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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

НАСЛЕДИЕ В.С. СОЛОВЬЕВА: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ И ПУБЛИКАЦИИ

- Юрина Н.Г.** «Воскресные письма» В.С. Соловьева:
особенности диалога с читателем 6

ИСТОРИЯ ФИЛОСОФИИ

- Райнов Т.И.** Очерки по истории русской философии 50–60 годов.
Часть восьмая / Подготовка к публикации С.С. Илизарова и В.А. Куприянова 20
- Ермичев А.А.** Критические заметки к вопросу
о «Московской метафизической школе» 37

ФИЛОСОФИЯ И МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ ПОЗНАНИЯ

- Орро А.** Does a “russian philosophy” exist? The boundaries and nature of a question .. 47
- Медоваров М.В.** Проблема прерывности и непрерывности исторического процесса
в русской религиозной философии 68
- Nemeth Tomas.** Chelpanov: The Psychologist as a Realist Neo-Kantian..... 84

ФИЛОСОФИЯ И ФИЛОЛОГИЯ

- Рычков А.Л.** Маргиналии А. Блока как свидетельство об исторических
источниках примечаний в драме «Роза и Крест». Статья четвертая, заключительная 114
- Приложение.** Выписка А. Блока об альбигойском крестовом походе
из сочинений по всеобщей истории О. Йегера и Ф. Шлоссера /
Расшифровка и комментарии А.Л. Рычкова 135

ФИЛОСОФИЯ И КУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЯ

- Едошина И.А.** Культурфилософия *леса* в одноименной пьесе А.Н. Островского ... 143
- Дударева М.А.** Апофатика цвета в рассказах Б. Зайцева «Мгла» и «Белый свет»:
онтологический и культурологический аспект 160

КРИТИКА И БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ

- Мьёр К.Й.** [Рец. на:] Caryl Emerson, George Pattison and Randall A. Poole (eds.):
The Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought. Oxford: Oxford University Press,
2020. Ххviii + 712 p. 171
- Межуев Б.В.** Лев Шестов – по ту сторону истины и добра.
[Рец. на:] Andrea Oppo. Lev Shestov: The Philosophy and Works of a Tragic Thinker. 181
Academic Studies Press, 2020. 420 p.
- О ЖУРНАЛЕ «СОЛОВЬЁВСКИЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ»..... 190
- О ПОДПИСКЕ НА ЖУРНАЛ «СОЛОВЬЁВСКИЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ»..... 192
- ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ДЛЯ АВТОРОВ..... 192

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CONTENT

V.S. SOLOVYOV'S HERITAGE: STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Yurina N.G. V.S. Solovyov's "Sunday Letters": aspects of the author's dialogue with the reader	6
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HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Rainov T.I. The outlines of the history of russian philosophy of the 50–60s. Parts eight / <i>Prepared for publication by S.S. Ilizarov and V.A. Kupriyanov</i>	20
Ermichev A. Critical Remarks on the Question of a "Moscow School of Metaphysics"..	37

PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF COGNITION

Oppo A. Does a "russian philosophy" exist? The boundaries and nature of a question ...	47
Medovarov M.V. The Issue of the Continuity and Discontinuity of the Historical Process in Russian Religious Philosophy	68
Nemeth Tomas. Chelpanov: The Psychologist as a Realist Neo-Kantian.....	84

PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOLOGY

Rychkov A.L. A. Blok's marginalia on the Albigensian crusade as an indication of the historical sources of "Notes" in the drama "The Rose and the Cross". <i>Article four, final</i>	114
Appendix. A. Blok's excerpt about the Albigensian crusade from the works on general history by O. Jäger and F. Schlosser / <i>Transcription and comments made by A.L. Rychkov</i>	135

PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Edoshina I.A. The cultural philosophy of the <i>Forest</i> in the Eponymous Play by A.N. Ostrovsky	143
Dudareva M.A. The apophatic dimension of color in B. Zaitsev's stories "Mist" and "White Light": its ontological and cultural aspects	160

CRITICISM AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mjør Kåre Johan. Review of Caryl Emerson, George Pattison and Randall A. Poole (eds.): <i>The Oxford Handbook of Russian Religious Thought</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Xxviii + 712 p.	171
Mezhuyev B.V. Lev Shestov – on the other side of good and truth. [Review on:] Andrea Oppo. <i>Lev Shestov: The Philosophy and Works of a Tragic Thinker</i> . Academic Studies Press, 2020. 420 p.	181
ON "SOLOVYOV STUDIES" JOURNAL	190
ON SUBSCRIPTION TO "SOLOVYOV STUDIES" JOURNAL.....	192
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS.....	192

ФИЛОСОФИЯ И МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ ПОЗНАНИЯ PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF COGNITION

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Does a “russian philosophy” exist? The boundaries and nature of a question

Abstract. The issue of the existence of a peculiarly “Russian” philosophy has long been the object of many debates, which soon led to very different and often opposite conclusions. The question is always the same: Is there an original contribution that Russian authors made to philosophy, in the same way as with literature, arts, and sciences? What happened to Greek/Western philosophy when cultivated in “Russian soil”? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to first carry out a brief examination of the never-obvious issue of “what being a philosopher means”, i.e. of what generally distinguishes an intellectual who claims to be a “philosopher” from other kinds of intellectuals or scholars. After this short but necessary premise, this article will try to sum up some of the classic and modern definitions of Russian philosophy (from Chaadaev to Evlampiev) and conclude by proposing a personal idea about an overarching frame of Russian philosophical thought. In my opinion, the latter mostly originates from a peculiar reception in Russia of Platonism, Idealism and Marxism that ultimately transformed those views, especially during the Silver Age, into a sort of “integral gnoseology”, which connects “logos” and “life” in a specifically dialectical way that can be described, pour cause, as “Russian”. This “integral gnoseology” ultimately conjoins science and humanism in an original way and is capable of opening up to discreet phenomena and to multiple levels of knowledge.

Key words: Russian philosophy, Russian intellectualism, metaphysics, gnoseology, materialism, humanism, intuition, truth, Platonism, epistemology

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Существует ли «русская философия»? Границы и природа вопроса

Аннотация. Вопрос о существовании своеобразной «русской» философии всегда был предметом многих споров, которые легко приводили к самым разным и часто противоположным выводам: есть ли оригинальный вклад, который русские авторы внесли в философию, как это произошло в литературе, искусстве и науке и что случилось с греческой / западной философией на «русской земле»? В целях поиска ответа на эти вопросы, предлагается кратко исследовать неочевидную проблему «что значит быть философом?», то есть, что обычно отличает интеллектуала,

претендующего на звание «философа», от других видов интеллектуалов или ученых. После короткой, но необходимой предпосылки предпринята попытка суммировать некоторые из классических и современных определений русской философии (от Чаадаева до Евламбиева), чтобы, наконец, предложить личный взгляд на всеобъемлющую структуру русской философской мысли. При этом делается акцент на своеобразную трансформацию взглядов Платона, Гегеля и Маркса в России, особенно в период серебряного века, в своего рода «интегральную гносеологию», которая связывает и удерживает вместе «логотипы» и «жизнь» в специфически диалектическом смысле. Делается вывод о том, что эта «интегральная гносеология» в конечном итоге оригинальным образом соединяет науку и гуманизм и способна открыться скрытым явлениям и многим уровням знания.

Ключевые слова: Русская философия, русский интеллектуализм, метафизика, гносеология, материализм, гуманизм, интуиция, истина, платонизм, эпистемология

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Philosophers and “Non-Philosophers”: An Introduction

In searching for the boundaries of Russian philosophy or, to put it differently, in understanding the reception of Western philosophy in Russia, any scholar or historian must deal with the troublesome situation of a highly variegated scenario. The main issue, in this case, is to identify who the “philosophers” in Russia were as well as those who were not “eligible” for that attribute. From the end of the eighteenth century and over the subsequent two centuries, there were many authors and movements that to some extent might well define themselves as philosophical. However, most of them were more likely to be included as a part of a wider Russian history of ideas or intellectual history rather than of the “history of philosophy”, properly speaking.

The main question one should ask in this case is whether the term “Russian philosophy” is to be understood as “Russian intellectualism”, the quest for Russian identity or for any social or political or national ideal, or as the birth of and debate on a “Russian idea”, or as something different altogether. Not by chance, the histories of Russian philosophy that were written in the last century often dealt with a wider question of a “Russian thought”, whether this were social or political or religious, in order to not exclude a number of decisive contributions to the Russian history of ideas¹. Talking of a “Russian thought” is certainly more suitable to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian situation than investigating the more or less adequate convergence of Russian thinkers with a specifically Western philosophical tradition. In any case, the problem of “where to start?” with a history of Russian philosophy and of “who to include?” in the set of a possible Russian philosophical tradition still remains.

¹ The renowned examples of the works by N.O. Lossky, V.V. Zen'kovsky and G. Florovsky (who even employs the word “theology” to connote Russian thought) emphasize the religious aspects of Russian philosophy, whereas – as is easily predictable – the Histories written during the Soviet era as well as some contemporary Western studies interpret Russian thought mainly as a history of social or political ideas. This antithesis, “religious vs. social thought”, which somehow matches the classic polarity “Slavophile vs. Westernizing thought”, reflects a longstanding tradition of Russian intellectual history that surely does not help to focus on the existence of a specifically “philosophical” thought.

I tried to take a different view of this whole historical question for two reasons: firstly, to highlight and re-evaluate the meaning of the word "philosophy" as something specific, and secondly to avoid an overly well-trodden path whose story has already been written many times, and which concerns the difficult and long-standing issue on the nature of Russian identity as divided between East and West. In other words, the question is: Is there a specificity peculiar to the word "philosophy" in Russian thought that should not be confused with "intellectualism" or "national identity"? This is, in my view, the first problem, which somehow precedes the other main question: "What are the boundaries and nature of Russian philosophy?", i.e. "When or where does it begin?" and "What are its specific contents?". In such a context, another, more original question may also emerge: "What are the boundaries of philosophy itself?". That is to say: What does "being a philosopher" mean? What is the difference – is there one? – between a philosopher and an intellectual, or a semi-ologist, an anthropologist, or other, for instance? Were Yuri Lotman or Mikhail Bakhtin philosophers? Were any of the Marxist or early Socialist theorists philosophers? Were two of the finest intellectuals from the Silver Age, such as Vyacheslav Ivanov and Mikhail Gershenzon, also philosophers? Was Dmitrii Merezhkovsky a philosopher? These are only few examples, but the main point is: before discussing the nature (if there is one) of Russian philosophy, it would be helpful to identify what a philosopher is and, consequently, who the "Russian philosophers" are. This approach, in fact, is a necessary premise in the case of Russian philosophy, and indeed of all philosophy.

In order to avoid the uncomfortable conclusion that any *intellectual idea* is "philosophy", I would tentatively suggest at least a couple of directions on what philosophy is or should be in a stricter sense. The first and most obvious one may be the following: if one employs the word in accordance with the Western meaning, philosophy is a form of knowledge ascribable to a *given* tradition starting from the Pre-Socratic philosophers, following (to name only a few essential authors) with Plato and Aristotle up to Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Schelling, Hegel and so on. In this regard, *practising* philosophy or *being* a philosopher means primarily, but not exclusively², relating to *that* tradition: namely – although this might seem even too simplistic – "quoting" those philosophical authors and ideas among the main references for one's own work. If one accepts this first requirement, V. Solovyov is indeed a philosopher – possibly more than anyone else in Russia – as is N. Berdyaev, and no doubt also A. Losev, G. Shpet, S. Frank, A. Kojève, N. Lossky, L. Lopatin, A. Kozlov, along with others (indeed, all the Neo-Hegelians and Neo-Kantians, such as for example B. Chicherin, A. Vvedensky, and I. Lapshin), and even an apparently "anti-philosopher" like L. Shestov, whose lifelong concern was confronting Greek

² This is more or less the same as affirming that being a medical doctor means "primarily" following the Western "official" medicine, which does not consider the fact that there are many more ways of being a medical doctor or of practising medicine. The "primarily", in this case, is rather an exemplary and regulative way, so to speak, for "clearing the field".

philosophy, and Kant, and Hegel, etc.³ By the same token, even some of the most religiously committed thinkers who constantly confronted the Western philosophical ideas, such as P. Florensky and S. Bulgakov, surely stand in this category, whereas other religious thinkers may not entirely fulfil this precondition⁴. In the Soviet times of the post-Stalin era there were a number of philosophers who opened Marxist thought to a new comparison or contrast with Western classic philosophy and discussed in-depth questions of logic, epistemology and metaphysics: these included E. Il'enkov and M. Mamardashvili⁵. As far as the 19th century “social philosophers” are concerned – from A. Herzen to N. Chernyshevsky, D. Pisarev, and others – the doubt is actually the same concerning Marx, Engels, Feuerbach, and whether they belong to the classic Greek-European philosophical tradition, as well as how much they would consider themselves as “philosophers” in *that* regard.

The latter question leads, in fact, to the second “strict requirement” for belonging without question to philosophy, which, in my view, is: treating a subject with a certain (i.e. specific, characterizing, somehow predominant) degree of metaphysics. The word “metaphysics” can be understood here as a rational approach that is constantly addressed to the essence of things – i.e. the self-definition and search for the fundamental criterion of truth that makes them what they are – rather than to other external goals: for example, their use or function (e.g. the understanding of *how* things work), or their effectiveness, or the search for conventional laws or classification for the sake of classification. After all, if there is a difference between philosophy and other subjects such as sociology or anthropology, or psychology, or even linguistics and indeed any modern science, this possibly lies in this very issue⁶.

I used the expression “a certain degree of metaphysics” while being well aware that a good part of Western modern philosophical tradition defines itself as explicitly anti-metaphysical. However, such a criticism of metaphysics in the history of philosophy has been always dealt with as an inner criticism, i.e. a criticism against a given model of transcendent or transcendental metaphysics in order to unavoidably develop a new one opposing the latter. Yet, any new response of this kind always obeys an epistemological criterion that is in search of the ultimate *nature* of some-

³ In my recent work (Lev Shestov: The Philosophy and Works of a Tragic Thinker. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020), I tried to demonstrate precisely Shestov’s adherence, albeit in a critical way, to the Western classic philosophical tradition.

⁴ Authors like V. Rozanov, N. Fyodorov or D. Merezhkovsky may not appear as canonical as the others mentioned above, but that does not exclude the fact that, precisely because of their “unorthodoxy”, they might be considered to be some of the most original Russian philosophical thinkers.

⁵ On the destiny of Western and non-Marxist philosophy during Soviet times and on the existence of an authentic renaissance of philosophical thought, especially during the period of Krushchev’s “thaw”, see the remarkable study: V.A. Lektorsky-M.F. Bykova, *Philosophical Thought in Russia in the Second Half of the 20th Century*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

⁶ This definition does not exclude that those disciplines may deal at times with the question of their foundation or with the criteria of truth that regulate the analysis of their objects. However, when this occurs, it is neither the primary focus of those disciplines nor the scope for which they were created. It is, in fact, a “philosophical analysis” on a specific object of that discipline.

thing (i.e. the fundamental basis of our knowledge of it), which in more than one way is still a form of metaphysics. In this respect, any attempt at eliminating metaphysics in philosophy has been always highly problematic⁷. This tendency to address one's quest for the *essential* conditions that determine the very possibility of any investigated object is possibly the main feature distinguishing philosophy from any other intellectual activity⁸. It is not the only feature, but it is an essential one. In the Greek philosophical tradition, the Socratic question "ti esti?" ("what is it?") is that kind of question that is directed at the essence of something, for it is the philosophical question *par excellence*. That question, in fact, never leads to a mere description or explanation of the object, but rather to a deeper investigation of the abstract conditions and epistemic foundations that allow its very possibility of existence.

To give a few examples, a philosopher of mind investigates the question of "What is a mind?"; a neuroscientist, on the contrary, is focused on understanding "How a brain works". A mathematician is interested in how to conclude a calculation; a philosopher of mathematics, however, ponders the question "What is the nature of numbers?". Philosophy, at its core, has always been focused on the essence of concepts. Of course, there are many views of philosophy and many ways to do it, but in a strict and classic sense, at the heart of philosophy, there is mainly the "metaphysical issue", even when a given kind of metaphysics is denied by philosophy itself, as has been observed before. When Heidegger explores the nature of poetry, he raises the question "What *is* poetry?", not "How does poetry *work*?". Or "What must happen to a prose text to become a poetic text?". The latter, in fact, is precisely Yuri Lotman's point of view in his excellent study on poetry⁹. Lotman investigates *the way in which poetry becomes poetry*. Heidegger, as it were, "stops" at the problem of

⁷ This entire question is actually immense and involves at the same time both absolute relativism and absolute anti-metaphysics. Already Plato, in disputing with the sophists, maintained that Protagoras' doctrine of relative truth was technically "self-refuting" as it destroyed itself in its very definition (it is the so-called *peritropê* or "table-turning" argument: see Plato, Theaetetus 188c2-171c7). Moreover, as has been widely discussed in contemporary analytic philosophy (by R. Carnap and A.J. Ayer in particular), this sort of impossibility of getting rid of itself is part of the very nature of metaphysics, for when one produces an anti-metaphysical argument, the latter very easily turns out to be a newer form of a metaphysical proposition. To deny an absolute (metaphysical) criterion of truth, in fact, presupposes at least a set of equally absolute assertions or requirements that can hardly be considered as "non-metaphysical" themselves. Wittgenstein, for example, in his attempt at overcoming metaphysics with his famous "picture theory" of language, eventually fell into a self-referential incoherence (as he acknowledged in his later works). This does not mean that any rejection of metaphysics is absolutely impossible, but only that it often and quite easily becomes contradictory.

⁸ In point of fact, if one encompasses the entire history of Western philosophy even with all its differences and contradictions, the so-called "problem of metaphysics", as Aristotle saw it, can be reduced to the search for an epistemic criterion of truth. In this regard, philosophy is the discipline that searches for a primary criterion of validity of knowledge. Far from being a "transcendent" issue, speaking of the essence of something is fundamentally the question "How can I be sure this is true?", or in other words, "What is the epistemic/objective/ultimate truth of something?". For "turning to the essence of something", philosophically speaking, means turning to its ultimate and incontrovertible truth.

⁹ See Y. Lotman, *Analysis of the Poetic Text*. Trans. by D. Barton Johnson. Ann Arbor (Michigan): Ardis, 1976.

what it is. Not by chance, Heidegger – as he admitted himself – could deal only with those authors, like Hölderlin, whose poetry is about poetry itself: that is, a poetry expressing the *nature* of poetry¹⁰.

If I follow these two “guidelines”, my conclusion is that in Russia there are indeed a certain number of philosophers, and that other intellectuals or writers may not be strictly included in this group, albeit the latter might perhaps embody the most original part of Russian thought¹¹. I do not propose to give any “list”, for anything of this kind (i.e. lists and frameworks) is never historically real, and I am still convinced that philosophy lies in many more places than I stated before. But this is, at least, an attempt to ascertain a difference and prevent philosophy from unravelling into an undefined area of intellectual idea-production. According to this framework – as affirmed before: it is not the only one, but it is a classic one –, Solovyov is probably the first and most meaningful among the Russian philosophers, as Berdyaev also acknowledged¹², without forgetting the authors who preceded him, such as G. Skovoroda, P. Chadaev, and the early Slavophiles A. Khomyakov and, above all, I. Kireevsky, whose elaboration of Schelling’s late thought contributed decisively to the project of a “positive” (Slavophile, religious) philosophy in Russia. But Solovyov, most of all, accomplished this project and acted as a point of reference for his successors and for laying the foundations of a Russian approach to philosophy, which often contradicted his thought but could never ignore it¹³. After Solovyov, all the thinkers who, in one way or another (in following it or, by contrast, rejecting it), related to the path he opened up should be legitimately included under the label of “Russian philosophers”.

¹⁰ See the leading idea in Martin Heidegger’s “Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung” (Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry): a speech Heidegger held in Rome on 2 April 1936, then subsequently published in the journal *Das innere Reich* 1936, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 1065-1078.

¹¹ As Berdyaev observes in this regard, “the chief figures in Russian religious thought and the religious quest of the nineteenth century were not philosophers, but the novelists Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Dostoevsky is the greatest Russian metaphysician or rather anthropologist” (N.A. Berdyaev, *The Russian Idea*. Trans by R.M. French. Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1992, p. 194). In another passage, Berdyaev expresses an even more radical concept: “The greatest Russian metaphysician and the most existential was Dostoevsky. Unamuno said that Spanish philosophy is contained in Don Quixote. In the same way we can say that Russian philosophy is contained in Dostoevsky” (ibid., p. 175).

¹² Ibid., p. 182. Semyon Frank also expressed the same concept: “Solovyov is unquestionably the greatest of Russian philosophers and systematic religious thinkers” (S. Frank [ed.], *A Solovyov Anthology*. Trans. by N. Duddington. London: SCM Press, 1950, p. 9).

¹³ Themes such as the critique of Western philosophy (mostly understood as “positivism” and “rationalism”), the heritage of Platonism, the ideal of an integral knowledge, the philosophical frame of absoluteness or unitotality, the *myth* of a “Russian idea”, the critique of abstract principles and consequently the re-evaluation of life as opposed to reason, a certain kind of apocalyptic and eschatological view, and the idea of Godmanhood: these are all Solovyovian motifs which, in one way or another (sometimes by opposition), spread throughout the entire Russian philosophical tradition. On Solovyov’s relationship with Western philosophy, see M.V. Maksimov, *Vladimir Solovyov i Zapad: nevidimyi kontinent* (Vladimir Solovyov and the West: The Invisible Continent). Moscow: Prometei, 1998. On the Platonic heritage in Solovyov, see: M.V. Maksimov, *Traditsiya platonizma v metafizike Vladimira Solovyova* (The Tradition of Platonism in Vladimir Solovyov’s Metaphysics), in *Modernités russes* 2015, vol. 15, pp. 93-105.

Now, the question is: does this group of philosophers that we call “Russian philosophers” – on the basis of their nationality and of their belonging to an originally Greek and somehow “metaphysical” tradition¹⁴ – have a common idea of philosophy? Are there any recurrent topics within this group that allow us to speak of the existence of a “Russian philosophy”, not only in terms of the nationality of its authors but also of a distinct national thought? Is there a “boundary” or a substantial difference between this Russian philosophy and, for instance, European philosophy? In short, as is stated in the title of this article: Does a “Russian philosophy” exist?

Western Philosophy and Russia

I am aware that anyone who intends to deal with this topic is entering a sort of a “minefield”, since a substantial part of Russian intellectual history was dedicated to such a collective effort for self-definition and, in particular, for self-definition with strict reference to European thought. As Boris Groys suggested, all Russian intellectual history is overtly shaped through a constant comparison to Europe and, according to him, the whole of modern Russian thought is a point of view on Europe¹⁵. Groys is certainly not the only one to affirm that understanding Europe, in order to understand Russia, is the central problem of the Russian philosophical tradition, as well as one of the main problems of Russian literature and Russian culture¹⁶. Any analysis of this kind would probably start from the day after Russia’s victory in the war with Napoleon, in 1814, when Russian intellectuals started to reflect on their role with regard to Europe, and would continue up to the present time¹⁷. This whole topic is obviously too big to be dealt with in this context.

Many prominent authors, from Chaadaev to the present time, have tried to answer this question on the Russian philosophical identity. Chaadaev’s answer is well known and is a negative answer¹⁸. In many ways, this “negative start” marked the entire path of Russian philosophy and it acted, as it were, like a “curse” on it, by generating or reinforcing a sort of “neurosis of distinctiveness” (as Evgenii Barabanov

¹⁴ Once again, I employ the adjective “metaphysical” here in the same way as it can be maintained that the entire Western philosophical tradition, from Plato onwards, is “metaphysical”.

¹⁵ This position is also expressed by Boris Groys in his article “Russia and the West: The Quest for Russian National Identity”, in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 1992, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 185–198.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185. See also Vera Tolz’s opinion: “Since Peter the Great’s reforms “the West” (*zapad*) had become arguably the most important ingredient of modern Russian identity” (In W. Leatherbarrow and D. Offord [eds.], *A History of Russian Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 197).

¹⁷ See on this the classic study by A. Koyré, *La philosophie et le problème national en Russie au début du XIXe siècle*, Gallimard, Paris 1976 (the text was written in 1929).

¹⁸ “Every nation has its period of stormy agitation, of passionate unease, of hasty activities. [...] All societies have gone through such phases. Such periods provide them with their most vivid memories, their legends, their poetry, their greatest and most productive ideas. [...] But we Russians, we are devoid of all of this. [...] There are no charming remembrances, no graceful images in the people’s memory; our national tradition is devoid of any powerful teaching. [...] We live only in the narrowest of presents, without past and without future, in the midst of a flat calm” (P.Y. Chaadaev, *Philosophical Letters and Apology of a Madman*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1969, pp. 35–36).

puts it in a critical way¹⁹). At a certain point, the only question regarding Russian philosophy seemed to be “What can we (Russians) add to European philosophy?” or, in other words, “What is the difference between us and them?”. But this kind of question, as Chaadaev argued from the very beginning, can only result, over and over, in a lack of something²⁰.

Leaving aside the fact that such concern for a national identity (or peculiarity) of thought in other European countries has never been as problematic – which would possibly confirm Barabanov’s thesis of “originality neurosis” – it is my opinion that this way of posing the question concealed, from a historical point of view, another more relevant event that happened in Russia. I am talking about the fact that when any “original” Western philosophical content, or any Western author, “crossed” the Russian border, it simply became different from whatever it previously was. If we take the Western philosophers that had the greatest influence on Russian history and thought – and I would name the classic triad: Plato-Hegel-Marx – the Russian reception of these authors radically transformed their thought from what it had been in Europe into something other. In short: into something “Russian”. These are not the only authors, of course. There may be many additions to this list: Kant, Schelling and Nietzsche are probably the most obvious. The “Kant case” is particularly interesting in this respect, since his thought was largely perceived in Russia as “enemy” or as something antithetical to Russian philosophical sensitivity²¹. Therefore, one can argue that in Russia there was no original *production* of philosophical ideas, but there

¹⁹ E.V. Barabanov, Russian Philosophy and the Crisis of Identity, in *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 1992, vol. 31, no. 2, p. 48. Barabanov’s comment on this is very harsh: for him, philosophy in Russia was no more than a pathological mechanism to keep minds in a position of passivity and subjugation.

²⁰ The only result that can be found, in his view, is the unconscious, unrepresentable mode of being that is alternative to any historicity. With respect to the universal world history, according to Chaadaev, this “mode of being” is unarticulated, unobjectified and unoriginal. Needless to say, this a-historicity of Russian identity (i.e. this extra historical and “unformalized” character of Russian culture), which is nonetheless “full of inner life”, would be the “gist” of later Slavophile reflection.

²¹ In 1925, Semyon Frank affirmed that “the criticism of Kant’s philosophy and the fight against Kantianism are constant topics of Russian philosophical thought” (cf. S.L. Frank, *Russkoe mirovozzreniie* [The Russian Worldview]. St Petersburg: Nauka, 1996 [1st ed. 1926], p. 169; on the same issue, see also A.N. Kruglov, *Filosofiya Kanta v Rossii v kontse XVIII-pervoi polovine XIX vekov* [The Philosophy of Kant in Russia at the End of 18th and First Half of the 19th Century]. Moscow: Kanon + ROOI “Reabilitatsiya”, 2009, p. 11). Frank’s opinion is certainly not unbiased, however it is a good representation of a certain philosophical and religious tendency (see, on this, M.A. Meerson, *Put’ against Logos: The critique of Kant and Neokantianism by Russian Religious Philosophers in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, in *Studies in East European Thought* 1995, vol. 47, nos. 3–4, pp. 225–243, and A. Akhutin, *Sophia and the Devil: Kant in the Face of Russian Religious Metaphysics*, in *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 1991, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 59–89). The reception of Kant in Russia, especially during the 19th century, is actually more complex and variegated than the religious philosophers’ point of view may express. In this regard, see: A.I. Abramov – V.A. Zhuchkov, *Kant Pro et Contra. Retseptsiya idei nemetskogo filosofa i ikh vliyanie na razvitie russkoi filosofskoi traditsii* (Kant pro et contra. The Reception of the German Philosopher’s Ideas and Their Influence on the Development of Russian Philosophical Tradition). St Petersburg: Russkaya Khristianskaya gumanitarnaya Akademiya, 2005; and T. Nemeth, *Kant in Russia: The Initial Phase*, in *Studies in East European Thought* 1988, vol. 36, pp. 79–110.

certainly was a definite *reaction* to Western philosophical ideas. The nature and quality of this "reaction" perhaps reveal more about the identity of the Russian philosophers than the positive contents of their works do. In this regard, what they do not accept about European philosophy is often more meaningful than what they develop as their own position.

Thus, if the issue of originality is what matters, one might conclude that perhaps there is not so much original philosophical content in Russia, but there is unquestionably a distinct and original way of *absorbing* philosophy. Philosophy in Russia is something that involves all human life and aims at including it within an objective investigation of the truth. It would appear that a subjective point of view on things, in Russia, cannot easily be dissected. At the same time, unlike what happens in other similar "humanistic views" in Europe, the fields of this research are not limited to thought or to an existential approach, but include every cultural aspect of life. Given all this, an implicit (or sometimes a very explicit) critique of Western logos emerges, which is probably the main trait and achievement of Russian philosophy as a whole. It is a philosophy that originated from the West, with an initial "lack" (here Chaadaev influenced everyone after him), but that eventually turned out to be an instrument of critique of the West itself thanks to an enlarged concept of logos.

When Nikolai Lossky, at the end of his *History of Russian Philosophy*, tries to sum up the main characteristic features of Russian philosophy, he names the Solovyovian ideal of "integral knowledge"²², along with different forms of intuitivism in epistemology²³. In Lossky's synthesis, many other references and authors converge: from the earliest Skovoroda to Chaadaev, to Kireevsky, to Herzen, Solovyov, Rozanov, Florensky, Frank and many others, who give different names (*sobornost'*, *tsel'nost*, *vseedinstvo*, *nepostizhimoe* etc.) to a concept that is very close to this ideal. Boris Groys interprets this "integral knowledge" as the "search for unity and universality not at a level of thought, but of life"²⁴. Not far from this is Vasilii Zen'kovsky when he writes that Man and Humanity (their destiny, their meaning, their ways and the ends of their history) represent the real core of Russian philosophical thought: i.e. not universe, not matter, and not even God. In this sense, Russian philosophy appears essentially "anthropocentric" rather than "cosmocentric" or "theocentric"²⁵. This would seemingly offer a solid reason for the model of wholeness. More recently, Igor' Evlampiev confirmed this view by saying that the four main traits of Russian philosophy are: the quest for the hidden meaning of Christian ideas; the meaning of human being, on the one hand, and the meaning of history, on the other (the latter forming together a radical antithesis); and finally a peculiar style of philosophizing

²² Cf. N.O. Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1952, pp. 404-405.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

²⁴ See B. Groys, *cit.*, p. 186.

²⁵ V.V. Zen'kovsky, *Istoriya russkoi filosofii* (*History of Russian Philosophy*). Vol. I. Leningrad: EGO, 1991, p.16.

that combines rationality with intuition, and logic with arts and literature²⁶. In addition to this (and actually going much further, almost to the point of dismissing philosophy as such), A. Zamaleev maintains that Russian philosophy produced its own style, a rhetorical and exegetic one, which never focused on the theory of knowledge as its primary goal, as European philosophy did²⁷.

From a historical point of view, Russia certainly welcomed more that kind of, so-called, metaphysics of “participation” which assumed either a transcendent or an all-encompassing paradigm (emblematically: Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Idealism) rather than any other metaphysics of “experience”, which, like Aristotelianism, or all Cartesianism or Empiricism, implied a strong sceptic option at the root of its analysis on human knowledge²⁸. This difference between Russia and Europe is also due to a precise historical path of Russian theology that radically differed from European Christianity. It is very likely that such an original and fundamental option – let us say, to put it briefly, Neo-Platonism over Aristotelianism – may also have affected the Russian view on Materialism in the 19th century, which, as a “dialectical materialism”, became an all-embracing materialist ontology: one might well say, a brand-new form of metaphysics contrasting the traditional form. Thus, the paradigm of unity and, within it, the idea of a fundamental dialectics of two principles, a higher one and a lower one, is a cultural feature that appeared in Russia long before the philosophical ideas of the 19th century. It is, in fact, a fundamentally Neo-Platonic paradigm that entered Russia along with Christianity. When one considers the transition from Medieval Russia to modern Russia and the encounter with European philosophy, which after the Renaissance largely abandoned that same paradigm, there may appear to be a conflict.

From the early 1990s up to the present day, there has been a critical rethinking of this alleged Russian paradigm of “unity of thought” and on the postulated existence of a Russian identity. Many contemporary scholars (among others: E. Barabanov, M. Epstein, V. Podoroga, S. Khoruzhy²⁹) imply, mostly in a critical way, that such a *myth* created a “system of ideocracy” and a “suicidal quality” to Russian philosophy. In other words, it created a sort of “slavery” for the Russian culture. Everything that happened in Russia (from theocracy to Marxism) depended upon this idealistic effect or “distorted Platonism”, which eventually created a “Plato-Marxism” (M. Epstein). In a recent survey of these positions (and also an excellent essay on the contemporary status of philosophy in Russia), significantly entitled *The End of Russian Philosophy*, Alyssa De Blasio shows how, after an initial revival of the Russian religious philosophy in the immediate post-soviet years (the 1990s), in

²⁶ I.I. Evlampiev, *Istoriya russkoi filosofii* (History of Russian Philosophy). St Petersburg: RHGA, 2014, pp. 4–5.

²⁷ A.F. Zamaleev, *Kurs lektsii po istorii russkoi filosofii* (Course of Lectures on the History of Russian Philosophy). St Petersburg: Izd. St. Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2009, pp. 13–14.

²⁸ As A. Zamaleev rightly observed, the quest for *knowledge* rather than for *truth* – where truth is meant in the broadest sense – was the main goal of this second line of development of metaphysics (see *ibid.*).

²⁹ For an analysis of Khoruzhy’s critique on Russian religious philosophy, from a religious point of view, see A. De Blasio, *The End of Russian Philosophy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, pp. 129–133.

the years that followed an ongoing criticism arose about its unfruitfulness and lack of philosophical dialogue. At the present time, while many contemporary philosophers in Russia dismiss the value of the experience of Russian religious philosophy, they also find a new way for philosophy under a renewed concept of “philosopher-intellectual”, capable of setting up an organized discursive place and of playing a public role in society, which is exactly what an “essentialist view of Russianness” is unable to do³⁰.

I do not wish to enter into the merits of this debate. It does occur to me, however, that even such radical criticism³¹ ultimately lies within the same paradigm of thought, as if it were the ultimate idealistic assertion deriving from the same source. Perhaps – at least, this is my impression – even a complete re-start, away from Platonism (and from the Hegelianism and Marxism that derive from it), would not be neutral, but it would be another idealistic reaction to the same idealistic source. I agree that Russian philosophy was often merged with ideology (whether national, theocratic, humanitarian, political, or messianic). But a large part of this “end-of-Russian-philosophy movement” is no different, as it replaces one ideology with another ideology, which may overvalue some tendencies of Western thought. Labelling Solovyov or Florensky or Berdyaev as simply “messianic”³², “transrational” and therefore “inauthentic philosophers” has the unfortunate consequence of not listening to what they had to say about a specific problem³³. Such an approach does not *stay* true to the “fact” (i.e. the options they proposed, which were not just absurd or literary inventions, but authentic epistemic positions). In the same way, affirming that the closeness between philosophy and literature in Russia results in a less authentic philosophy does not help to see what the consequences of this proximity are (e.g. a new philosophy, a new literature). Finally, refusing to accord any philosophical value to Russian philosophy because it is not what a “real philosophy should be” implies another hidden assumption, i.e. the overrating of European/Western philosophy in its most logic and positivistic embodiments as the perfect and only model to aspire to. But that kind of philosophy (i.e. rationalism, empiricism and ultimately analytic philosophy) is equally a vast range of varied approaches and, at the same time, is only one of the numerous outcomes of Western philosophical tradition. Why should Russian philosophers be considered “messianic” when authors like Spinoza or Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, or Schopenhauer, or Bergson, or Heidegger, or even the whole German Idealism are not? Why should a good part of

³⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 2–5.

³¹ According to which, it would seem, all Russian intellectual history (whether transcendentalist or materialistic) was wrong, in that it lacked authentic realism.

³² Although in Slavophile’s and Solovyov’s thought such a claim of a “Russian mission” is certainly appropriate: see, in particular, Solovyov’s work: *Three Forces*. Moscow: B universitetskoi tipografii, 1877.

³³ The case of Florensky is paradigmatic in this regard. As Massimiliano Spano seeks to demonstrate in his Afterword to the English edition of his 1922 work *Mnimosti v geometrii* (cf. P.A. Florensky, *Imaginary in Geometry*. Ed. by Andrea Oppo and Massimiliano Spano. Milan: Mimesis International, 2021), Florensky’s philosophy of science is anything but a religious or esoteric experiment, but is instead an authentically epistemological paradigm of knowledge and a modern example for a Platonic “speculative mathematics”.

contemporary French philosophy – which is largely merged with literature (in part following precisely the Russian example!) – not be equally “messianic”, “ideologized”, and “inauthentic”? No one would deny the value of these authors who had such a huge influence on the world culture.

The point is: Western philosophy has had different shapes and models during its long history. In its wide “array” of forms, there is room for varied and heterogeneous positions, although these should certainly keep an epistemic frame of truth, i.e. the Western logos, as an ultimate scope and boundary. For this reason, in order to avoid any ideological approach as much as possible, I would like to keep my conclusions at an epistemological level, i.e. trying to trace the main characteristic of the Russian philosophical tradition within the issue of the “knowledge of truth”.

At first glance, Russian thought might seem to be a large inconsistent puzzle, made of many scattered pieces: religious existentialism, materialism, ontology, dialectics, theology, symbolism, semiotics, culturology and so on. But if one looks at a number of hidden premises and at the final results of those pieces, the same puzzle may appear differently. Some of these results, for instance, are: the way in which the religious frame of *sobornost*’ became a philosophical one with Solovyov and the subsequent Silver Age philosophers; what kind of materialism the “Russian materialism” truly was (i.e. certainly different from the European “historical materialism”); what kind of science the Russian science from the beginning of the 20th century was (I am thinking of the Moscow School of Mathematics, or Naturalistic science in the way scientists like V. Vernadsky or A. Bogdanov approached it); but also how the “discovery” of Palamite theology impacted the general antinomic view on reality in Russia and many other examples of this kind concerning, in particular, the social and humanistic sciences. From such a context, one may deduce that in Russia an *extended* and often *antinomic* idea of logos has been explored and developed³⁴. It is not an opposite of Western Aristotelian logos, but it does include more objects of reflection (including arts, literature, culture, myth and religion, to name a few) than the classic Western logos does. Not only are the objects of this logos “extended”, but so are the subjects that affect them – as Georgii Florovsky notably argued “It was not merely ‘philosophy in Russia’ [...] but a new “philosophical subject” ”³⁵.

In other words, it is imprudent – to say the least – to speak of a “Russianness” of Russian philosophical thought, as if it were a philosophy that stands apart by virtue of its own different nature (as, for instance, ancient Chinese mathematics did). But it is historically reasonable to state that the reception of Western philosophy in Russia occurred with characteristic aspects, which on the one hand include a substantial disregard for Aristotelian logic and Cartesian metaphysics, and, on the other, a reworking of the Neoplatonic and Hegelian paradigms in a modern form. This, in very brief terms, generated a new and peculiar way to maintain both a scientific and a humanistic approach to the knowledge of truth.

³⁴ It is not by chance that this is also an old Slavophile argument.

³⁵ G.V. Florovsky, *Puti russkogo bogoslaviya* (Ways of Russian Theology). Moscow: Institut russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2009, p. 301.

A Paradigm of Discontinuity Within the Wholeness

This “extended logos” combining rationality with intuition (Evlampiev) is what I would call – along with Solovyov and N. Lossky – “integral gnoseology”. Yet, the “wholeness” or integrality of the paradigm of knowledge – which, as one of its main results, conjoins science and humanism in an original way – is not sufficient per se to account for another quality of a typically Russian approach to epistemology, namely the fact that such an integral form is capable of opening up to discreet phenomena and to multiple levels of knowledge. By means of a dialectical production of discontinuous antitheses of reality, the logos can more easily embrace a wider spectrum of problems. This quest for the discreet and dialectic nature of reality is what I would also term, in its most epistemological connotation, a “scientific Neoplatonism”. Such a definition – which may even sound like a sort of oxymoron – applies in particular to the so-called “Moscow Pythagoreans”³⁶ and indicates a modern form of metaphysical Neoplatonism that is nonetheless “scientific” in that it is addressed to an epistemic comprehension of the natural world with the instruments of modern science. In essence, it is a philosophical view that, in its widest frame, entwines the thought of a significant number of Russian philosophers as it originates from a historically peculiar reading, which took place in Russia, of Plato (in fact, a “Neoplatonic Plato”), Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Marx. This tradition ultimately produced a position of realistic ontologism and dialectical metaphysics and, at least in some authors, of an “epistemological intuitionism”. The latter is not, however, the same intuitionism as Brouwer’s – from which it differs essentially due to the nature of intuition itself³⁷ – and yet it stands equally opposite to mathematical constructivism and to Gottlob Frege’s logic, which in more ways can be said to hold the paternity of contemporary analytic philosophy.

If one takes into account the thought of those Russian thinkers who have been mentioned so far as being closer to the label of “philosophy”, this openness and interest towards the discreet nature of reality, in all its levels, is particularly evident. There is no wonder, then, that the category of integral gnoseology, as understood in this way, led Russian thought to group into the same epistemological level fields that are otherwise antithetical, such as science and literature, or existential-subjective humanism and social sciences, or again (especially in arts and literature) a given view of Christianity and the

³⁶ On this, see L.A. Lyusternik, *The Early Years of the Moscow Mathematical School*, in *Russian Mathematical Surveys* 1967, vol. 22, pp. 171–211; and S.S. Demidov, N.V. Bugaev i vzniknovenie Moskovskoi Shkoly teorii funktsii deistvitel'nogo peremennogo (N.V. Bugaev and the Birth of the Moscovian School of the Theory of Functions of a Real Variable), in *Istoriko-matematicheskie issledovaniya* 1985, vol. 29, pp. 113–124.

³⁷ For L.E.J. Brouwer, intuition is a “pure” intellectual intuition and does not involve sensory experience. On the contrary, for an author like Florensky it is precisely through life experience that it is possible to have an intuition of numbers. For the same reason, Brouwer – once again, unlike Bugaev and Florensky – rejects Cantor’s actual infinite, which is not “construable” and eventually leads to contradiction. Florensky’s conception of number and of mathematics can, in fact, accept contradiction as it derives from life itself, which is superabundance of sense, and can certainly bear and absorb all the contradictions.

search for a historic-materialistic meaning of life. Russian culture achieved all this – i.e. keeping together the most different perspectives and even the strongest oppositions – in a way that European philosophy had scarcely conceived of throughout its history. Undoubtedly, many of the achievements of Russian social or historical disciplines, or even empiric sciences, and most of all a particular way of considering history and science, originated from this epistemic context as well as from a specific (dialectic, antinomic) idea of truth. Russian culture offered a number of clues to recognize this truth. It is, in the broadest sense of this expression, an “epistemological truth”, in which the point of view on world knowledge is, in large part, dialectically alternative to a classic, Euclidean, Aristotelian, and Cartesian paradigm³⁸. From differential mathematics to non-Euclidean geometry, and from iconographic and avant-garde art to Orthodox theology, there are many fields in which an antinomic or discontinuous “double” was positively theorized by Russian schools, authors or scientists within a paradigm of integrality of knowledge and a metaphysics of total-unity. Most significantly, theology is the field where such a “discontinuity within the wholeness” was openly and uniquely affirmed, as the two different “economies” of the Son and the Spirit are what distinctively give Orthodox theology its huge historical influence on Russian and world culture. In an analogous way, with its crucial distinction of Being and Essence within the absolute Unitotality, Solovyov’s thought, perhaps the real, original matrix of all Russian philosophy, provided authors like Florensky with a general philosophical paradigm of integrality that might well be defined as the metaphysical background of his philosophy of discontinuity as well as of his philosophy of history. The Russian mind and culture – as Florensky largely maintained in his works³⁹ – has revealed this “discontinuous double”, which finds its *raison d’être* in an original and epistemic shape of truth. The general philosophical views of Sergei Trubetskoi and Lev Lopatin – two of the most direct disciples of Solovyov – are also a good example of all this. Sergei Bulgakov’s sophiology also represents an important development of Solovyov’s and Florensky’s ideas precisely in placing *sophia* as a kind of third being in between Absolute and cosmos: hence his ambiguous but also enriching notion of the “world-soul” as the living unity of being. Some of the main and most important conceptions of the Russian philosophers fall under a similar framework, albeit in an apparent (but not substantial) opposition to Solovyov: for instance, Nikolai Berdyaev’s dialectics of the phenomonic (necessity) and noumenic (freedom) world within the eschatological aim of the “Russian idea”; and Lev Shestov’s aporetic nature of truth as divided between “Athens” and “Jerusalem”. The same can be said for Semyon Frank’s concept of “unfathomable”, Nikolai Lossky’s doctrine of “intuition” or Aleksei Losev’s

³⁸ On the existence of a specific epistemological style of Russian intellectual culture, see B. Pruzhinin, Russian Philosophical Tradition as a European One: Epistemological Style of Intellectual Culture, in *Philosophical Traditions in Europe* (Proceedings of the XXIII World Congress of Philosophy) 2018, vol. 34, pp. 65-69. See also B.I. Pruzhinin-T.G. Shchedrina, Antinomizm kak printsip kul'turno-istoricheskoi epistemologii, ili ob odnoi linii preemstvennosti v russkoi filosofii (Antinomicity as a Principle of Cultural-Historical Epistemology, or On a Line of Continuity in Russian Philosophy), in *Ratsional'nost' i kul'tura. K yubileyu Vladimira Natanovicha Porusa*. St Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2013, pp. 139-150.

³⁹ See, on this, my work: Conceptualising Discontinuity. Pavel Florenskii’s *Preryvnost'* as a Universal Paradigm of Knowledge, in *Russian Literature* 2021 (forthcoming).

theory of “myth”: as all-encompassing and universal concepts, they have an internal, complex dialectical system, which is often made up of dualistic antitheses⁴⁰. Analogously, during Soviet times, the most relevant philosophers of science (such as B. Kedrov, P. Kopnin, and M. Omelyanovsky) dealt with the interaction between philosophy and science in quite a different way from the modern positivistic attitude that was developed in the West: i.e. they worked on wider conceptual categories (such as reality, matter, space, time) and on a systemic structural conception, a whole theory of “reality” and of “activity”, which combined logic, epistemology, psychology and sociology in the creation of new knowledge and cognition⁴¹.

A special case is represented by Gustav Shpet, a “Husserlian” philosopher who attended Husserl’s lectures in Göttingen for a year. He elaborated the German philosopher’s main problems from a strong Russian perspective, i.e. combining Husserl’s analysis of consciousness with a fundamentally religious Platonism, and yet not following the Russian sophiological thought. In this way, starting from the Husserlian phenomenology, he managed to develop an original aesthetics and above all a “hermeneutic phenomenology” that was focused on the problem of knowledge and language, but also merged with specifically Russian themes and with a Platonic conception of the absolute⁴². The Husserlian phenomenology as proposed by Shpet and by N. Lossky had a short but significant impact in Russia⁴³. The Soviet revolution did not allow the development of this process to be seen fully⁴⁴, but I have reason to think that many clues might point to a convergence between the late Husserlian phenomenology and Russian philosophy as a whole, the first and foremost among them being the insufficiency of classic Western logos to grasp the complexity of reality, which is indeed an adequate premise to the entire Russian philosophy in all its histor-

⁴⁰ Many more examples of the same kind (i.e. in search of a larger and more dialectical frame to interpret specific problems) could be easily added in extra-philosophical fields: this line of thought can easily be extended all the way to Mikhail Bakhtin’s critique of ideology as well as his attack on Freud’s “disembodied” and inauthentic unconscious. Not to speak of Yuri Lotman’s seminal concept of “semiosphere”, which, as inspired by Vernadsky’s theories, is the concept that indicates more than any other a holistic approach to culture and to the meaning of language by means of the primacy of the “whole”, namely, the semiosphere itself.

⁴¹ On the peculiarity of modern Russian philosophy of science as the quest for the interdependence of various disciplines within a whole heuristic philosophical system, see the section “Philosophy of Science” of the volume: V.A. Lektorsky-M.F. Bykova, *Philosophical Thought in Russia in the Second Half of the 20th Century*, cit., pp. 117–151.

⁴² See, on this, in English language, S. Cassidy, *Gustav Shpet and Phenomenology in an Orthodox Key*, in *Studies in East European Thought* 1997, vol. 49, pp. 81–108. An English edition of Shpet’s writings on “hermeneutic phenomenology” appeared in recent times: see G. Shpet, *Hermeneutics and its Problems: with Selected Essays in Phenomenology*. Ed. by Thomas Nemeth. New York: Springer, 2018.

⁴³ See F. Tremblay, *Nikolai Lossky’s Reception and Criticism of Husserl*, in *Husserl Studies* 2016, vol. 32, pp. 149–163.

⁴⁴ Until the end of the 1950s, the Soviet commentators considered Husserl’s philosophy as irrational or even “mystical”, and they used to criticize it on a number of points, above all for its investigation of “essences”. See, on this, T. Nemeth, *Husserl and Soviet Marxism*, in *Studies in Soviet Thought* 1975, vol. 15, pp. 183–196.

ical forms. The “religious outcomes” of the neo-Kantian group, the late Florenskian research on culture and language, and a general tendency that from pure mysticism pointed to culture and language, are only some of the results of the philosophy of Silver Age that lead one to think of a general paradigm of criticism towards Western logos. Losev and Shpet are two key-figures, in this respect, for understanding the ultimate identity (or what it could be) of philosophy in Russia. With their original interpretation of phenomenology, they are probably the best “missing links” to bridge the gap between European and Russian philosophical thought, if such a gap actually exists⁴⁵. The same can be said about Kojève as far as his interpretation of Hegel and Hegelianism is concerned.

All in all, Russian intellectual culture was capable of shedding new light on European philosophical movements like Platonism, Kantianism, Hegelianism, materialism, phenomenology, and existentialism. In this sense, Russian philosophy might be regarded as an inner and constructive critique with respect to Western thought. By this, I am not saying that there is an “*essential* Russian philosophy”, as it were, a gift for “native Russian adepts”, but I am implying that there are philosophical (i.e. metaphysical, epistemological, rational) ideas that are “Russian” in that they derive and find their meaning within a definite Russian historical and theoretical context, which is undeniably more religiously and idealistically marked than it is in other cultures. This is true for Russia in the same way as it is true that Pragmatism has its historical roots in American culture, or Empiricism in modern British culture, and Hermeneutics in contemporary French culture. In the same way, it can be affirmed that modern Italian philosophy (in particular, from Giambattista Vico onwards) is traditionally connoted as Historicism and Political thought, whereas Spanish philosophy is in general, as Ortega y Gasset famously defined it, a particular kind of existentialism or a “ratio-vitalism”⁴⁶. Similarly, an integral approach to the philosophy of knowledge and of science, and, above all, the definition of this approach in terms of a dualistic and often antinomic framework, but at the same time a deeply humanistic/literary approach to philosophy, are characteristic features of the Russian cultural philosophical background. Perhaps not “inborn” qualities, but cultural elements, yes.

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⁴⁵ What I am implying here is that, if there might possibly be a substantial difference of cultural motifs and background between, for example, Slavophile thought, Florensky’s philosophy or Russian Symbolism and modern European philosophy of symbol or of myth (e.g. the one expressed by E. Cassirer, M. Eliade, P. Ricoeur, H.G. Gadamer, C. Lévi-Strauss, H. Blumenberg etc.), then Losev is certainly a figure who can bring the two parts together. The same could be said about Shpet in relation to a possible connection between Solovyov’s philosophy or Russian religious philosophy in general and Husserl’s phenomenology.

⁴⁶ See, in particular, Ortega’s lesson “Qué es filosofía?” (What is Philosophy?) of 1929. On Ortega see J. Ferrater Mora, Ortega y Gasset: An Outline of His Philosophy. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

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Реферат

В статье рассматривается ряд обширных и непростых вопросов, касающихся сущности русской философии. Например, есть ли в русской мысли специфическая особенность у слова «философия», которую не следует путать с «интеллектуализмом» или «национальной идентичностью»? Какая разница и существует ли она между философом и интеллектуалом или семиологом, антропологом или кем-то еще? Каковы, собственно, границы русской философии? И наконец, имеется ли у русских философов общее представление о философии? Есть ли в этой группе мыслителей повторяющиеся темы, которые позволили бы говорить о существовании «русской философии» не только с точки зрения национальности ее авторов, но и с точки зрения наличия отличительной национальной мысли? Есть ли «граница» или существенное отличие данной русской философии, например, от европейской философии? Словом, как и было обозначено в заголовке статьи: существует ли «русская философия»? Для того чтобы разобраться со всеми этими проблемами, необходимо ответить на другой, исходный вопрос: каковы границы самой философии? То есть, что значит «быть философом»? Установив пару классических критериев, позволяющих отличить философию от других областей знания, и признав, что, в соответствии с этими критериями ряд русских философов все же существует, а также после краткого изучения давних спорных вопросов взаимоотношения между русской и западной мыслью и текущей дискуссии о них в России исследование обращается к поискам общих корней русской философской мысли.

Философия в России – это нечто, что охватывает всю человеческую жизнь, стремясь сделать ее частью объективного исследования истины. По-видимому, в России нелегко проанализировать субъективную точку зрения на вещи. Учитывая это, возникает неявная (а иногда и очень явная) критика западного логоса, что, вероятно, и является главной чертой и достижением русской философии в целом. Это философия, пришедшая с Запада, с изначальным «недостатком» (как утверждал П. Чаадаев), но которая в конечном итоге превратилась в инструмент критики самого Запада благодаря расширенной концепции логоса. Когда Николай Лосский в конце своей «Истории русской философии» пытается обобщить основные характерные черты русской философии, он называет соловьевский идеал «целостного знания», а также различные формы интуитивизма в гносеологии. С исторической точки зрения Россия, безусловно, больше приветствовала так называемую метафизику «соучастия», которая предполагала либо трансцендентную, либо всеобъемлющую парадигму (символически: платонизм, неоплатонизм и идеализм), чем какую-либо другую метафизику «опыта», которая, подобно аристотелизму, картезианству или эмпиризму, подразумевала сильный скептицизм в основе анализа человеческого знания. Таким образом, парадигма единства и в ней идея фун-

даментальной диалектики двух начал – высшего и низшего – это культурная особенность, возникшая в России задолго до философских идей XIX века. По сути, это принципиально неоплатоническая парадигма, пришедшая в Россию вместе с христианством. Если рассматривать переход от средневековой к современной России и встречу с европейской философией, которая после эпохи Возрождения в значительной степени отказалась от той же парадигмы, может возникнуть конфликт. На первый взгляд, русская мысль может показаться большой противоречивой головоломкой, состоящей из множества разрозненных частей: религиозного экзистенциализма, материализма, онтологии, диалектики, теологии, символизма, семиотики, культурологии и т.д. Но, если рассмотреть несколько скрытых предпосылок и их конечный результат, одна и та же головоломка может выглядеть по-разному. Фактически, из такого контекста можно сделать вывод, что в России была исследована и развита расширенная и часто антиномическая идея логоса. Это не противоположность западному аристотелевскому логосу, но включает в себя больше объектов отражения (таких как искусство, литературу, культуру, мифы, религию и многое другое), чем классический западный логос. «Расширены» не только объекты этого логоса, но и предметы, которые на них влияют. Как, в частности, заметил Георгий Флоровский, «это была не просто “философия в России” ..., но новый “философский предмет”».

В целом русская интеллектуальная культура смогла пролить новый свет на европейские философские движения, такие как платонизм, кантианство, гегельянство, материализм, феноменология и экзистенциализм. В этом смысле русскую философию можно рассматривать как внутреннюю и конструктивную критику западной мысли. При этом, мы не утверждаем, что существует «сущностная русская философия», как бы дар «исконно русским адептам», а имеем в виду, что существуют философские (т.е. метафизические, гносеологические, рациональные) идеи, которые являются русскими в том смысле, что они проистекают и имеют значение в рамках конкретного исторического и теоретического русского контекста, который, несомненно, выражен более религиозно и идеалистически, чем в других культурах. Это действительно для России точно так же, как является верным, что прагматизм имеет свои исторические корни в американской культуре или эмпиризм в современной британской культуре, а герменевтика в современной французской культуре. Аналогичным образом, целостный подход к философии знания и науки и, прежде всего, определение этого подхода в терминах дуалистической и, часто, антиномической структуры, но в то же время глубоко гуманистический и литературный подход к философии – все это характерные черты русского культурно-философского контекста. Возможно, это не «врожденные» качества, но точно элементы культуры.