

# Russian Thought in Europe

RECEPTION, POLEMICS,  
DEVELOPEMENT

HUMANITAS

STUDIA KULTUROZNAWCZE

# **Russian Thought in Europe**

**RECEPTION, POLEMICS,  
DEVELOPEMENT**

Edited by

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# HUMANITAS

STUDIA KULTUROZNAWCZE

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## Modern Slavistics outside Russia in Quest of “the Real Dostoyevsky”<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary slavistics does not merely study Russian literature; exposure to Russian literature shapes an image of Russia and ideas of Russian identity as well as represents the basic concepts and meanings of Russian culture. Reaction to modern western and American slavistics is important in the context of intercultural dialogue and communication among intellectuals from different countries. This article will examine some ideas of our foreign colleagues and in the process carry out a deconstruction of slavistics itself as a means of “appropriating” Russian culture separated from its roots by an alien mentality.

A common concern of all humanists is the loss of fundamental methodological principles, including those in the field of literary analysis. This was compensated for by the “attempt to overcome nationally-oriented isolation of humanities studies and what is essentially a post-Structuralist reorientation of ‘culture as text’ towards ‘culture as the process of translation and negotiations.’”<sup>2</sup> However, there is a division among western and Russian scholars into those who adhere to the requirement of having a solid methodological foundation<sup>3</sup> and those who come out for “epistemo-

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<sup>1</sup> This article was written as a part of item 1.5 of the Federal Targeted Program “Scientific and Scientific-Pedagogical Cadre in Innovation-Driven Russia” for 2009–2013, State Contract No. 14.A18.21.0268.

<sup>2</sup> Н. Поселянин, *Антропологический поворот в российских гуманитарных науках*, “НЛО” 113 (2012), pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> A. Marino, *Comparatisme et théorie de la littérature*, Paris 1989; А.А. Зализняк, *Речь на церемонии вручения премии им. А.И. Солженицына*, <<http://elementy.ru/lib/430463>>.



logical democracy”<sup>4</sup> and insist on pluralism that allows of various ways of exploiting “alienations” of texts<sup>5</sup>.

No one objects to “meanings” in philology, which Sergey Averintsev, aptly called “the service of understanding,” and which helps to “perform one of the main human tasks, i.e. to understand another person (culture, epoch) without turning it either into a “quantifiable” thing or into a reflection of one’s own emotions.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, any methodology must outline a common space of meanings that arise, above all, from common lexical units or definitions. Today, it has turned out to be a daunting task. On the one hand, every humanities scholar, whether or not he is embedded in tradition, has to constantly recreate concepts, and to work with them as instruments. On the other hand, rigorous terminology is of little use in the sphere of humanities as it “enfeebles” meanings leading to a loss of “polysemy and play on meanings.”<sup>7</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard writes about it in *The Post-modern Condition* (1979). Russians inherently feel comfortable with such a multiplicity of meanings because Russian philosophical thought as the basis of humanitarian knowledge, is inherently non-classical, as reflected in its abiding dislike of systems, categories and rigorous definitions.<sup>8</sup> However, Russians, perhaps more fanatically than other peoples, are prepared to uphold the mainstays of their world-view, “the key concepts” (A. Wierzbicka), key names, dates and events which like “a magic crystal” give an insight into Russian uniqueness and self-consciousness.

There is no doubt that traditional literary studies and philosophy are not objective and academic in the pure sense, but are part of a complicated mechanism of interaction of texts and practices. Slavic scholarship outside Russia is an important part of literary scholarship and is of course entitled to its own interpretation of iconic Russian names, texts, and concepts, but it is unlikely that anyone could afford to ignore the historical-cultural context in which they arose and exist and change without risking to distort the perception of national identity, certainly by the subjects of that identity.

<sup>4</sup> Н. Поселянин, *Антропологический поворот в российских гуманитарных науках*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Ф. Лавока, *Компаративистика как герменевтика остранения*, “Реферативный журнал. Серия: Литературоведение” 4 (2012), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> С.С. Аверинцев, *Филология*, in *Большая советская энциклопедия*, ed. by М. Прохоров, vol. 27, <[http://philologos.narod.ru/texts/aver\\_philol.htm](http://philologos.narod.ru/texts/aver_philol.htm)>.

<sup>7</sup> М.М. Бахтин, *Собрание сочинений в 7-ми томах*, vol. 5: *Работы 1940-х – 1960-х гг.*, Москва 1997, pp. 110, 79.

<sup>8</sup> See А.Ф. Лосев, *Русская философия*, in А.И. Введенский, А.Ф. Лосев, Э.Л. Радлов, Г.Г. Шпет, *Очерки истории русской философии*, Свердловск 1991, pp. 67-95.

One thinks of Carlo Ginzburg, who in his brilliant book *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (1976), using the approach of “micro-history,” demonstrated that humanities studies are not about texts as such, but about how these texts are used to construct and transform social meanings.

Traditionally, the examination of any work is connected with hermeneutics that is based on receptive aesthetics. This approach makes it possible to include former interpretations and perception in the context of a new reading/interpretation. At the same time receptive aesthetics also involves the reader as a fully-fledged participant in the hermeneutic discourse. West German receptive aesthetics in its time supplanted French Structuralism, and American Deconstructivism of the 1980s, put into question all the key concepts of text analysis: integrity, cohesion, presence, the word, centre, etc.; it totally eliminated ontology by making it redundant with respect to the text as a self-contained basis. It was the US humanists who gave a “vote of no confidence” to classical and non-classical 20<sup>th</sup> century theories.

In the late 1990s high-brow European (mainly French) theoretical models of discourse analysis were displaced by the American “practical criticism” theories. American Deconstructivists borrowed from the entire French doctrine only the method of textual analysis, casting aside philosophical problems (N. Ilyin). It was the “practical criticism” theories that were most readily assimilated in Europe and in modern Russia. Every reader started to arbitrarily apply to a literary work a cognitive network of subjective interpretation making classics the “heroes” of their own novels. This also applied to their own studies. Interestingly, American studies generated a backlash, an attempt to protect European scholarship from depersonalized globalism and primitivism and to preserve the foundations of national literary traditions. Many modern humanities scholars were tacitly reverting to the methodology of formalism or early structuralism, the schools that embrace the concept of a separate, isolated, stable and self-contained text. “The text was both the constant as well as the beginning and end of the study. The concept of the text was essentially a priori”<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, for many it was important to preserve integrity in interpreting the interaction between the subject and object of cognition. Ludwig Wittgenstein described it as the principle of “door hinges:” “the questions that we raise and our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. That is

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<sup>9</sup> Ю.М. Лотман, *Семьюсфера*, Санкт-Петербург 2001, p. 72.

to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are indeed not doubted. (...) If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put.”<sup>10</sup> In spite of these efforts the tendency of American “practical criticism” or research primitivism has gained wide currency in modern research practices.

When it comes to literature and the process of literary studies in an “updated” mode, the legitimacy of any pluralistic approaches and principles of any “detached analysis” raise no objections. Many contemporary works deliberately provoke such an eclectic approach (as highlighted by the work of Victor Pelevin). Current discussions are based on the idea of *rhizome* and pluralism (democratism) of opinions and evaluations that seek to overcome the “dominant discourse” (Michel Foucault), granting this right to every “reader.”

Things are more complicated when it comes to similar attempts to interpret Russian literary classics of the stature of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky and such broad ideas as that of “Russianness” or “identity.” Of course a genius is bound to provoke pluralism of assessments and interpretations. It is not by chance that the great Russian literature has generated its “twin,” the great literary criticism tradition that formed the basis for Russian philosophy. Paul Ricoeur noted that interpretation occurs wherever there is a complicated meaning that is discovered precisely through interpretation.<sup>11</sup> And yet, however independent we may be in this act, it is impossible, in the framework of institutionalised science, to ignore the humanitarian methodology, fully reject the communicative-semiotic approach or “the endeavor to establish a special epistemological status of humanities or the sciences of culture.”<sup>12</sup>

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who – according to Nikolai Berdyaev – distilled all Russian philosophy, is still one of the most vivid symbols of “the image of Russia.” Slavic scholars in Europe and America have been writing about him for more than a century; there exists a distinct branch of “American Dostoyevsky studies.” The perception of his name therefore merits a differentiated approach that moves from initial stereotypes and myths about the writer as a “Christian philosopher, the preacher of suffering and the Russian soul” (1910s) to the image of Dostoyevsky as an eschatological prophet in

<sup>10</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 341-343, transl. by D. Paul and G.E.M., <<http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/wittgenstein03.htm>>.

<sup>11</sup> See P. Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, transl. by D. Ihde, Evanston 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Т.И. Касавин, *Текст. Дискурс. Контекст*, Москва 2008, p. 95.

the 1940s and 1960s and subsequent psychoanalytical, masochistic, exhibitionist and other reinterpretations in the era of post-modernism or “neo-modernism” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many American Slavic scholars, identifying text and context, believe that Dostoyevsky unerringly predicted current events that determine the development of intellectual and social culture, including Russian culture, created on the basis of pluralism and equality of marginal figures of every stripe. Marginalisation of Russia has become one of the most common methods of its identification in Western and American Slavistics. Truly, “if there is no God, everything is allowed.”

There are interpretations of Dostoyevsky in terms of the problems of gender studies,<sup>13</sup> the protection of the rights of minorities (Susanne Fusso) on homosexuality in *The Raw Youth*;<sup>14</sup> Michael Katz on elements of “homosexualism” in *The Idiot* (an idea he expressed in an oral debate at the international conference “Leo Tolstoy and World Literature” at Yasnaya Polyana in 2010), feminism,<sup>15</sup> psychoanalysis,<sup>16</sup> the psychology of affects,<sup>17</sup> etc.

If “any theory is born as an attempt to solve concrete culture-specific problems,”<sup>18</sup> what agenda is Daniel Rancour-Laferriere pursuing when he claims that Russians are inherently... masochistic, narcissistic and paranoid, and Russians are not really a nation in the rigorous (sic!) ethnic sense of the world. He claims to have “cracked the mystery of the Russian soul,” and it consists in “moral masochism.” Oddly enough, the latest principles of analysis and license in the interpretation and understanding of Russia and the Russian character (as represented by Dostoyevsky’s work) often reek of the stereotype of the “Russian reservation” regurgitating the idea of continuous return to Russian myths, including conversations about the Russian identity. Russia has long changed, but the clichés have remained the same. Slavic scholars write about Dostoyevsky as if Russian identity

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<sup>13</sup> See R. Marsh, *Introduction. New perspectives on women and gender in Russian literature*, in R. Marsh (ed), *Gender and Russian Literature: New Perspectives*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 1-37.

<sup>14</sup> See S. Fusso, *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoyevsky*, Evanston 2007.

<sup>15</sup> See N.P. Straus, *Dostoyevsky and the Woman Question: Rereadings at the End of a Century*, New York 1994 (the Chinese edition 2003).

<sup>16</sup> See D. Rancour-Laferriere (ed), *Russian Literature and Psychoanalysis*, Amsterdam 1989, pp. 41-100; J.L. Rice, *Who was Dostoyevsky: Essays new and reserved* (Berkeley Slavic Specialities, Oakland, California 2011).

<sup>17</sup> A. Frank, *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, Durham – London 1995, pp. 251-263.

<sup>18</sup> С. Ушаков, *Верните мяч в игру*, “НЛО” 113 (2012), p. 56.

were a universally understood and immutable idea, something that can be simply explained or narrated in unidimensional categories with reference to a classic writer of the stature of Dostoyevsky. Behind it, in our opinion, is a primitive reduction of a whole phenomenon or in-depth meanings of culture to a single mode, affect, poetic myth or *idee-fixé* of the scholar who identifies himself with the writer (becomes that writer), and the writer with the nation; “playing” with his texts to the best of his understanding. As the English Slavonic scholar Thomas, aptly noted, many works of western (and of course American – S.K., I.B.) writers reveal undisguised mythologisation of Russia which is in stark contradiction with reality. There is still a gaping gap of stereotypes and misunderstanding between the West and Russia. To them the Russian people (and Russia itself) are merely shadows of literary characters; western scholars perceive Russians merely as descendants of Gogol’s and Dostoyevsky’s characters.”<sup>19</sup> One may explain such an analysis as the result of permanent psychoanalysis when “the text is the analyst” (and not the patient) while the philologist is the patient who tries to identify his own trauma in the context of the text. In that sense the transfer of course originates (...) from the philologist at the moment when he feels his impotence when confronted with the text, when analysis stalls... Be that as it may, invariably instead of treating the original text the philologist simply creates a different text (the text of his study) that ‘cures’ the original text only in the mythological sense. In reality the philologist hides his own psychological trauma in this secondary text.”<sup>20</sup>

A study of the perception of Dostoyevsky’s work reveals that this perception depends on the interpretative preferences of the reader when certain layers of meaning are turned into absolutes: the method of doubles, moral/immoral problems, Christology or atheism, psychoanalysis or phenomenology. The choice of the “main” books of Dostoyevsky is also determined by subjective inclinations and research preferences. Humanities studies are gradually becoming the field of methodological case studies, including the work of writers of the magnitude of Dostoyevsky or “objects” of the magnitude of Russia.

Let us take a closer look at one instance of such scientific pluralism, the monograph called *Surprised by Shame* (published in Russian translation

<sup>19</sup> Э. Томас, *Нерусские русские: Кавказ – Санкт-Петербург – Россия*, transl. by О. Овчаренко, in А.Ю. Большакова (ed), *Россия и Запад в начале нового тысячелетия*, Москва 2007, pp. 106-122.

<sup>20</sup> В.П. Руднев, *Прочь от реальности: Исследования по философии текста II*, Москва 2000, p. 264.

by Russian State Humanities University, Moscow, 2011), by Deborah Martinsen, an American Slavic scholar and president of the International Dostoyevsky Society.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps it wouldn't merit so much attention if it did not deal with the Russian identity and reveal how “they” see “us.” The book evokes mixed feelings. It consists, as it were, of two opposing parts: the conceptual part that is highly tendentious and one-sided, and the analytical part that demonstrates the author's profound and original understanding of the texts, characters and images of heroes and the historical contexts seen from an unusual angle.

First of all, it has to be noted that the attempt to reveal the methodological foundation of the study is hampered by the lack of justification and priorities of research names and the chosen strategy. Deborah Martinsen identifies a circle of scholars (mainly American) in the fields of anthropology, psychoanalysis, sociology and affect theory. They are all mentioned in passing, usually without references, which is particularly true of Russian references notwithstanding the fact that the author refers to such humanities scholars as Vladimir Solovyov, Mikhail Bakhtin, Yuri Lotman, Boris Uspensky, Yuri Tynyanov, Valentina Vetlovskaya, and Ludmila Saraskina whose work has long been recognised as models in the world community. It is unlikely that an average post-graduate in Russia studying the theme of shame (which is central to the monograph) would have permitted himself to devote just ten lines of generalities to the author of *The Justification of the Good*. “Vladimir Solovyov who sees the positive functions of shame as protection of privacy and indication of moral awareness”<sup>22</sup>. It is impossible in this description to recognise the first Russian philosopher, the founder of ethics who has created a *system* of moral categories in which shame is but the first stage in the development of a person's moral consciousness (reflection). Martinsen's claim that modern American scholars describe in the psychological terms Solovyov's ideas characterised in ethical terms<sup>23</sup> requires at least a minimum of proof, for such a reduction has far-reaching consequences causing shifts in worldview and concept that should have been explained in the study. Against the background of endless terminological fiddling such as “voyeuristic instincts,” an “essay in exhibitionist lying,” etc., some of the author's syllogisms clearly err on the side of

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<sup>21</sup> D.A. Martinsen, *Surprised by shame: Dostoyevsky's liars and narrative exposure*, Columbus 2003 (the Russian edition: Д. Мартинсен, *Настигнутые стыдом*, transl. by Т. Бузина, Москва 2011).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. xv.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

cheerful simplification: “For him [Solovyov] shame is an innate quality that differentiates humans from beasts. A sign of our ethical identity, shame manifests itself in conscience, which, in turn, leads to ethical action. As a writer, Dostoyevsky provokes readers’ shame, thereby piquing our consciences and moving us to act ethically, which, in turn, improves the world in which we live.”<sup>24</sup> The author omits an important nuance in Solovyov’s reflections on Dostoyevsky, namely, the effect that shame as the lowest feeling of “separation and connection” (Martinsen’s description of shame) of humans from beasts, is followed by *a feeling of pity* as a sense of connection/difference of oneself from the other person and *religious worship* as the connection/ difference from the supreme element, God. In the absence of a complete vision of the ethical problem (with shame as its lowest element) everything collapses: the ethics of Solovyov and Dostoyevsky, all talk about identity as the desire to embed us through Dostoyevsky into the Russian world of total “exhibitionist shame and lying.” If “all Russians are liars” (whether they are ashamed of it or not), as the scholar would have us believe, then clearly only a non-Russian scholar who is not an exhibitionist and not a liar can help overcome that ancient (though not Greek) paradox.

The scholar imputes some startling goals not only to Solovyov but to the hero of the study, Dostoyevsky, and that without referring to any serious methodological foundations or scientific premises. “Dostoyevsky surprises them [the readers] with shame, engages readers with paradox, and delights us with metaliterary play. (...) For shame makes us self-conscious of how we differ from others at the same time that it makes us feel our common post-lapsarian heritage. Dostoyevsky’s power as a writer, in part, from his playing on the boundary between self and other – the edge of shame’s paradox.”<sup>25</sup> We would permit ourselves another telltale quotation: “From his earliest to his most mature oeuvre Dostoyevsky provides countless case studies of shame – shame turned inward, as in the case of the underground man, or shame directed outward, as in the case of Peter Verkhovensky. He portrays the shame of poverty, of social class, of terminal illness, of deformity, of mediocrity; the shame of fallen women, superfluous men, political intrigues, liars, criminals, gamblers, eccentrics, and misfits; and the hidden shame of respectable people. (...) In short, Dostoyevsky documents shame’s part in the universal search for personal, social and metaphysical identity.”<sup>26</sup> One gets the impression that Dostoyevsky was writing his

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. xvi.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, pp. xv-xvi.

novels solely to ensure that Americans could get grants to study people *ad marginem*, while Russia allegedly is marginal from head to toe.

The monograph seeks to show a group of heroes who are liars, “who are at the centre of Dostoyevsky’s shame dynamics;”<sup>27</sup> the author’s overarching task is to reveal the national identity crisis that produces a special type of Dostoyevskian “shame-ridden” liars: Lebedev, Lebyadkin, Ivolgin and others, as well as real people. “The humiliated rage experienced by a wide range of Russians often turned inwards, as seen in the soaring suicide rate, but when it turned outward, as seen in political terrorism, it rocked the entire country.”<sup>28</sup> From our point of view suicides and terrorism do not attest to shame as the basic emotion *of a certain type of individual*, but of resentment, which was long ago brilliantly described by M. Sheller,<sup>29</sup> who examined the phenomenon of “ill-wishing,” also among the Russian intelligentsia. This complicated and dual state of the individual has vouchsafed a definition only in terms of psychological “shame-lying” reduction; most importantly, the resentimental type of individual is identified with the Russian type as such, just like the writer’s literary outcasts.

One further remark. All this ceases to look like innocuous studies if one remembers the persistent cliché of Dostoyevsky as the “spiritual guide” to Russia. “His work is seen as being little short of the quintessence of the main features of the Russian national character. Dostoyevsky was one of the first who, owing to his broad popularity and well-earned authority initiated a kind of dialogue between the Russian and American civilizations. This dialogue provided an artistic expression of the key parameters of the Russian idea and the American dream.”<sup>30</sup>

As one of her key arguments Martinsen uses Dostoyevsky’s polemical remarks in *Diary of a Writer* dated 1873 called “Something about Lying.” These remarks provided a basis for the entire analysis of “liars,” shame, Russian exhibitionism and identity.

Let us briefly recap what Dostoyevsky wrote in that entry. Unlike Martinsen, we cannot afford to ignore the social connotations of the author who engaged in opinion journalism for very understandable ideological reasons. The target of his criticism was not the “lying Russia,” as Martinsen

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. xvi.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. xv.

<sup>29</sup> See M. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, transl. by L.A. Coser and W.W. Holdheim, Milwaukee, WI. 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Т.Л. Морозова, *Достоевский и писатели Америки*, “Литературоведческий журнал” 16 (2002), p. 160.



assumes, and not all Russians are liars. In his frame of reference – and he was the founder and proponent of the “native soil” concept, only a certain “class of intellectual” Russians were liars. Dostoyevsky does attribute the penchant of the intelligentsia to lie to their being ashamed of themselves. From his point of view the shame is engendered by the entire two-hundred-year-old situation in which the Russian noble class emerged as narrow-minded, uneducated, as “ne’er-do-wells” in contrast to working people and the cultured western intellectual type. Those who are ashamed of their Russianness (“the face God gave to the Russian man”) are western-style “villains” who are ready to be anyone as long as they do not have to preserve and develop their own uniqueness or their own identity. What else could one expect from the “rootless Russian intelligentsia?” It is indeed an identity problem that goes back to the arguments that began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is nothing original about Dostoyevsky’s position on that issue (unlike in his novels). On the one hand, the ideology of the “native soil” divides Russia into “the soil, i.e. the people” and the “rootless intelligentsia” which is an omnibus term to refer to the many characters who are shame-ridden and shameless, cynical and reflective liars, referred to by Martinsen. Fyodor Karamazov is one of the many fathers of “Russia,” though along with the man-servant Kutuzov, the *starets* Zosima and St. Isaac Sirin.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, we cannot agree with the American scholar’s central thesis that liars are emblems of the national identity crisis or with her claim that Dostoyevsky wavers in his choice between these two systems of values.<sup>32</sup> His priorities are absolutely transparent and clearly expressed, even in the above mentioned note: in it Dostoyevsky “hints at the ability to learn to live with anything, but at the same time at the breadth of our Russian nature that makes even that which is boundless pale and faded. The two hundred years when there was not the slightest trace of independence of character and two hundred years of spitting into our Russian face have extended the Russian conscience to a boundless and fateful degree from which (...) what do you think one can expect?”<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the wish to draw broad cultural parallels and make sweeping generalizations, the wish to shoehorn Dostoyevsky into the world cultural

<sup>31</sup> See S. Klimova, *Conceptualizing Religious Discourse in The Work of Feodor Dostoyevskij*, “Studies in East European Thought,” vol. 59, 1-2 (2007), pp. 55-64.

<sup>32</sup> See D.A. Martinsen. *Surprised by shame: Dostoyevsky’s liars and narrative exposure*, p. xvi.

<sup>33</sup> Ф.М. Достоевский, *Нечто о вранье*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений: В 30 т.*, Ленинград 1973–1990, vol. 21, pp. 117-125.

context often verges on methodological arbitrariness and undisguised eclectics, manipulation with names and quotations. We believe that case studies should fit specific ideas into some kind of research paradigm, a paradigm that is accepted by the community as such or is at least justified through the concept of rhizome and that takes into account the continuity and integration of the experiences of the object and subject of cognition. Otherwise, methodology becomes a set of “scientific protocols” in the spirit of Karl Popper, except that the procedure of falsification is not applied to them. Without being afraid to seem backward and lagging behind western (American) humanities studies, we would not like to see our country billed as “subaltern studies” in American scholarship.

*Transl. by Yevgeny Filippov*

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# RTU

Original Russian thought came into existence fairly late – as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Creating their own conceptions, Russian thinkers readily referred to various philosophical traditions: the Eastern Christian one as well as the schools and currents that emerged in the West. At the same time, one can observe a reverse phenomenon: Western intellectuals too – philosophers, theologians, men of letters – in one way or another would refer to the oeuvre by Russian writers. This process, which in its broadest sense can be described as the reception of Russian thought in the West (above all in Europe), was begun still in Vladimir Solovyov's lifetime (19<sup>th</sup> century) and has continued till this day.

The notion of reception, employed in this publication, is quite broad in its sense. It means both the influence of Russian philosophy on the works by Western fellow writers, and the criticism and polemics undertaken by the latter, as well as the development, study and research into the thought created in the Russian milieu. All these aspects have come to be reflected in the book hereby presented for the Reader.

*Teresa Obolevitch*

*Tomasz Homa*

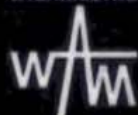
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