that is, bringing fully to life the Organisation of South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC). The organisation was formally created at a meeting on 1-2 August 1983, climaxing seven years of quiet inter-governmental study and working-level negotiation. The founding documents were signed by Foreign Secretaries representing seven governments in the subcontinent (Bangladesh, Butan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). Evidently, India alone can not bring about the economic and political cooperation SARC mandates. Nevertheless, India—containing about three-quarters of the subcontinent’s population and an even larger proportion of its industry and technological capacity—is the key to success. But success requires a new consensus within India’s political leadership that peaceful and cooperative relations among the states of the subcontinent are a vital condition for the full and satisfactory modernisation of Indian society. The creation of SARC in 1983 indicates that the concept has a certain reality in Indian life—though the limited and sporadic progress since then suggests that it has not yet come to dominate Indian policy. It may be useful to recall that it took the United States quite a long time to learn a similar lesson with respect to Canada and Mexico.

In the Western Hemisphere the policies and habits of

economic cooperation have weakened since the 1960s, but institutional bases for a revival exist in the Organisation of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank. Evidently, there can not (and should not) be a nostalgic return to the old "Alliance for Progress". But an ample agenda for hemispheric cooperation exists with respect to debts and trade, the build-up of Latin American technological absorptive capacity, the movements towards Latin American economic unity, and hemispheric environmental problems.

THIS BRINGS ME to the linkage of Regionalism and the task of containing and rolling back environmental degradation. At first sight, environmental problems appear, *par excellence*, to require sustained action at the global level; notably the attenuation of the Ozone Layer and the build up of CO₂ with its believed linkage to the Greenhouse Effect. And it is certainly the case that global analyses and policies are required in certain important areas. But a new United Nations specialised agency for the environment, as some propose, could not implement global policy on its own. It could set broad policy-objectives, and report what individual countries and regions were (and were not) doing; it could supply technical expertise where needed and otherwise cooperate in national and regional efforts. But there is a much better chance of effective action if these essentially household tasks are approached on a neighbourly regional basis. Some progress, for example, has been made on a "neighbourhood basis" between the United States and Canada on Acid Rain—which was not likely in response, say, to a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly. Similarly, a Western Hemisphere organisation (probably with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank) is more likely to help Brazil deal with the Amazon problem—and a European organisation to be more effective than a global organisation in dealing with the scandalous state of that region's waterways.

THESE ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES are meant, then, to suggest that the elaboration and strengthening of regional organisations in the years ahead might contribute a useful (and perhaps critical) dimension to the solution of the major global problems which initially emerged as candidates for a reigning metaphor. But is this a realistic vision? Is it likely to happen? A mildly optimistic response would be that we have been talking prose for quite a long time—since the first United Nations regional economic commissions were set in motion and the Marshall Plan organisation created in Paris in 1947. Forty-odd years later, the array

of "regional" and "sub-regional" organisations in existence is now quite long.

I was requested to write an autobiographical note for the 50th reunion of my class at Yale, and in it I included this passage, after noting my recurrent connection with work on Regionalism in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia:

"The reasons for the regional impulse in each case are, in the end, quite similar: the inadequacy of the nation-state to handle by itself the complex economic and technological interdependencies of the contemporary world; the difficulties of generating practical cooperation among the 159 governments of the global community; the need to balance the power of a hostile, or potentially hostile, large country; the need felt by the smaller countries to hold in check a generally friendly, larger country of the region; the desire of the United States to withdraw, in degree, but to do so in a setting of order. The regional impulse has certainly not triumphed, but it has stubbornly continued to assert itself in a world still, on balance, dominated by raw nationalism. In any case, regionalism has been an interesting phenomenon to follow for forty years. . . ."

Of course, only a few of these organisations have proved to be influential for substantial periods: notably, the European Community, NATO, OECD, the three regional Development Banks, and ASEAN. Put another way, the regional institutions, at their present level of political support and vitality, can not be expected to play the serious role I am assigning to them. A great deal of creative architecture and construction will be required if my metaphor is to be vindicated.

Contemporary events have provided striking reaffirmation of the strength and viability of Western concepts of human freedom, competitive private enterprise, and representative democracy. Since 1914 these ideas have been on the defensive, explicitly challenged by one alleged "wave of the future" or another. Their reasserted vitality is a source of satisfaction among those who believe in these concepts. But this circumstance does not, in itself, guarantee that humankind will successfully manage the agenda it confronts. It is, in fact, not difficult to write a scenario where the outcome of the four powerful forces I have identified would be not "a federal pattern of regional and global cooperation", but fragmentation, violence, and stagnation. At best, there will be, as always, surprises and set-backs.

Looking ahead to the middle of the next century, I think of a passage from *The Iliad*:

*All on a razor's edge it stands,
either woeful ruin or life. . . .*

That has been a metaphor for the human condition since Adam and Eve were shunted out of the Garden of Eden. Nevertheless, it still applies.

Two Stories by Nabil Naoum

Bird Mountain

IN THE middle of the summer the architect Maurice Banoub came across an undated document relating to a burial ground that had been bought and erected by his great-grandfather and his brother. The beautiful calligraphy in which it had been written, and the contractor's ornamental seal at the bottom of the page, together with the feel of the brittle yellow paper, evoked his delight. In addition, the name of the place made a special impression on him, for the agreement stated that the burial ground was in Bird Mountain, at a place known as Angel Monastery, and that "the extent of the crypt should be three metres by three metres and that it should be of extremely fine workmanship".

Owing to Maurice's infatuation with the past and family history on the one hand, and on the other with the field of architecture, and both being represented in this document, he decided to make a journey to the district of Sohag from where his father's family was descended. He had long been cut off from news of them and he hoped that he might find his way to the burial ground, and so perform the duty of paying a visit to his forebears, or that he might well come across some relative who was still living there.

At Sohag, Maurice hired a private car to take him to a ferry that made the journey twice a day to the other bank. Following the advice of someone knowledgeable, he found a boy who took him to the house of his father, a tailor who still employed his toes when cutting out a garment.

It was after a difficult journey by donkey that he and the father arrived at the heights of the eastern mountain, where a monk received them at the first alleyway leading to the Angel Monastery on Bird Mountain. Here flocks of cranes would put down at the time of their return from their winter migration.

Maurice went up with the monk along a twisting pathway that hung perilously over the mountain's edge. They reached a gateway in a high wall built with great constructional skill from unbaked bricks. Inside the monastery a number of cells were arranged in rows, all surrounding a large courtyard. Behind a small church were several tombs with high stone chambers and with figurines of the local angel set above the doors.

After a long period of waiting in the reception hall, an elderly monk approached and introduced himself as

the head of the monastery. After greeting him—for he had learnt his name from the other monk who had accompanied him—Maurice first of all went with him on a visit to the church in order to say a prayer for the souls of his forebears. The monk took him to one of the tombs whose outer covering was made of white marble and over whose vast iron gateway was a delicately wrought statue of an angel about to ascend to the heavens. Behind the gateway Maurice saw a small garden with a fountain in the centre; though it had been neglected for many years, its mosaic work was still bright and beautiful. Around the enclosure could be seen three spacious rooms, and at the bottom of one of them was the crypt specified in the document. When Maurice expressed a desire to go into the tomb, the head of the monastery informed him that it was padlocked and that the key was with Gabriel Effendi, its owner.

"Your relative—and you don't know him?" the elderly monk teased him. After he had said a blessing for Maurice and his deceased relatives, the monk informed him that he would be able to meet Gabriel Effendi by taking himself any weekday to the Boursa Café at Sohag's railway station.

And so it was that Maurice easily found Gabriel Effendi on arriving at the Boursa Café.

"It's incredible", said his relative. He was an elderly man with crumbling teeth and twisted features. From the ancient overcoat in which he was enveloped on that scorching day in August there emanated a repulsive smell.

AT GABRIEL EFFENDI's insistence, Maurice reluctantly agreed to spend the night at his house. That evening the two cousins sat on the great balcony that overlooked the river in the fine palace which, as Gabriel informed him, had been the property of the forebears of their respective fathers for such a long time.

"Hanna and Ishaq and Ibrahim and Samaan and Katrina and Shagara and Haniyya and Shalomet and Mathias and Bishara—all of whom have died", said Gabriel to Maurice, examining him from behind his thick glasses that made things look like flat coloured surfaces. "As for those at the monastery", he continued with a cough, "they are saints, they have put two relatives in touch with each other."