

MARTIN HEIDEGGER: THE POSSIBILITY OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HEIDEGGER AND HIS HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY FOR RUSSIA

The possibility of Russian philosophy

Today the questions, what is Russian philosophy, has it existed, does it exist now, and will it exist in the future, are pressing. But there is an even deeper question, *is Russian philosophy possible at all?* The question sounds strange and paradoxical, but we not infrequently encounter phenomena that exist *de facto*, though their meaning, content, justification, and organic structure remain problematic. Upon close examination such phenomena prove to be not what they present themselves as, but simulacra, counterfeits, obscure “copies without originals” (Baudrillard).¹ They “are,” but they are impossible. Their ontology is rooted in misunderstanding, in counterfeiting, in a disharmonious displacement. Pitirim Sorokin described similar phenomena in social systems as a “dumping place society.”² Oswald Spengler had recourse in similar situations to the figure of “pseudomorphosis”³ (in geology, the name of a certain mineral formation, in which unexpected heterogeneous factors interfere during the process of crystallization, for instance, the lava of an erupting volcano, etc.).

Thus the question of the *possibility* of Russian philosophy is entirely legitimate. What we usually call by that name may prove to be precisely a simulacrum or pseudomorphosis. Or it might prove not to be. In any case, to seriously ground the possibility of Russian philosophy, we need to make a certain effort. This effort is all the more necessary since even the most optimistic view of Russian philosophy cannot ignore its rather late appearance in Russian history and the serious intermission in its existence in the 20th century, when if it did not disappear entirely (not having had time to truly begin), it was considerably distorted in Marxist dogmatics.

If Russian philosophy as such exists, it is significantly damaged historically and requires reanimation. If [it exists] in outline, then it is all the more necessary to refer to its presuppositions, to the domain of its possibility. Moreover, there is a demand for its grounding and return to the starting positions from which can begin the complicated and not so obvious process of philosophy in the context of *samobytnoy* Russian culture.⁴

The correlation of Russian and Western philosophy

Russian philosophy (or its simulacrum), arose as a *reaction to European philosophy*: it started from it, correlated with it, sought its sources of inspiration in it, argued with it, imitated it, rebutted it and developed it. Whatever aspects of Russian philosophy we touch upon, we will necessarily be dealing with a response to a challenge, a reaction, an attempt to comprehend a thesis (theory, system, school, ideology) that had come to Russia from the West. Even when Russian thinkers strove to be or genuinely were in part original, this very originality expressed itself in the form of contrast with the philosophy of the West, juxtaposi-

tion with precisely it. Whether Russian thinkers imitated or rejected Europe, they compared themselves with precisely it and took as a thesis one or another philosophical theory or the totality of Western theories, starting from which they developed their own considerations.

This circumstance compels us to refer to the corresponding European philosophical contexts in order to understand Russian philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries. The possibility of Russian philosophy is inextricably linked with actually existing Western European philosophy, which develops according to autonomous logic. The actuality of Western philosophy was the potentiality of Russian philosophy. This correlation is fundamental. But it can be interpreted in different ways.

On one hand, this may mean that Russian philosophy is an offshoot of Western European philosophy, its late and specific sprout (outgrowth). On the other hand, it is possible to decipher this potentiation as a response to a challenge, that is, as a forced defensive gesture, directed mainly against Western philosophy (as with Slavophiles and, in part, Russian Marxists). Thirdly, we can consider it as Spengler's "pseudomorphism", that is, as a result of the heterogeneous and inorganic grafting (semi-violent-semi-voluntary) of one cultural form onto another, which is completely inappropriate to it. And finally, such a correlation can be viewed as a form of cultural expansion, an attempt by the West to spiritualize Russian society through the installation of its own rational cultural code, facilitating the administration of real power and ensuring the control of Western society over Russian society.

In all cases, Russian philosophy was correlated and does correlate with Western philosophy, and there is no reason to assume that this will not be so in the future.

The moment of unfolding of the Western European history of philosophy

Western European philosophical thought is a dynamic process. This process can be reconstructed and all the more so interpreted differently, but no one undertakes to disprove that the history of Western European thought in its formation traverses certain successive phases, within which certain philosophical paradigms dominate (like the paradigm shift revealed by Kuhn in scientific knowledge).⁵ These phases, no matter how we define them, are connected systems that, like circles on water, diverge around a school or person, intersect, and conflict with each other, forming a certain intellectual pattern.⁶ This pattern constitutes the general structure of the history of philosophy as *the history of Western European philosophy*. And if there are endless debates about the parameters of this pattern, no one questions the very fact of the existence of this history. Western European philosophy is a historical phenomenon, where we clearly distinguish a Beginning (pre-Socratic, Antiquity) and mark further epochs from Plato and Aristotle to the Middle Ages, Modernity, and so on to the current postmodern era.

Russian philosophy in its possibility to be is dealing with a historical process, a historical structure that has deep roots and well-defined outlines. The branches of a single tree are continuously growing, but the structure of the tree of philosophical knowledge remains generally constant. Therefore, Russian philosophy cannot confine itself to contact (resonance/dissonance) with some moment in the formation of Western European philosophy, with a particular private school, with a particular branch, direction, or trajectory of thought. To *be*, Russian philosophy must relate to *the entire history of philosophy as a whole*, and in dealing with any

moment of it, compare itself with a dynamic and openly developing whole.

It becomes obvious that Western European philosophy in this case should be presented to Russian society in the form of *the history of philosophy*, that is, one or another schematic theory that generalizes the Western European philosophical process. This will not only make it easier for Russians to become acquainted with its individual moments, but will generally make familiarity with the particular possible, through a compressed scheme of the whole, giving a horizon of meaning to the fragments.

This circumstance explains the fact of the extraordinary popularity in Russia of Hegel, the creator of one of the most capacious and panoramic algorithms of the history of philosophy. Moreover, perhaps it was the Hegelian approach absorbed by Marx that became the basis for the wide popularity of Marxism in Russia. Through Marx and Hegel, the Russians got acquainted at once with the whole of Western European philosophy, revealed in its structure on the example of a simple dialectic scheme for understanding. And the same reason lies at the basis of the underestimation of Kant and the Kantians, who did not propose a compact historical-philosophical model. For the Russian consciousness, Kant remained only a moment of philosophy. Hegel, on the other hand, claimed that while representing a moment of the philosophical process, he embodied in this (special, eschatological and teleological) moment a sense of the history of philosophy as a universal history.

This observation is extremely important for understanding the essence of Russian philosophy. When Russians wanted (want) to enter the process of philosophy, they had to (will have to) enter not into philosophy, but into the

history of philosophy, and they needed (will need) not only its moment (specific school, concept, idea), but also a brief presentation of the preceding phases of the process, and precisely a philosophical, conceptual presentation of it. After comprehending the entire historical and philosophical process as a whole, you can participate in it. It is important not just to jump into the “magic tram” (Gumilev), but to understand which route to take, where it begins and where it leads. Therefore, to “leap” into Russian philosophy, the history of philosophy is always necessary. Only that moment of Western European philosophy that will contain the formula for this whole philosophy can become the moment onto which, in fact, Russian philosophy can be grafted or from which it can take its own start (in any direction).

So, the possibility of Russian philosophy is that Western European philosophy, which is at the same time both a moment of development of this philosophy and the account of the algorithm (structure) of the whole history of philosophy in a concise and brief format.

In the 19th century, when something similar to “Russian philosophy” arose, the very possibility of its existence was Hegel's philosophy with its subtype, the philosophy of Karl Marx. Precisely Hegelianism (and its variety, Marxist philosophy) can be considered the hermeneutical base, the semantic whole, which served as a reference point for “Russian philosophy” in its first approximation. And if we grasp that, then we will understand why Marxism fascinated Russian philosophical thinking for almost a century. It is this way, not the other way around: a totalitarian political system did not make Marxism the fate of Russian thinking in the twentieth century, but Marxism as a type of Hegelian history of philosophy predetermined the totali-

tarian political system of the Soviet period. Politics is a consequence of philosophy; the opposite is not true.

Heidegger as a chance for Russian philosophy

The last remark explains the retrospective well - why Hegel and why Marx - but does not lead us to a broader problematic: what is the possibility of Russian philosophy? It was like that, and that it was exactly so is extremely important. But at the same time, it is tied to a historical moment of Western European philosophy itself, to when contact between Russians and itself took place. This predetermined the trajectory of a certain period, revealed important regularities. Regularities remained (the possibility of Russian philosophy lies in the history of Western European philosophy, now and always), but the moment has changed. Therefore, in order to expand the horizon from the historical moment to the historical regularity, and in order to actually (here and now) discover this regularity, it is necessary to ask a new question. While the Russians followed the Marxist history of philosophy throughout almost the entire twentieth century, did a different historical and philosophical version appear in the West that would rethink the Hegelian heritage or take new moments into account? Only in this case, after understanding and overcoming Hegelianism and Marxism as an exhausted version of philosophy (not erroneous, but simply exhausted, in the sense of life-giving philosophical forces), could we repeat the *beginning* of Russian philosophy and prove its possibility not in a historical moment but overall, as a more general phenomenon. There is no doubt that there were many new moments in Western European philosophy in the twentieth century: Wittgenstein, structuralists, phenomenologists, and existentialists. But all this says nothing to Russian philos-

ophy in the event that it wants to substantiate its *possibility* in a broader sense than the development of one of the branches of the nineteenth-century thinking. With our Hegelianism (Marxism), everything is clear (is it clear?). But how do we relate to everything else?

We cannot give a clear answer; after abandoning Marxism, we were confused, missed the thread, began to grab some isolated points in the chaotic need to philosophize in the absence of good reasons for doing so. We tried to declare ourselves as a moment in the process, in which, as it turned out, we were not full participants. We tried to slip past the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy, pretended that we can do without the history of philosophy (it really is not needed by those who are already part of this history). But nothing came of it.

Now it is obvious: in trying to philosophize, the contemporary Russian looks like a fool. And the more agilely he imitates those who philosophize, the more he is a fool.

Identification of the new history of philosophy is vital for Russians. This is the basis for the possibility of our Russian philosophy. But this is where the problems begin. At first glance, the twentieth century created many histories of philosophy. You choose. I do not want to. But upon closer inspection, everything crumbles like dust: there were no histories of philosophy, there were philosophies of history (Jaspers)⁷ or just moments of epistemological analysis (Foucault).⁸ In its context, all this was timely and meaningful, but not for us. In order to enter the hermeneutic circle, we need a hint; without it, we find ourselves outside this circle. Someone among Western European philosophers must tell us the password, open the code, give us the key.

This does not lie on the surface. But if we want, in spite of everything, to ground the possibility of Russian philoso-

phy, we will have to look for exactly this, the history of philosophy, singled out by the ontologically representative thinker of the twentieth century, someone fundamental and “native” for the West.

My hypothesis is that Martin Heidegger, who created a concept adequate to the entire historical and philosophical process of Western culture, is such a thinker. If this hypothesis is confirmed, it is in him that we have to discover and ground the possibility of Russian philosophy, not in a retrospective, but in a perspective horizon. If Heidegger becomes for us what Hegel and Marx became in the 19th century, then we will get legitimacy for the *second Russian approach* to philosophy.

Middle Heidegger as an essential element in the reconstruction of the history of philosophy

The question arises: does Heidegger have a history of philosophy? Is not his teaching just a moment in the process of Western European philosophy, not containing in itself a succinct presentation of the structure of this process?

This question can arise only in connection with one subtle historical and philosophical circumstance. In Heidegger's legacy, the attention of specialists is usually focused on the early period of his philosophical work, on phenomenology and Husserlianism,⁹ culminating in his famous *Sein und Zeit*.¹⁰ A narrow circle of experts on Heidegger also investigated the late Heidegger, mainly considering this period as a departure from classical philosophizing and an appeal to mythology, “mysticism” and poetic hermeneutics. The middle period of his work, the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s, most often fell out of sight of researchers. This period, as a rule, was interpreted as a transition from the analytic of Dasein to the later

hermeneutics.¹¹ From this perspective it is really difficult to find a full-fledged history of philosophy in Heidegger, and his ideas only look like a philosophical moment. But if you fill this gap, considering the sketches and texts of this era published only in recent decades, after the death of the philosopher himself: *Beiträge zur Philosophie, Geschichte des Seyns, Über den Anfang*, etc., the mosaic of his thoughts develops into a single whole, and what we were looking for is revealed to us: Heidegger's history of philosophy, no less consistent and all-encompassing than Hegel's.¹² As with any schematization, it is full of exaggeration and generalization; but this is a property of any reductionist scheme. We have only one thing to worry about: Has Heidegger managed to reflect in his works a hologram of Western European destiny?

If we holistically comprehend all three periods of Heidegger's philosophy, we will get a complete picture not only of his philosophy, but of his conception of the history of philosophy, which is much more important for us. This history of philosophy claims to have a decisive word about the structure of the whole process: Heidegger himself (like Hegel) is aware of his philosophy as "metaphysical eschatology" (as he writes in the *Holzwege*),¹³ as an expression of that form, towards which the Western European process was moving.

Philosophy of the evening

For Heidegger, the history of the West is the history of Western philosophy. That is, philosophy expresses in itself the deep content of the whole historical process. At the same time, Heidegger, as well as Husserl and all Western European thinkers, identifies the fate of the West [*Zapad*] with the universal fate of humanity, which in its life cycle is

fated to move towards the sunset [*Zakat*], to the “behind-falling” [*za-pad*] of its spiritual sun. The West is a place of sunset, where the sun “falls,” goes to sleep. “West” in German is “*Abendland*,” “the country of the evening.” The evening is, in a sense, the eschaton and the telos of the day cycle. Whatever part of the day we might be in - morning or afternoon - sooner or later we will face the horizon of the evening, the West, the sunset. Western European philosophy is universal in the sense that everything comes to its decline [*Zakat*] sooner or later.¹⁴ Therefore, he who thinks about the end, about the evening, about the twilight of being, thinks not only about himself, but about everyone who is sooner or later fated to reach this point.

Therefore, for Heidegger the homology is just: world history is reducible to the history of Western culture and civilization; and the history of Western culture and civilization is reducible to the history of Western philosophy. Consequently, world history is reducible to the history of Western philosophy. Therefore, the structure of Western philosophy as a process is a concentrated expression of the “destiny of being” (*Seynsgeschichte*).¹⁵

This logic of historical finalism (typologically repeating Hegel’s pattern of thinking, only at a different, existential rather than conceptual level) predetermines one more homology: the teleologism of the history of philosophy itself, which leads to the eschaton. Being of the evening, by definition, this history eventuates at the point of midnight, which is the goal and limit to which the whole process is directed. Heidegger leads us to the idea that the *end point* of Western European philosophy is the most important point in the whole process of its unfolding and therefore can be taken as the main moment of its content.

Thus, the homologous chain receives the last element:

the history of humanity is reduced to the history of Western European humanity, which, in turn, reduces to the history of Western European philosophy and then to the *end point* of Western European philosophy.

But just such a scheme is what is necessary for the actualization of Russian philosophy. If we trust Heidegger, we will get exactly what we need as a prerequisite for living philosophical thinking. We get not just a moment of Western philosophy, but the algorithm of this philosophy, and close to its end, which, in this interpretation, means the introduction to the most significant thing in this philosophy; after all, this is the philosophy of sunset [*zakat*], where the most important element is night and its structure. Heidegger in this case becomes the sought-for possibility of Russian philosophy, allowing us to relate to its schematically described whole.

Heidegger, the hologram, and the hermeneutic circle

Reconstruction of the history of Heidegger's philosophy requires supplementing the more or less well-known and explored periods of his work with an understanding of the meaning of the middle period when Heidegger's thought (according to the famous "Letter on Humanism," to his French friend and correspondent Jean Beaufret) was primarily concerned with the problem of Ereignis.¹⁶

The fact that Heidegger is the greatest representative of the Western European tradition is not disputed by anyone, no matter their attitude towards him. But the understanding that Heidegger drew a clear picture of the history of the Western European philosophical tradition, its meaning and destiny, is much less common. However, acquaintance with all three periods of his work and correct reconstruction of the structure of his philosophical thought allows us to

present Heidegger's concept of the history of philosophy with all its unambiguity. Decisive for us is not whether this historical-philosophical picture is fair or problematic. It is important for us to state that it exists, that it is systematically and structurally described, which means that it can be used as a full-fledged philosophical apparatus, as a methodology and a hologram.

After clarifying the structure of the Heideggerian concept of the history of philosophy and distinguishing its phases and stages from the perspective of the philosopher himself, we - as Russians, looking from the Russian [perspective] (which means from the indefinite) - will be free to treat it differently, critically and uncritically. In the first case, having clarified the structure of this history of philosophy, we decide to not trust it; in the second - to trust it, to take it as reliable.

Here, the question arises of hermeneutics and the problem of the "hermeneutic circle," which concerned Dilthey and Gadamer. Understanding is possible only when correlating the particular with the general. But a better understanding of the general affects (changes) the understanding of the particular, and an understanding of the private transforms the vision of the general; in the process of comprehension, two unknowns are clarified, which correct each other, but which can never be completely determined by themselves, without correlation with the other. Therefore, in the process of cognition, presumptions of both the whole and the relatively particular always appear, which are clarified (sometimes refuted and replaced by others) in the course of the hermeneutic practice itself.

With regard to Heidegger and the interpretation of his philosophy, we face the same hermeneutic problem. In order to correctly evaluate its place in the process of

Western European philosophy, we are forced to have a general scheme of this process (the hypothesis of the whole and its structure). But we have to find this scheme somewhere. We can borrow it either from Heidegger or not from Heidegger. In the first case, we can use his history of philosophy (which, as we have seen, exists, especially if we carefully examine the theses of the middle period of his work of the 1930s - 1940s) as a whole, starting from which we will consider the whole structure of Western European philosophy and Heidegger's place in it. Of course, according to the logic of the hermeneutic process, we will be able in parallel to specify both the meaning of the history of philosophy as a whole and our philosopher's place in it, which can lead to results different from the ready-made formulas put forward by Heidegger himself. But the starting scheme of the hermeneutic circle will be just that. We can say that in this case, we trust Heidegger and move along the hermeneutic axis proposed by him. Where this movement will lead is obviously difficult to say.

The second option is that we do not trust Heidegger's history of philosophy (for example, not recognizing its legitimacy, or, which happens more often, not spending the effort to study it and understand it consistently), and therefore should take as a whole a different version of the history of philosophy. This is where the difficulties begin.

The fact is that very few authors were engaged in the creation of a coherent history of philosophy in the West, and among the figures of the first magnitude only a few can be recalled. The first and largely unsurpassed initiative of this kind so far was the philosophy of Aristotle. In the 19th century Hegel established the history of philosophy as the highest manifestation of philosophy itself, creating the prerequisites for a wide range of philosophical theories,

Marxism in particular, which was extremely popular in the 19th and 20th centuries. Moreover, for these and other impressive histories of philosophy, to one degree or another, the principle of *holography* acted: these philosophies themselves were thought of as a synthetic generalization of the historical-philosophical process. The history of philosophy and philosophy of Aristotle were located at the beginning of the history of philosophy, opening its first pages and summing up the “preface” (pre-Socratic thought). Hegel thought of himself as a thinker completing the historical-philosophical process, finding in his writings its teleological end (in accordance with the teachings on the Absolute Idea and the phases of its dialectical deployment). Other “non-holographic” attempts to offer a history of philosophy as an open process, most often represented formally descriptive, rather than semantically structured models (Johann Franz Buddeus (1667-1729), Johann Jakob Brucker (1696-1770) and so on, up to Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)). In them, the history of philosophy was conceived not as a whole, but as a sequence of moments. At the same time, the presence or absence of the holographic construction of the history of philosophy for the Western European philosophers themselves was uncritical, since they naturally belonged to this process and were inside a culture built on philosophical grounds, which obviously predetermined their implicit complicity in what might not be explicitly formulated. In other words, an open, purely descriptive history of philosophy or, in general, the absence of any kind of history of philosophy, was not a serious problem for Western European philosophers. They could well do without it.

Russian philosophy is a completely different thing. It felt an urgent need for a summing hologram in order to correctly interact with and relate to each of the real

moments of Western philosophy (that is, the teachings of one or another philosopher). Without an image of the “whole,” it could not be what it should have been.

Therefore, we face a serious problem in the Russian cultural context: if we refuse to trust Heidegger’s history of philosophy, we will have to place the philosopher himself in some other historical and philosophical context on the basis of correlation with another “whole.” And here there is little choice: it is hardly correct to interpret Heidegger based on the history of the philosophy of Aristotle (the illuminating moment of the beginning of the philosophical tradition) or on the Hegelian or Marxist schemes of the “sought” whole. Marxist readings of Heidegger in the Soviet school of philosophy did not give any results except for misunderstandings, and Western currents of Marxism and neo-Marxism, which absorbed, apart from Marx and Hegelian dialectics, many more philosophical elements from other contexts (Kantianism, phenomenology, Freudianism, existentialism, structuralism, the philosophy of language, Nietzscheanism, etc.), failed to bring these areas into a general updated history of philosophy, or did not set themselves such a task. In such a situation, the projection of Hegelianism onto Heidegger’s interpretation would simply be an anachronism, especially since Hegelianism did not survive in the twentieth century in pure form, and its diverse interpretations (including critical ones) were transformed into a spectrum of conflicting philosophical systems that darkened the original clarity and conviction of Hegel himself.

The question of trusting or not trusting the history of Heidegger’s philosophy is thus acute for those who are thinking about the possibility of Russian philosophy, and the choice “not to trust” seems even more difficult and prob-

lematic than “to trust.” To account for this, it is necessary to emphasize once again that this problem does not arise for Western philosophy. Heidegger’s history of philosophy can be taken into account or not taken into account with the same success: organic cultural participation in the history of philosophy is guaranteed by the “rootedness” of the Western thinker in the cultural environment, and for this no special hologram is required.

This gap of cultural context, however, can give the Russians, interested in philosophy, the illusion that, through direct imitation of Western philosophers, one can do without the “whole.” Here lies the error: it is possible for Europeans, it is impossible for us. If we want to relate to the hermeneutic circle of Western philosophy, we can not do without the image of the “whole,” only after that we gain the possibility of full-fledged philosophizing.

My thesis is as follows. At the previous stages of the 19th and 20th centuries, the possibility of Russian philosophy was justified by referring to the Hegelian history of philosophy, on which we had been building the process of Russian philosophizing for almost two hundred years. Seen from this angle, the Marxism of the Soviet period fits perfectly - after all, Marxism also represented a capacious and holographic, teleological and eschatological version of the history of philosophy. But today the legitimacy and constructiveness of the Hegelian-Marxist history of philosophy has been exhausted for us. We took from it the maximum of what was possible and exhausted this paradigm. Therefore, we must again - now with the support of new historical and philosophical constructions - substantiate the possibility of Russian philosophy. And it is proposed to take as such a historical-philosophical hologram, as a basis for entering the hermeneutic circle, Martin

Heidegger's philosophy. To do this, we must set aside our mistrust, and, on the contrary, treat Heidegger's philosophy - albeit at the first stage - with trust and openness, with a kind of gnoseological empathy. If we will be successful, we will obtain in a new historical era a ground for Russian philosophy to be.

Three stages of Heidegger's philosophical work

As previously noted, it is common in Heidegger studies to divide his philosophical cycle into an early period (phenomenological studies and writing *Sein und Zeit*), a middle period (little-known, occurring as thought about Ereignis, and including the series of lectures on Nietzsche, the *Holzwege*, and the lecture cycles of the 1930s, combined into the posthumous collections *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, *Von den Anfang*, *Geschichte des Seyns*, etc.), and a late period (connected with the philosophy of language and the formalization of the description of *Geviert*).

At all these stages, separate elements of the Heideggerian history of philosophy are scattered in various works. If we aim at their identification, consolidation, and systematic description, we will find them in the earliest works, in *Sein und Zeit*, and in the hermeneutic period. But they are set out especially explicitly in the middle period. *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Geschichte des Seyns*, in general, are abstracts of lectures arranged as a history of philosophy, and *Einführung in die Metaphysik* sheds light on the structure of this history of philosophy and its ontological basis. From this perspective, the famous Heideggerian theory of Dasein will be revealed as the culminating point of the historical and philosophical process, on which this process teleologically converges.

Thus, the works of Heidegger's middle period give us a

framework for clarifying his historical and philosophical schema, onto which theories from other periods of his works are superimposed.

Heidegger's schema of the history of philosophy

Heidegger's reconstruction of the history of philosophy can be schematically described as follows.

The birth of philosophy in pre-Socratic thought is the great triad of Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, which is the *first Beginning* or the *great Beginning*.

Here philosophy comes from pre-philosophy or non-philosophy, from thinking. Its forerunner several centuries earlier was Homer's poetic genius.

According to Heidegger, the *first Beginning of philosophy* is characterized by the decision of the ontological problem, the question of *what is being* and how it should be understood. This problem first acquires a clear form in Heraclitus's teaching on *physis* and *logos*. *Being* as that which makes *what* is, that which it *is*, is conceived in the great Beginning as "*physis*," that is, the opening, ascending, revealing "power of presence." For Heidegger, in this teaching of Heraclitus lies the radiant triumph of philosophy and at the same time the first birth of that tendency, which - much later - will lead philosophy to its End. The identification of "being" with "*physis*" is only a half-correct solution of the ontological problem. Of course, Heidegger thinks, being is *physis*, the generating force of the world, bringing things and beings to the light of presence, into openness, making the existent [*sushcheye*] existent, that which *is*. In this sense, being is an existent [*bytiye i yest' sushcheye*], all existence as a whole, that is, *physis*. But this starting point of philosophy — with all its fundamental majesty — already contains a certain error: by celebrating being as presence and bringing to pres-

ence, as existent, the pre-Socratic ontology overlooks the other side of being — the one that leads the existent to non-existence, to death, the one that *nihilates*, annihilates the existent. *Nothing* is hidden behind being, apprehended only as “*physis*,” disappearing in it. And Parmenides in his famous poem will consolidate this disappearance by the formula “non-being is not.” According to Heidegger, non-being, *nothing* (*Nichts*) as the *to-not* (*Nichten*) is indeed. And pure ontology would have to initially put this “*to-not*” inside *physis*, see it in being as its opposite side, different from it and at the same time identical with it. But Greek thought took a different path: it focused on “being” as “*physis*,” losing sight of “nothing” (because of its nothingness). Thereby, already in the great Beginning, a certain gap arose between how philosophy began to take shape and how it should have taken shape if the ontological problem had been formulated properly. The gap between how it was historically and how it should have been gave rise to two points in the structure of ontology, through which a straight line was drawn that predetermined all the other stages of the history of Western philosophy. As a result, we got a ray with both a trajectory (a line) and an orientation (a direction vector, going *from* how one should have understood being to how it should not have been understood).

Already in the first Beginning, Heraclitus and Parmenides formalize the fundamental configuration of the entire historical and philosophical process. This process is structured by the main paradigm: a progressive “retreat from being,” “loss of being”, “forgetting about being.”

Logos and nihilism

Compensation for the loss of the distinction of the nihilating side of being in being as “*physis*” was the appearance

of the “*logos*.” “Logos,” which Heidegger interprets etymologically as “harvest,” “harvesting,” becomes a priority topos, in which the *nothing* that is lost in the understanding of being as “*physis*” reminds of itself. This is the specificity of philosophy, the introduction into the game of an *nihilating logos*, placed this time not in being (as it should have been), but outside of it, at the conditional point that later will become with Aristotle the “*upokeimenon*” and in modernity the Cartesian “subject.”

Heidegger identifies the work of the logos in the procedure of “*techne*,” or in what he later calls “*Gestell*.” If the existence of the world begins to be thought of as a predominantly *positive presence*, then *nothing* concentrates more and more on the side of cognition and its dual topos. Cognition as a process is the root of “*techne*,” in which there is a rigid splitting of being into *physis* and *logos*, into the cognizable and cognizing, which further leads to the arrangement in the center of precisely the the cognizer, the carrier of the logos, deploying its nihilating power onto the sphere of *physis*, conquering being and in the end, reproducing being as an artificial product. In this limit of the development of the technical beginning, the triumph of nihilism manifests itself.

Logos should have been inside *physis*, but it turned out to be outside, and this became the fate of Western European philosophy, the fate of the West, as well as the meaning and content of its unfolding.

The End of the first Beginning

If the main tendency of Western European philosophy was only outlined in Heraclitus and Parmenides, in Plato and Aristotle its path was clearly fixed. Heidegger calls Platonism and Aristotelianism the “End of the first Begin-

ning.” This is still absolutely Greek philosophical thought, breathing ontology and being, but the possibility of interpreting being as something open, the possibility of placing the logos not outside *physis*, but inside it, is here removed from the agenda. Plato’s doctrine of ideas fixes the prerequisites of the *referential theory of truth*, formulated fully, which consists in the search for the correspondence of the speculative principle (the idea) and the things of the natural world. The implementation of this operation concerns reason, the logos.

Being is henceforth thought of as *a being*, only as *the highest being* or *beings-as-a-whole*. Moreover, it is not just a dynamic of natural power, pushing a thing to presence, but a fixed and static visual image, a moment of “luminous intellectual perception” [*svetovogo sozertsaniya*].

According to Heidegger, this is a fundamental and irreversible step in *the diminution of the status of being*, now equivalent not simply to *physis*, but to the idea. Symmetrically to this, the logos, in turn, makes a serious step towards nihilism and the technical relation to the world; the metaphor of the demiurge god, the worker, the artisan who technically manufactures the world starting from fixed images-ideas, begins to dominate.

In his philosophy and history of philosophy, Aristotle fixes the qualitative moment of the End of the pre-Socratic period of Western philosophy. This is an end in all senses, termination (withdrawal) and fulfillment, that is, the achievement of complete maturity, perfection, the fullness of what was incorporated in the thinking of the pre-Socrates. The philosophy of Aristotle is the hologram of all early Greek philosophy. It summarizes the previous period and lays the foundation for further stages, which is true not only for the Stoics, but also for the later scholastic periods

of Western philosophy, and also, to a large extent, for modernity (after all, Kant remarked that the field of logic has not advanced a single step since Aristotle's philosophy).

According to Heidegger, Plato and Aristotle mark the moment of completion of the philosophical Beginning. Next comes the middle period associated with Christianity and scholasticism and, in the broadest sense, called the "Middle Ages." From the historical and philosophical point of view, these centuries are called "Middle" precisely because they occupy an intermediate position between the philosophy of Antiquity (the philosophy of the first Beginning) and the philosophy of modernity.

The Middle Ages

Heidegger studied medieval philosophy meticulously in the early stages of his teaching at the University of Freiburg; later he paid very little attention to it. From his point of view, Nietzsche's formula that "Christianity is Platonism for the masses" is an exhaustive axiom for summing up the philosophical state of affairs with medieval philosophy. For Heidegger, Christian scholasticism is the development of the philosophical step that Plato made in principle, putting the idea (the highest idea, the idea of good) in the place of being, thus fundamentally removing being from the sphere of philosophical thinking, replacing epistemological and ontological problems. Theology continues the same tendency, putting God in the place of the highest being, that is, remaining in the same Platonic paradigm.

For Heidegger nothing fundamentally new happens in the Middle Ages. Philosophy moves in the path predestined for it by the pre-Socratics and especially Plato and Aristotle.

Modernity – Descartes

But a truly interesting time for Heidegger is *modernity*. He defines it as the “*Beginning of the End*” (symmetrical to how Platonism was for him *the End of the first Beginning*). Modernity unfreezes medieval scholastic Platonism and gives free rein to the nihilistic power of the logos. At the center of this process is Descartes with his dual construction of subject and object. The subject replaces logos, the object physis. At the same time, Heidegger believes that in this modern philosophy approaches a more direct formulation of the problem: the rejection of *ideas* and the appeal to rational logical thinking directly as a subject reveals the very essence of the philosophical problem laid down in the era of the Beginning of philosophy. Cartesian rationalism, English empiricism, Newton and all other areas of modern philosophy (from Spinoza and Leibniz to Kant) develop in the field of more acute problematisation of ontology, where things are called by their own names.

Thus, Descartes, with his *cogito*, openly places the argument about ontology in the field of epistemology, making it a derivative of the logos, of reason. According to Heidegger, this is the beginning of the clear domination of the technical attitude to the world and man; man becomes a technician in relation to nature-object, and *Gestell*, earlier veiled, exposes its historico-philosophical power. Philosophy itself becomes more and more a technical occupation, a technique of thinking, which boils down to methods of calculation and evaluation. In other words, in modernity nihilism as the essence of Western European philosophy is revealed in full.

Hegel and Nietzsche

Modernity ends, according to Heidegger, in Hegel's philosophy, and Nietzsche is its last chord.

Hegel makes his history of philosophy a grandiose, monumental creation of the Western European spirit, concentrating in itself the destiny of the Absolute Idea, embodied during the “end of history” in the subjective spirit of the Western European culture of modernity. Hegel seriously poses the question of the relationship between being and nothing, being and knowledge, building his dialectic on that. In his summarizing work, Hegel, according to Heidegger, still remains within the framework of Western European metaphysics, thinks with the help of “concepts” and “categories,” that is, he is still in the space of the referential theory of truth and the common European philosophical topos. Hegelian ontology for Heidegger is the maximum approximation to what true ontology should have been (hence Hegel’s enormous attention to Heraclitus and the pre-Socrates, who thought on a symmetrical segment of the history of philosophy - but only in the era of the Beginning, while Hegel himself thinks in the era of the End), but the approximation is fatally incorrect due precisely to its belonging to the old metaphysics, its structures and methods.

Nietzsche philosophizes even more honestly and frankly. He directly proclaims “European nihilism,” the crisis of Western metaphysics and the “death of God,” exposes the “will to power” as the basis of the historical process and, therefore, the basis of philosophy and the history of philosophy. At the same time, Heidegger believes that Nietzsche, who demolished metaphysics, did not make a single step beyond its borders, but became precisely the last metaphysical thinker of the Western European tradition. The Nietzschean “superman” and “will to power,” according to Heidegger, do not at all indicate a new horizon of thinking, but only the absolutization of the

nihilistic nature of logos and the highest concentration of *Gestell*.

In other words, Nietzsche is not only not an alternative, but represents a genuine and accomplished End, the End of Western European philosophy and, accordingly, the end of philosophy itself.

So, along with Hegel and Nietzsche, Western European philosophy goes through a full cycle from the first (great) Beginning through the middle (medieval, in a broad sense) period to the Beginning of the End in Descartes and the complete and irreversible End in Hegel and, especially, Nietzsche. Starting with a somewhat inaccurate definition of being as physis, and only as physis, Western philosophy entered its fatefully predetermined history (destiny), the only content of which was progressive deontologization, loss of being, growth of nihilism, *techne*, *Gestell*, nihilating reason as an expression of the will to power. Being declined [*ubyvalo*] until it had declined completely.

But this, according to Heidegger, is the destiny of the West as the “Land of Evening” (*Abendland*). The decline [*Ubyvaniye*] of being is the lot of the West and the meaning of the history of philosophy as a purely Western phenomenon. Deontologization, concealment of being, and the onset of a nihilistic night are not an accident and not a catastrophe, and even not a consequence of error — this is a statement of philosophical geography. The light goes out there and then when it must. And when it must, the darkness sets in, the “Great Midnight”.

According to this reconstruction, Western philosophy is over. The remaining time can be devoted to understanding this ending, describing and interpreting the meaning of this event.

But Heidegger has another theme that predetermines

the cutting edge of his thought in the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s. This is the thought about *another Beginning* or about "Ereignis."

Another Beginning

In the middle period of his work, Heidegger focuses his attention on the concept of "Ereignis" and the theme of *another Beginning* that is directly connected with it. Ereignis is, according to Heidegger, *another Beginning*.¹⁷ But this is not just an "event" ("event" is a literal translation of "Ereignis"), but the possibility of an "event," an "accomplishment" having a fundamental philosophical meaning.

Another Beginning – that is that Beginning which did not begin in pre-Socratic thought. It is an understanding of being that includes *nothing* in being as its necessary component; which, identifying being with existence and physis, emphasizes that this identification does not exhaust being, since being is simultaneously *non-existent*, *non-being*, *nothing*, as well as that which makes a being not only existent but non-existent, that is, that which is *nihilates*. Being in another Beginning must (should) be recognized both as that which *is*, and as that which *is not*, but that, although not a being, nevertheless *is* (non-being is, in spite of Parmenides).

The whole history of philosophy is distancing from the possibility of Ereignis, is primarily non-Ereignis, as embodied in deontologization and oblivion of being, in *Gestell* and *techne*. But the negative Heideggerian interpretation of the historico-philosophical process as a non-Ereignis carries an opposite indication of Ereignis itself, if only to decipher this process as a narration not of what it is in itself, but of what it is not, and that *non-manifestation* is its highest and chief meaning. Western philosophy, recognized as a progressive distancing from truth, its gradual concealment,

is a paradoxical form of finding the truth itself through its dialectical denial and veiling. Therefore, Ereignis and another Beginning should be sought not elsewhere, beyond the limits of Western European philosophy, but in it, in its inversely interpreted content. The very fact of distancing from being in the course of the unfolding of the history of philosophy is a reverse indication of the significance of being and how one should think of it.

Heidegger describes the correct thinking of being in the framework of “authentic” (*eigene*) existence through the graphic figure of *Geviert*, the fourfold.¹⁸ Two pairs of opposites intersect in it, representing ontological unity: 1) *Sky* (“world”, in some versions) and 2) *Earth*, 3) *mortals* (*people*) and 4) *gods* (*immortals*). This image, borrowed from Hölderlin’s poetry, leading, by the way, to Plato, where in Heraclitan enmity *four* world domains of being converge among themselves, describes how one should understand being in *another Beginning*.

Another Beginning, according to Heidegger, must be born directly from the End of philosophy, if only this end is correctly decoded and recognized. On this point, Heidegger quotes lines from Hölderlin: “Where the danger is, grows the saving power also.”¹⁹ To transition to *another Beginning*, you need to take not a step to the side, not many steps back, but a step forward. However, this is a very difficult step, during which nihilism itself, the loss of being in Western European philosophy, *techne* itself and *Gestell* itself, will be revealed as the unconcealment of the truth of *Seyn-being* through its self-concealment. From this perspective, Western philosophy, which is, in the first approximation, a progressing crisis and fall into twilight, will reveal itself as a path to salvation: the one who first reaches the bottom of

the abyss can be the first to push off from it and begin to rise.

Who are you, Herr Heidegger?

Heidegger himself has repeatedly asked himself the question: who is Hölderlin in the context of modern philosophy? Who is Rilke's Angel?²⁰ Who Nietzsche's Zarathustra?²¹ In the same vein, we can ask ourselves: who is Martin Heidegger in his own historico-philosophical picture? From what was stated above about the structure of Heidegger's history of philosophy, the conclusion is almost unambiguous: Heidegger considered himself *the philosopher of another Beginning*; the herald of the possibility of Ereignis; a figure who deciphered the logic of the history of Western European philosophy and opened, through its special interpretation, the space for entering into a new comprehension of the problem of being.

In his own history of philosophy, Heidegger sees a dual key moment. It consists in establishing the exhaustion of the historical and philosophical process by witnessing the advancement of the point of Great Midnight, on one hand, and on the other, in opening the horizon of *another Beginning*, that is, the possibility to philosophize differently than philosophy did before, but taking into account the dramatic and catastrophic experience that is imprinted in the history of this philosophy.

On one hand, Heidegger fulfills the role of the "doctor of the dead," introduced by Dumas on the last pages of *The Count of Monte Cristo*: he writes out a certificate of the indubitable death that has taken place (Western European philosophy). On the other hand, he opens up the possibility of glancing - through *Geviert* and the perspective of another

Beginning - beyond the horizon of rationalistic and technical nihilism to approach closely a different philosophy.

In other words, in Western European philosophy Martin Heidegger is a reference point in all directions: into the past, into the future, and even to the side. It can be said that Heidegger ultimately thinks of himself as *Dasein*, whose presence he first revealed and grounded, and then fundamentally comprehended during the unfolding of his philosophy.

If Hölderlin, according to Heidegger, was a poetic herald of *another Beginning* (as Homer was a poetic herald of the first Beginning), Heidegger himself became the starting point of that thinking that explicitly (and not just explicitly) puts an end to Western European philosophy and throws it into the mouth of a volcano.

Entscheidung

Heidegger as a philosophical character in his own (eigene) history of philosophy is an embodied invitation to the execution of a *decision* (Entscheidung).²² Heidegger polemicized about Entscheidung with Carl Schmitt, who built his philosophy of right (*Entscheidungslehre*) on the principle of decision (decisio). Heidegger reproaches Schmitt with the fact that he lowers, diminishes the significance of the *decision*, reducing it to a choice of orientation in specific questions of a political sort. According to Heidegger, Entscheidung is something much more fundamental and meta-political. It is a choice that is made in the face of the final moment in the history of philosophy: the choice between “moving towards *another Beginning*” and “perishing” in the endless labyrinths of postponing the last historical and philosophical moment, in the “not-yet,” which is nothing fundamentally new, but seeks to extend to infinity

the gap between the already completed end of philosophy (the end of the history of philosophy, in Hegel and Nietzsche) and the final and irreversible awareness of this end. The *decision* is the choice between realizing what has happened and refusing such a realization.

In the last years of his life, Heidegger was inclined to conclude that the West decided to ignore the end of philosophy and committed itself to the “endlessly ending end.”

In the 1930s and 1940s, an *Entscheidung* was made in the form of Europe’s rejection of two versions of *Machenschaft*,²³ the final incarnations of *techne* in the triumph of the machine philosophy of machine (American) society, which Heidegger called “planetär-idiotismus” [planetary idiocy], and the Soviet, Marxist one. Having lost the battle for Europe as a *different* decision (compared to the United States and the USSR as two forms of the ultimate embodiments of Western European metaphysics), the West *made* a decision for *nothing*, for rejecting *Ereignis*.

Decision and Russian philosophy

Again we return to our problem, the possibility of Russian philosophy.

If we relate to Heidegger with trust and take his philosophy as the history of philosophy that provides us with a model of the whole in the circle of philosophical hermeneutics, we can outline two ways for the formation of Russian philosophy in new circumstances, when the legitimacy of the Hegelian (and Marxist) version is exhausted.

First: to accept Heidegger’s reconstruction, and also the role of Heidegger himself as the designer of the funeral speech for Western European philosophy. Then we will have the right to study it biographically or, in the case of an extreme degree of distrust, anatomopathological plans (we

will study the dead by examining how and why it died and how it was dying). If at the same time we have doubts about the circumstances of death, we will be able to dig up the corpse and re-examine it. In any case, Russian philosophy, built on such a basis, will be able to become authentic; we will understand what we are exploring and will get a correct idea of the meaning and significance of what we are studying. This conscious contact with *nothing*, expressed in the contemporary moment of the history of philosophy, will be the guarantor of the authenticity of our philosophical thinking and the basis of the interpretational scale, on the basis of which we will perceive and comprehend what comes to our attention.

In the second case, the prospects are more promising: by adopting Heidegger, we will be able to put forward our claims and ambitions for participation in *another Beginning*. Although simple enthusiasm is not enough for that; we will have to take the trouble to immerse ourselves in the subtleties and nuances of the history of Western philosophy, for another Beginning cannot occur (happen, open itself) without scrupulous and careful tracking of the entire process of deontologization that originated in the context of the first Beginning. In other words, another Beginning can hardly be expected without participation in the destiny of the first one. In order to be granted participation in *another Beginning*, we need to live out and exhaust the destiny of Western European nihilism (and for this we have some historical basis in the form of the Soviet period and the Russian reading of Marxist philosophy). In any case, to get a mandate to participate in such a *decision*, we must be *not outside*, but *within* Western European philosophy: extreme course of entry into which we, however, are guaranteed if the legitimacy of Martin

Heidegger's historico-philosophical reconstruction is recognized.

The fact that Russians are not so far on the way beyond the edge of the West, to the point of Great Midnight, should not mislead us. This is not a reason to avoid the influence of this final eschatological point; if not today, then a little later, but we will be there. The fact that we are "*not-yet*," "*noch nicht*," cannot calm us down or inspire empty hope: *the bottom of the abyss* is what will give us the possibility to receive a part in a different legacy, in *another Beginning*. "Already in it," not "not yet in it": such is the terrible stake in the historico-philosophical process.

Phenomenological Deconstruction

As in the 19th and 20th centuries, we operated with the Hegelian-Marxist model of the reconstruction of the historico-philosophical process to identify the content and meaning of any philosophical phenomenon, school, author, or theory, today, by accepting Heidegger's legitimacy and history of philosophy, we shall be able rather precisely and unambiguously to classify and interpret any fact in the history of philosophy through the operation of "phenomenological destruction." Derrida adopted this Heideggerian thesis from *Sein und Zeit* in his famous method of "deconstruction" (previously used by Lacan)... Derrida is talking about the contextualization of a statement in the original semantic environment, requiring careful research. This is a consequence of the application of the rules of structural linguistics and the connotative approach (notwithstanding the denotative) in the content analysis of philosophical discourse. Heidegger's original version, which served as the basis for "deconstruction," presents an even clearer method: placing this or that philosophical discourse in the overall

picture of the “whole” historical and philosophical process, comprehended as a gradual movement along the path of deontologization towards total nihilism. The place where this or that statement or philosophical theory is located on this trajectory predetermines its hermeneutical meaning.

Once we accept Heidegger’s history of philosophy, philosophical facts and constellations of facts will make sense to us.

Heidegger and Russians’ second attempt to enter into philosophy

The second attempt of Russians to enter philosophy is directly connected with Martin Heidegger. Without a history of philosophy — distinct, capacious, and teleological — Russians cannot penetrate the hermeneutic circle of Western philosophy. Of course, there remains a doubt: should we, in general, penetrate there? Moreover, the statement of the growing nihilism of the process of Western European philosophizing hardly serves to dispel this doubt. But nevertheless, on a purely theoretical level, if we do not want to remain eternal ignoramuses in the philosophical process, taking one thing for another and not for what it really is, we are simply fated to accept one of the histories of Western philosophy on faith. And the choice, as we have seen, is small here. Most of those constructions that are known as “history of philosophy” are not at all what we need: they describe the formal process of the flow of philosophical theories and concepts, whose implicit logic is intelligible only to those who participate in this process in a natural way, due to culturally belonging to a society built on philosophical foundations. The foundations of our society and our culture are whatever you please, but not philosophical, which means that we will not close this gap with any

personal efforts. We need an image of the “whole”; only then can we correctly evaluate the particular. But for the natural representatives of Western European culture, such an image is not necessary. They know it implicitly and are part of it. We are outsiders on this path into the abyss, and its trajectory, goals and causes are far from obvious to us.

We could consider other versions of the history of philosophy, as capacious and holographic as the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. But nothing comes to mind. There are several versions of the philosophy of history (for example, Jaspers’),²⁴ but this is completely different. The history of philosophy is not a philosophy of history. If such histories of philosophy from the twentieth century are discovered and are sufficiently substantiated, then it will be possible to think about other possibilities of Russian philosophy; more precisely, about another possibility of Russian philosophy. At first glance, Heidegger is the most optimal option for us, the most logical and structurally close for giving us a primary fundamental impulse.

PART I

ARCHEOMODERNITY. THE
HERMENEUTIC ELLIPSE.
THE ABSENCE OF RUSSIAN
PHILOSOPHY

A PEOPLE WITHOUT A PHILOSOPHY

Debris analysis

Before embarking on a more careful study of the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy and its prerequisites, it is worthwhile to briefly examine the object that we today by inertia and without critical consideration call "Russian philosophy." Before creating something, it is necessary to carry out two preliminary operations: "debris analysis" and "garbage disposal." We will not be able to make a single step on the path to Russian philosophy, if we assume that "we already have it." If it existed, then it would just have to develop. So to enter the initial positions of the study, we must show that it does not exist, and that what stands in its place is rubbish and misunderstanding. This is by no means gloating: it is simply that philosophy does not tolerate any exaggeration and obviously requires our devotion only to the truth, even if it turns out to be bitter. In addition, everything is not so sad: if it turns out that there is no Russian philosophy, then this can be interpreted not simply as the inability of Russians to create this philosophy, but perhaps as a sign that the terms for this have not yet come and the

conditions are not right. In the end, it may turn out that Russians don't need philosophy at all, and its absence is an expression of the norm, and not a defect or misunderstanding. If it turns out that we, Russians, are not a philosophical people, so much the worse for philosophy, not for the people. It cannot be ruled out that we will come to this in the course of our research, but here we should not get ahead of ourselves. We must act gradually and consistently.

Hegel said that, "a great people begets great philosophers." We, Russians, without any doubt, are a *great people*. But we have not spawned our real — *great* — philosophers. How can we resolve this contradiction?

The first version: everything lies ahead. The second: Hegel was wrong. The third: we are not a great people. The latter is rejected at the outset, since, looking at our culture as a whole, at our history, at our accomplishments, at our lands and our spirituality, we will see that the Russians are a great people, operating on a grand scale. Two versions remain: either *everything lies ahead*, or *philosophy is not the destiny of the people*, or at least it is the destiny *not of every people*.

Philosophy and Indo-European world. Indian philosophy

The second hypothesis ("Hegel was mistaken") comes up against the following historico-linguistic observation. If we take a look at the family of Indo-European peoples and, more broadly, those cultures that are built on the basis of *Indo-European* languages, we will see that *all* of them, in one way or another, have developed their own philosophical schools. And these schools are impressive, monumental phenomena of world history and culture.

Often, "philosophy" is understood only as Western European philosophy, from the pre-Socratics to Nietzsche

(as Heidegger thought). This, in fact, is the philosophy of the European, Romano-German segment of the Indo-European world, its far-Western part. Without doubt, Western European philosophy is most revealing and explicit in terms of the development of the principles and foundations laid in it, which gradually acquired a striking, distinct, and impressive form. But the other, Eastern branches of Indo-Europeans created, though qualitatively different, yet no less convincing philosophical schools, opening whole continents of philosophical thought.

Take, for example, Indian philosophy. Built on the basis of one of the Indo-European languages, this philosophy is a monumental, unique, and original *palace of thought*, which includes hundreds of schools and trends, a host of outstanding thinkers, and an amazing variety of methods, approaches, and principles. In Indian philosophy there is everything: both a general spirit or style, allowing one to speak about it as an integral phenomenon, and a wide range of ideas and theories that are extremely contradictory and differ from each other both in the main and in particular.

Take at least the opposite schools of Vedanta: Dvaita and Advaita. The first is based on the dualistic, the second on the non-dualistic interpretation of the Vedas. It would seem a complete contradiction, but the Indian spirit overcomes it, finding a place for both thoughts within the framework of a common philosophical field.¹

Looking at Indian philosophy more broadly, besides the six classical “darśanas” (philosophical systems) we will see a whole layer of “heterodox” philosophical systems, from the gigantic field of Buddhist philosophy and Jainism to Lokāyata and Charvaka.

Indian philosophy is a well established and extremely developed phenomenon, a gigantic intellectual edifice of

rationality that has been subjected to consistent and systematic reflection. In this philosophy, there are anthropological, epistemological, and ontological aspects, as well as aesthetics, ethics, and socio-political parts. The general structure of this philosophy is *fundamentally different* from Western European philosophy in its presuppositions, methods, and generally accepted principles but *in no way inferior to it* in the development of the rationalistic apparatus and the depth of self-reflection. So at the two poles of the Indo-European world, in the West and in the East of Eurasia, we encounter two vivid types of philosophical thinking, deeply incorporated into culture, society, politics, and religion.² If we take into account the quality and scale of the influence of these phenomena on the cultures of the West and the East, as well as their dissemination to nearby societies, *the connection of Indo-European cultures and peoples with philosophy* will reveal itself to us as a kind of fundamental regularity, and philosophy itself will appear as a *global phenomenon* concentrated in Indo-European societies and described mainly in Indo-European languages: Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi, in one case, and Greek, Romance and Germanic, in another.

Iranian philosophy

We also encounter one more giant stratum of *philosophizing Indo-Europeans* in Iran and in that cultural area on which Iran's culture has had a direct impact over the centuries. Some nomadic Iranian-speaking tribes should also be included here. And again, as in India, we are dealing with a developed philosophy, but one with a *completely distinct* philosophical spirit, different from the Indian and Western European.

Unlike Indian integrality and inclusiveness and Western

European pluralism and fragmentation, Iranian philosophy focuses on the *dualism* of the world and operates with it in different ways. This applies to ancient Iranian culture, Mazdaism, Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, and later Iranian Shiite Islam, including diverse sects, such as Manichaeism or Bábism. All these philosophical and religious teachings went far beyond Iran itself, spreading among the peoples of Asia Minor, among the Slavs and Europeans right up to Western Europe (where we find echoes of Iranian dualism and Manichaeism in medieval Gnostic sects among the Cathars, Albigens, and Waldenses, and among early Protestants, the Czech Hussites and German followers of Thomas Müntzer).

Iranian thought is built around a fundamental dichotomy: *light/darkness, up/down, good/evil, purity/dirt, gods/demons*, etc. This dichotomy predetermines the most diverse philosophico-religious, social, political, and cultural constructions, developed by Iranians in different phases of their history.

At all stages of the history of Iran, we are dealing *precisely with a philosophy*, perhaps not as explicitly developed as in India or Europe, but nevertheless completely original, clearly formulated, and reaching back into history for several millennia. Iranian philosophy is an indubitable and original phenomenon.

In addition to Hindus and Europeans, we see that another huge sector of Indo-European ethnic groups - Iranians and peoples close to them - has developed its own philosophical traditions and laid it out in its own language.

Philosophy in the Arab world and in China

Attention should be paid to the fact that *outside* the

In Indo-European context there are also at least two cultures that gave birth to full-fledged philosophical schools and trends and claim to be global: *Chinese* culture and *Islamic-Arab* culture. These are the two poles of distinctive philosophical spirit, which also had a great influence on the thinking of entire peoples.

Over the millennia of its history, China has created a unique type of intellectual culture in which several layers can be distinguished:

- Archaic cults of ancestors and spirits,
 - The ethical-administrative and ritual philosophy of Confucius, combining political standards and establishments with ritual and moral values,
 - Taoist teachings of followers of Lao Tzu, built on the paradoxes between the finite (collectively "*de*", "good") and infinite (*Tao*),
 - Indian Buddhism reworked in the Chinese way (Chan Buddhism), in which we are dealing with the influence of the Indo-European religious and philosophical system.

Despite all the diversity and sometimes contradictions, all strata of Chinese culture constitute *a single whole*, united by a specific style of thinking, contemplation, and ethical principles. Here, the duality (yin-yang), in contrast to the Iranian approach, does not lead to an unremovable opposition, but is integrated into a nuanced dialectical complex. Chinese philosophy, in turn, fundamentally influenced the culture of nearby peoples: Tibetans and Mongols in the North, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese and Thais in the East, as well as many Pacific ethnic groups in the South.

Arab Islamic philosophy is completely independent phenomenon, based on interpretations and commentaries on the Koran, the Muslim holy text, and representing a peculiar development of the Semitic cultural principle, rooted in Assyria and Phoenicia, but with unique distinctive features. The great influence on Islamic philosophy of the Greek tradition — Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics — became known in the Arab world largely due to the school of non-Christian Neo-Platonists in Haran, where they settled after their expulsion from Byzantium by Emperor Justinian in 529. In the Middle Ages, Western Europe received information about pre-Christian philosophy largely through reverse translations from Arabic.

In some cases, for example, in Iran, the imposition of the Arabic-Islamic, Neo-Platonic, and Iranian philosophical heritage proper led to the emergence of new original philosophies (the most striking example of this is the medieval philosopher Shahāb ad-Dīn Yahya ibn Habash Suhrawardī).

Be that as it may, in addition to the obvious and very serious influences of Indo-European philosophies, both the Chinese and the Arabs elaborated comprehensive, unique, and original philosophies, diverse and with many vectors, but united by a common spiritual style and common manner of thinking, with a sophisticated philosophical language, methodologies, and structures of concepts.

Slavic asymmetry

It is important for us, first of all, that *the majority of Indo-European peoples* and linguistic cultures corresponding to them have created extensive and persuasive *philosophical complexes* representing large-scale and cultivated traditions.

Against this background, a certain asymmetry is immediately apparent: the Slavs, on the one hand, are a large segment of the Indo-European linguistic and cultural community located in the territories between Western Europe and the East, but, on the other hand, *there is no Slavic philosophy*. In some cases, this can be explained by the fact that the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe were for centuries under the influence of other philosophical traditions - Greek (in the case of Orthodox peoples) or Roman-German (in the case of Catholic Slavs and later Protestants, for example, Czechs). But the case of Russia, the numerically and territorially largest Slavic power, shows that the Slavs do not pay much attention to philosophy even when they create independent and distinctive cultures, empires, and sovereign states.

Undoubtedly, Slavic culture exists and has certain general characteristics and significant features. But the place of philosophy in this culture is either insignificant or lacking altogether.

This asymmetry is striking. If philosophy is related to the structure of the language (which could be assumed, given the philosophical scale of the majority of Indo-European peoples, although the Arab world and China give us other examples),³ then why was such a large and culturally original segment of Indo-Europeans as the Slavs able to build, to protect and increase powerful independent powers (Russia, and once Serbia Nemanjicz or Ancient Bulgaria), but did not develop something even remotely resembling the philosophy of other Indo-European societies or societies that were under their spiritual influence? The superficial answer (with a fair amount of racism), along the lines that, "the Slavs are not ethnically pure Indo-Europeans," has no meaning: Indian society is much more heterogeneous in a

racial sense and the influence of the autochthonous population is much more noticeable there, yet the philosophical culture – and what a culture it is! – was created and has developed harmoniously to this day. Obviously, the real reason for the deferment of philosophy in Slavic societies *does not lie on the surface*. Perhaps, in the course of our research on the possibility of Russian philosophy, we will manage to get closer to it. In the meantime, we restrict ourselves to establishing this circumstance, which is a phenomenological statement: matters stand precisely so and not otherwise. And this indisputable observation will serve as our starting point.

But, be that as it may, we see: the Slavic segment of the Indo-Europeans *lies fallow* in relation to philosophy. It is a resting field, which not only did not bear fruit, but, apparently, is also not yet sown. And if someone did try to sow something here, it ended in failure; the seeds fell on the stony ground, or were pecked by the birds of the sky, or were covered by weeds. This is a Slavic, Russian field, extremely enchanting, clearly cultivated, and *waiting for something*, but so far philosophically fruitless.

THE HERMENEUTIC ELLIPSE AND ITS STRUCTURE

Philosophers Without Philosophy

Nevertheless, from time to time we use the combination of words, “Russian philosophy,” and we list the names of “Russian philosophers”: Skovoroda, Solovyov, Fedorov, Leontiev, Bulgakov, Berdyaev, Trubetskoy, Frank, Florensky, Shestov, Kojève, Losev. Who are they, then, and what were they up to?

First, there can be philosophers even in the absence of philosophy in the culture of a people: individual representatives of a given people can quite integrate into the cultural and philosophical tradition of another people that has such a tradition. *Philosophers are possible without philosophy*, but the adjective “Russian” in relation to such a philosopher will only mean the origin of his personality, and not participation in the hermeneutic circle of the integral phenomenon called “*Russian philosophy*.” In this sense, all of the above authors and a number of others, completely and without any stretch, can be called “Russian philosophers”: they are *Russians who philosophized*. That’s accurate. At the same time, the fruits of their philosophizing *did not result in* the creation

of Russian philosophy. Some of them did not set themselves such a task (Skovoroda, Kojève, Shestov, Berdyaev), and some did (Solovyov, Fedorov, Bulgakov), but failed. In any case, *when comparing* what we know about the “Russian philosophers” themselves and what we received from them in the form of works, ideas, texts, and theories, with the philosophical bodies of work developed in Indo-European (and not only Indo-European) cultures, it becomes completely obvious that the mechanical aggregate of all their efforts cannot be called *philosophy* in the full sense, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms. In other words, *we have Russian philosophers, but we do not have Russian philosophy.*

“Russian fragments”

This basic starting point can be considered in two ways. On the one hand, for the correctness of further constructions, it would be necessary to show why what is presented as “Russian philosophy” is not that. This critical aspect will clear the way for us (the “garbage disposal” stage). On the other hand, we can recognize in the ideas and works of Russian philosophers *fragments, hints, and intentions* that, taken as such (and not as an integral philosophy), will be extremely valuable for those who in a new historical period still think about the possibility of Russian philosophy as a full-fledged and well-founded phenomenon.

We know that the main work of the first person (as is customarily thought) who called himself a “philosopher” was lost – “On Nature” by Heraclitus of Ephesus – but on the basis of scattered fragments that have come down to us, we draw vast conclusions about what Heraclitean thought was. As an example, we can refer to Heidegger’s texts on

Heraclitus and the results of his joint seminar with Eugene Fink.¹ If we treat the works of the “Russian philosophers” precisely as scattered *fragments*, written in a language that is not fully deciphered, in which only individual signs can be identified, and even that hypothetically, then they will acquire *genuine value* and find their creative potential for of the future. We should not interpret them (they, in fact, have nothing to really interpret), but finish building and deciphering them as charades, half- or a third done, the correct answers to which the compilers did not know, dropping the matter after having hardly started it. We must *complete*, extract, and often *create* anew the meaning of the “Russian fragments.” But all this is true in the event that we initially operate with the optimistic hypothesis that *Russian philosophy is possible*. If it is possible, then the “Russian fragments” may have a meaning, by which is meant a properly *Russian* meaning. If this cannot be established, then the same fragments can be considered as *an attempt at the last stage to get involved in the work of the Western European philosophical tradition*. And the attempt is clearly unsuccessful, just as the late-comer tries to jump into the departing train, grabs the rail of the last car, but loses his grip and slips into the ditch (the “philosophical steamer” of 1922 or the collapse of Soviet Marxism in the 1960s, which became obvious in 1991), where a completely different, new, and not at all philosophical life begins.

In both cases, it is a question of a “*phenomenological destruction*” in the Heideggerian sense, only the procedures will be different. In the first case, we proceed from the possibility of the existence of such a thing as “Russian philosophy” as a whole and try to find the correspondence of this (highly hypothetical) structure to the “Russian fragments”; that is, we deliberately operate with *Russian hermeneutics*. In

the second case, Western European philosophy is taken as the reliable hermeneutic circle (I think it's not necessary to explain why it is not Indian or Iranian) and of *what* these Russian fragments were the misunderstanding, distortion, and curvature, and how they arose, is shown. This second type of "phenomenological destruction" has already been partially done by liberal critics and representatives of the Russophobic direction, both in Russia and abroad. True, this work was so tinged with political and propagandistic moments and emotional gloating that its theoretical value and constructiveness (albeit critical) are often completely lost. In the face of the arrogant disgust of those who criticize "Russian philosophy" as a wretched embarrassment, an equally biased reverse impulse arises, pushing us, despite all evidence, to state: "Russian philosophy existed and was an independent and weighty phenomenon that contributed to the treasury of world philosophical thought." It turns out that we are responding to an *insultingly formulated* truth with a *soothing* lie. This is not a philosophical, but a polemical-publicistic device that should be set aside.

The way out of this situation will be to concentrate attention precisely *on the possibility of Russian philosophy*. We do not insist that it is actual. Most likely, it does not exist as an actual phenomenon. We do not even insist that it is possible. Maybe it is not; maybe it is completely impossible. We are only working on the philosophical hypothesis of the existence of such a hermeneutic circle as could be called "Russian philosophy," and on this hypothesis we want to build our own hermeneutics.

Russian philosophy is a hypothetical whole, given to us neither as a whole nor as several parts. It is an entirely imaginary world, built, however, on the quite concrete and phenomenologically indisputable basis of the Russian

Beginning [*nachalo*], Russianness, the Russian world, Russian originality, Russian culture. *The Russian* [*Russkoe*] is *phenomenologically certain*. It is a short conversation with whoever denies *that*: they are just enemies, and enemies have always been dealt with the same. But Russian philosophy entirely belongs to the realm of *projective possibility*. It is *phenomenologically uncertain*; it lives in a wish, a hope, a subtle dream, if you will, a hallucination. But do not underestimate the power of imagination; it plays a crucial role in the anthropological constitution and, accordingly, in culture and society.² And the “Russian philosophical fragments” are tiny specks of dust in this dream, no more than that, but no less.

Archeomodernity and pseudomorphosis

The specificity of Russian culture and Russian society can be defined as *arechomodernity*.³ This is especially true of the last three centuries following the Petrine reforms. The term “archeomodernity” describes a situation when social modernization is carried out not *naturally* and organically, as a result of accumulating preconditions in the depths of social processes, but is *imposed* from above in a volitional way, and the model of modernization is taken from socio-cultural and socio-political patterns copied from societies with a completely different history and type and located in other phases of their development (and development itself can occur in different directions). Such “modernization” is *exogenous*, not *endogenous*⁴ and does not transform the deep structure of the traditional society undergoing modernization, but only *distorts* it. At the same time, the internal structure is basically *preserved* in the archaic, “original” [*nachal'nom*] (“arch” - “origin” [*nachalo*]) condition,

which gives rise to the *doubling* of social culture and a “*dual hermeneutics*.” The modernized strata of society (the elites) think of themselves in one world, in one capacity, in one social time, while the masses remain archaic and interpret social facts in the perspective of the old traditional concepts. Spengler called this phenomenon “pseudomorphosis,” drawing on a metaphor from the field of mineralogy and crystallography, where the natural growth of crystalline rocks is disturbed by an external phenomenon, for example, the eruption of volcanic magma, whose particles interfere with the process of crystal formation and create malformed crystal-hybrids.⁵

Archeomodernity is a hybrid society in which both sides – the modernized and traditional – are easily guessed, *but do not enter into orderly, logical interaction with each other*, do not combine consciously and consistently, but coexist “*de facto*” without noticing each other. In archeomodernity you can never be sure whether you are dealing with the modern or archaic element: at any moment the situation may change and antiquity will look out from under the mask of the contemporary, while tradition will upon closer examination prove to be a fake. In such a society, the principle of the *social lie* dominates – both the elites and the masses systematically lie to themselves and others about their nature, not because they know the truth and hide it, but because they *do not* know this truth and *hide their ignorance*.

It is precisely archeomodernity as a socio-cultural type that has developed in Russia in the last centuries. Spengler believed that appearances of pseudomorphism in Russian history began with Peter I, although its premises are already visible in the Russian schism. Russia differs from other forms of archeomodernity, which in varying degrees include colonial and postcolonial societies (as is clear in the case of

the countries of Africa, Latin America, the Islamic world, India, China and, with certain reservations, Japan, South Korea, etc.), only by the fact that exogenous modernization took place in it *without actual loss of sovereignty* and without complete colonization. Rather, it was “*defensive*”⁶ in nature and served to defend sovereignty and independence in the face of aggressive pressure from Western Europe. What the colonialists imposed on other traditional societies, *we imposed on ourselves* - precisely in order to protect against potential colonialists; that is, in the name of freedom and independence. Russian archeomodernity did not become less painful and unnatural as a result, but acquired an *additional* dimension; it was possible to interpret it not only as a fatal consequence of the loss of independence at a certain historical stage in the face of modern societies, but as a kind of consciously chosen “national idea.”

In the most *charitable* sense, you can interpret Russian archeomodernity as a special *social disguise* that traditional society (arch) adopted to preserve itself in the new historical conditions, when external and offensive colonial modern societies acquired too many competitive advantages, incompatible with traditional societies’ ability to preserve freedom.

If we treat archeomodernity *critically*, it can be viewed as the deliberate and voluntary distortion of traditional social structures and *artificial auto-infection* done for some vague goals in a world where in most cases these distortions were imposed forcibly and the epidemic spread by itself. In this case, the Petrine reforms and the whole subsequent history of Russia, including the USSR and the modern Russian Federation, are seen as something intermediary between a *diversion* of the ruling class and the self-destructive *masochism* of society as a whole.

. . .

Smerdyakov as the central figure of archeomodernity (on “bathhouse mildew”)

The program of Russian archeomodernity is briefly and succinctly presented by the hero of the Dostoevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, Pavel Smerdyakov, the illegitimate son of Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov from the foolish beggar woman Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya.

“I hate all Russia, Marya Kondratyevna. [...] In 1812 there was a great invasion of Russia by Napoleon, first emperor of the French, and it would have been a good thing if they had conquered us. A clever nation would have conquered a very stupid one and annexed it. We should have had quite different institutions.”⁷

And in dialogue with the same Maria Kondratyevna:

-“If you’d been a cadet in the army, or a young hussar, you wouldn’t have talked like that, but would have drawn your sword to defend all Russia.”

-“I don’t want to be a hussar, Marya Kondratyevna, and what’s more, I should like to abolish all soldiers.”

-“And when an enemy comes, who is going to defend us?”

-“There’s no need of defence. In 1812 there was a great invasion of Russia by Napoleon...”⁸

. . .

This is not simple Westernism, although Pavel Smerdyakov, of course, is a Westernizer, which is evident from his admiration for everything European. He himself says so about Europeans:

“There the scoundrel [foreigner] wears polished boots and here he grovels in filth.”⁹

It is telling here that Smerdyakov partially criticizes himself, his Russian nature. Judging by the derogatory nickname, both he and his foolish mother stink from the inside, in accordance with his last name, but he tries to drown out the stinkings with perfumes and disguise them with lacquer shoes. This is the image of a Russian lackey, a bastard; a social figure hovering *between* master and commoner, a being that is deeply sick, mangled, upset, but at the same time suffering and tormented, and tormenting others. This just is a *hybrid*, a typical image encapsulating the basic properties of Russian archeomodernity. This feature of the Smerdyakov breed is noted in Dostoevsky by the old servant Gregory, who raised Smerdyakov (as a representative of the traditional archaic Russian society, the Russian *servant* is juxtaposed to the Russian *lackey*). Aware of the pathological nature of the Russian lackey quality, of social Smerdyakovism as an archeomodern metaphysical phenomenon, Gregory insisted even in Smerdyakov’s childhood not to baptize him:

“Because it’s a dragon [...] a mixture of nature has occurred.”¹⁰

. . .

This is an extremely important “*mixture of nature*,” and the “mixture” is pathological, unnatural, aesthetically disgusting and ethically repulsive (Smerdyakov commits patricide in the novel); it is *the formula of Russian archeo-modernity*, a disgusting hybrid of archaism with modernity, carried out to the *detriment* of both components, leading to the perversion and degeneration of both. The old Russian *servant* suspects that the type of the Russian *lackey* who is replacing him carries a colossal *anthropological threat*. Developing the theme of the “dragon,” of the “mixture of nature,” Gregory tells Smerdyakov to his face:

“Are you a human being? [...] You’re not a human being. You grew from the mildew in the bathhouse. That’s who you are.”¹¹

This is not just an irritated metaphor; it is an essential *insight into the field of social anthropology*. Smerdyakov (the Russian [*rossiyskiy*] lackey and prototype of a Russian [*ruskogo*] liberal), is, in the opinion of a typical representative of archaic Russia, “*not a human being*,” “scum,” an evil demonic creature born from “bathhouse mildew” (the models of “bathhouse” and “mildew” used here have an archaic structure and mean something “unclean,” “primordial,” recalling the plot of the dispute between the devil and God in numerous Russian apocryphal legends about the creation of the world, with obvious elements of either ancient Iranian dualism or medieval Bogomilism).¹²

The most important thing is that the degenerate

Smerdyakov is an absolutely *autochthonous Russian degenerate*. His “Westernism” is not the cause of his degeneracy; on the contrary, the his own deep-seated degeneracy pushes him - from awareness of his own pathology and aversion to what is his and to everything around - to worship before the “other,” in this case before Europe, raised to the ideal. In Smerdyakov and in Russian archeomodernity, what is central is not *love for another*, but *hatred toward one's own*. This distinguishes Russian archeomodernity from its colonial and postcolonial counterparts.

In colonial India or slave-owning Brazil, modernity, embodied in the ruling class of European colonialists, was a catastrophe, a disaster that had an external character. And although the colonization gradually penetrated the depths and gave rise to layers of collaborators, imitators, and transgressors, it did not carry in itself a deep split in the consciousness of the people and hatred for its own identity. It was *like a natural disaster* and had no endogenous cultural roots.

The artificial modernization and westernization of the Russians, beginning with Peter I, gave rise to a sense of society's *internal betrayal* of itself, its roots, and it was not possible to explain to the broad masses the “defensive,” “forced” nature of such modernization, perhaps rationally intelligible to elites. (Moreover, it was not clear why it was necessary to “throw the baby out with the bathwater,” to sacrifice identity for the sake of the dubious benefits of technical development). Only a *Smerdyakovistic* understanding of the dispositive of various strategies of self-estrangement reached the masses; a split of consciousness, inner hatred and fastidiousness - first and foremost, toward themselves. Modernity was perceived not as such, but as *a measure of humiliation* — as

that, in comparison with which everything Russian was subjectively presented to Russians as “wretched,” “insignificant,” “shameful,” and “repulsive.” Thanks to this understanding of “modernity” in archeomodernity, its content, like the modernization process itself, is perceived as false and distorted; it *loses* its original content, but *does not acquire* positive and new content, turning into a meaningless and aggravating *pathogenic core*, a source of unceasing *ressentiment*.¹³

At the same time, in the figure of the Russian [rossiyskogo] “lackey-dragon,” *the archaic side significantly mutated*, losing the calm self-identity of the archaic, turning it inside out, losing the internal structure, the structure of myth and custom, ritual and tradition.

The hermeneutic ellipse

Russian culture embarked on the path of the archeomodern from the end of the 17th century, but its first signs appeared even earlier - from the first half of this century. It was then that fundamental changes in church practice became noticeable: the proliferation of polyphony and the partial introduction of the *partes* in church singing, the influence of “fryazh” style - perspectives - in iconography (for example, in Ushakov’s school and *parsuna* painting), and the active imposition of European modes and customs (theaters, smoking, new styles of clothing, etc.). In the church schism, and then in the Petrine reforms, this tendency reached its climax and predetermined the structure of Russian society right up to our time. Since the time of Peter the Great, Russia has been living in archeomodernity, and an appeal to this social model serves as a fundamental hermeneutic base for the correct interpretation of

major cultural, social, political, spiritual and economic events.

Archeomodernity can be likened to an *ellipse* with two foci — the Modern focus and the archaic focus. The processes of modernization (= Europeanization) were developed at the elite level, while the masses remained within the framework of the archaic paradigm in Muscovite Rus'. At their cores, both social groups lived *autonomously* from each other, almost without intersecting, like on two different planets, two different social territories. Costumes, manners, even language differed: after the seventeenth century the elite of Romanov Russia spoke fluent Dutch, English, German, and later French, while they might not know Russian at all: it was superfluous in the everyday life of a nobleman. These two territories represented two types of what Husserl called the "*life world*" (Lebenswelt), two distinct horizons of being and life, structured in a completely different way. The core of the elite was made up of foreigners who served as a benchmark for the Russian aristocracy itself: they were the carriers of a truly European Lebenswelt. The core of the common people was the Old Believers and, in part, representatives of Russian sectarianism, who consciously strove to have as few interactions as possible with the Russian state and "personnel" society (that is, with the Modern).¹⁴ But although these worlds were completely divorced, yet we are dealing *with one and the same society*, even if it consists of the *superposition* of two cultural territories. Moreover, this unity was formalized by *the unity of political, social and economic mechanisms*, affecting everyone in one way or another. Between these two poles, a gradually generalizing figure crystallized, embodying archeomodernity not as a composite, decomposable concept, but as a formless [bez-obraznyy] internalized *pseu-*

dosynthesis. This is our Smerdyakov, “the lackey-dragon.” He was that common denominator that turned two circles with different centers into a *single Russian ellipse*.

And precisely Smerdyakovism, easily discerned in the Russian aristocracy (both among the heroes of Pushkin and Lermontov and especially vividly in the real historical character of Peter Chaadaev), is the *whole* that is the structure of the hermeneutic ellipse of archeomodernity.

The Westernizer focus

In the structure of the hermeneutic ellipse, one can mark the pole that embodied modernization (Modernity) and was part of the destiny of the West. A Western person, even one living in Russia, or an individual Russian (aristocrat), fully integrated into Western society (which is theoretically quite possible), is *part of Western culture*, Western sociality, and, accordingly, *a moment of the logic of the development of Western history*. From the point of view of philosophy (as Martin Heidegger clearly shows), this history was *an expression of various stages of philosophical thinking*. Western society and the stages of its historical formation down to *Modernity* was a reflection of the development of Western philosophy. Therefore, *Modernity* (the New Time [another term for Modernity in Russian]) was *part of Western destiny*, in some sense its *goal*, its “telos.” Modernity matured in Western culture, was embodied in it and spread beyond its borders in Europe’s colonial rush to integrate the world under its principle [*nachalo*] (the era of the great geographical discoveries).

In its pure form the pole of *Modernity* in Russia can well be regarded as the *extreme periphery of the Western European hermeneutic circle*, like the brutish Spanish conquistador lost

in the Amazonian swamps in search of El Dorado.¹⁵ Nikolai Gumilev wrote pathetically about such a figure:

Delving into unknown mountains,
The old conquistador got lost.
Condors were swimming in the smoky sky,
Snow masses were hanging.
Eight days he wandered without food,
His horse died, but under a large ledge,
He found a comfortable home,
So as not to be separated from the dear corpse.
There he lived in the shade of dry fig trees.
Sang songs about sunny Castilla,
Recalled battles and mistresses,
Saw firearms and mantillas.
As always, he was bold and calm,
And he knew neither horror nor anger.
Death came, and the warrior offered her
To play among broken bones.

It is clear that such a “conquistador” is not up for philosophy, but even in inhuman conditions he remains *the bearer of Western European destiny*, which sets Western man in his fundamental and unremovable solitude before the face of the main interlocutor, death, in the structure of an aleatory code, associated with the haphazardness of European Dasein, lost in the labyrinth of the growing *nothing*.

But this existential charge of the real (and not imitational-Smerdyakovite, and in fact, deeply Russian as a result) Western culture at the level of the masses *was not at*

all perceived and deciphered. Therefore, modernization as inclusion in the West European process, the West European destiny, spread to a very limited layer of the Russian political elite. As the representative of an orthodox power seeking (albeit for pragmatic reasons) to preserve sovereignty in the face of other European powers that were ready at any moment to encroach on it, this elite was geopolitically oriented mainly *against* the West both on the periphery of Russian rule in the West (Baltic, Ukraine) and in the South (Crimea, the Caucasus) and the East (Central Asia, and starting from a certain point, the Far East).

These geopolitical circumstances did not contribute to the organic assimilation of the principles [*nachal*] of Western philosophy, even by the Russian aristocracy. The Russian elite developed the archetype of the brave land-snecht who found himself in a strange, incomprehensible and not interesting country, but who was trying to serve it as much as possible for a specific interest.

Schematization of the hermeneutic ellipse

Adopting *archeomodernity* as the basic model for interpreting the features of the mentality of Russian society in recent centuries brings us before the problem of correctly deciphering what the 19th century attempts to build a “Russian philosophy” actually were. A graphic depiction of the hermeneutic ellipse of Russian archeomodernity brings us closer to the main problematic of our research. Consider the following figure.

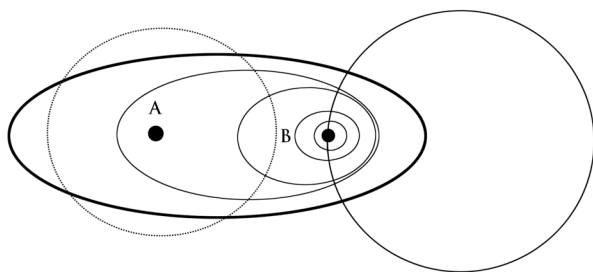


Figure 1. The Russian Hermeneutic Ellipse (Archeomodern)

We see several figures on it. The ellipse itself signifies Russian archeomodernity, which, when superficially analyzed, appears to be something *integral and one*, but is in fact organized around two rather distant (and, most importantly, *qualitatively different*) foci.

The structure of the poles

Focus B (Figure 1) is the focus of *modernity*. The whole secret is that it belongs to *another* really existing, actual hermeneutic circle, the circle of Western European philosophy. That is, the discourse of modernization in Russian society is a provincial and *blind reproduction* of Western European culture, history, and, accordingly, philosophy. At the same time, the focus B itself (Figure 1) has its own *core* and *periphery*. At the core are the *Europeans* who settled (permanently or temporarily) in Russia and retain an organic connection with the hermeneutic circle of Western culture.

First of all, they are either Russian tsars and tsarinas, who married European houses, or ethnic foreigners them-

selves. Naturally, they did not appear on the Russian throne alone, but carried with them from Europe a whole army of relatives, lovers and mistresses, maids of honor, jesters, doctors and a giant personnel serving the imperial personalities who automatically reached the highest levels of power. They were all carriers of the Western European beginning [*nachalo*], which affected them even if they were Orthodox or converted to Orthodoxy in Russia. In the 18th-19th centuries, only form remained of Russian Orthodoxy; the content was fundamentally distorted by various Western Christian influences (Catholic, Protestant, mystical, Masonic, etc.) both from within the new-rite nobles and on the part of the secular elite.¹⁶

The foreigners laid the foundations of Russian academic science, first of all, within the framework of the Petrine Academy of Sciences, whose project was fully implemented under Catherine I. Among them was a whole pleiad of foreign scientists: physicians Blumentrost and Schumacher, historians Miller and Schlözer, physicists D. and N. Bernoulli and Aepinus, mathematician Euler, naturalist Gmelin, academic functionary Tauberg, philologist Bayer, draftsman and art historian Staehlin, etc. To this should be added the foreigners who enlisted in the Russian service in search of ranks and awards. Together, they created the content of pole B (Figure 1), being the true bearers of *modernity*, albeit of a peripheral, colonial “conquistador” type.

Grouped around this nucleus in the form of small concentric ellipses are Russians captured by the process of Europeanization and modernization. These are the representatives of the Russian boyars and especially the nobility, who, for purely practical reasons, strive to win the favor of their Imperial Majesties and are ready to sacrifice the old traditions and foundations to do so. They are also a new

pleiad of Russian scientists (sometimes by origin *raznochintsy*, such as Lomonosov, but quickly rising to the elite), who adopt certain aspects of their thinking from foreigners and form the basis of the Russian intellectual class. In other words, around pole B concentric figures of Russian society – aristocracy, first of all – gradually form.

Moreover, *the further away they move from their foreign core, the more the severity of the structure of Western European thinking is erased in them*, eroded by the pulling influence of the second focus (A) (Figure 1), *the archaic pole*. The erosion of the Western European core is especially noticeable in the Russian *raznochintsy* of the second half of the 19th century, who were close to the common people, though *not only* in them, as indicated by the case of Russian conservatives at the beginning of the same century – Shishkova, Glinka, Magnitsky, Rostopchina, Sturdza, Uvarova – and by the Slavophiles - Khomyakov, Kireevsky, the Aksakov brothers – or by Pushkin, who became interested in folk culture “from above,” from the position of the aristocracy.

The *circles* forming around Focus B (Figure 1), gradually expanding, change shape, *turning into ellipses* as the Russian Beginning [nachalo], Focus A, has an increasing influence on them. We now consider Focus A in more detail.

The archaic focus

Focus A (diagram 1) marks the archaic principle [nachalo] in the hermeneutic *ellipse*. It is this that can be considered as a *potential* center of that hypothetical hermeneutic *circle* (not an ellipse!) that could be called “Russian philosophy,” the possibility of which is the subject of this work. We marked this circle with a dotted line (Figure 1) to emphasize its hypothetical nature. As such it is

not. But whether it can be we will try to find out in the course of our research based on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. In the meantime, it is important to us that in the real structure of Russian society this focus is in a *subordinate* position and corresponds to the broad masses, the people, to what may be called the *archaic principle* [*nachalo*] of *Russian society*. Given this hierarchical subordination, the hermeneutic ellipse of Russian archeomodernity should be positioned vertically.

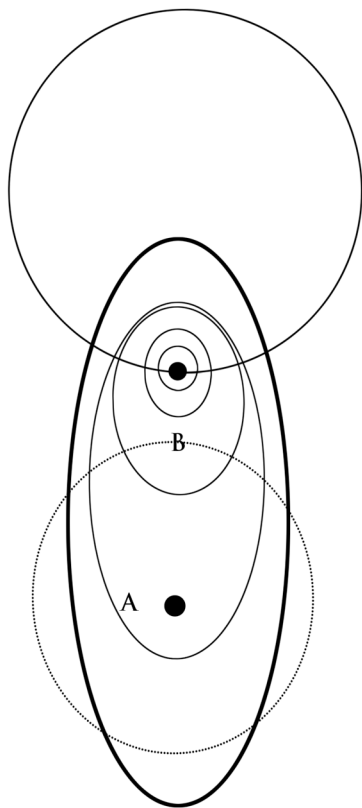


Figure 2. The Russian Hermeneutic Ellipse; Vertical Arrangement Emphasizing the Hierarchical Relationship of the Foci

The final hermeneutic ellipse consists of the extension of the process of modernization and Europeanization, gradually including more and more Russian people. Pole A (Figure 2), the archaic focus, represents a kind of “strange attractor,” the influence of which modifies the general struc-

ture of society and its logos and distorts its proportions, which imitate (as the modernizers think) the hermeneutical circle of Western European culture, science and philosophy. This can be seen especially clearly in the 19th century as the project of the “people’s Enlightenment” spread, when large segments of the simple Russian people fell under Western influence in the basic parameters of their education.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF ARCHEOMODERNITY

Slavophiles and Westernizers: the discovery of archemodernity

The appearance in the first quarter of the 19th century of Russian conservatives (the so-called “Russian party”: Shishkov, Rastopchin, Glinka, etc.) and *Slavophiles* especially can be represented in this diagram as an achievement of the “haughty” Eurocentric ellipse expanding its reach to the points of Focus A (Figure 2) and the first intelligible and conscious intuitions of the Russian intellectual and political elite regarding the fact that Russia is a distinctive and original culture and civilization, not just a “European country.”

It is possible to propose a third figure of the hermeneutic ellipse, which will show an extension of modernization going from Focus B down to the populace and at a certain point contacting the hidden Russian Beginning, focus A (Figure 3), which serves as a center of attraction, distorting by its effect the circle and turning it into an ellipse. The Slavophiles were the historical first to reach this point.

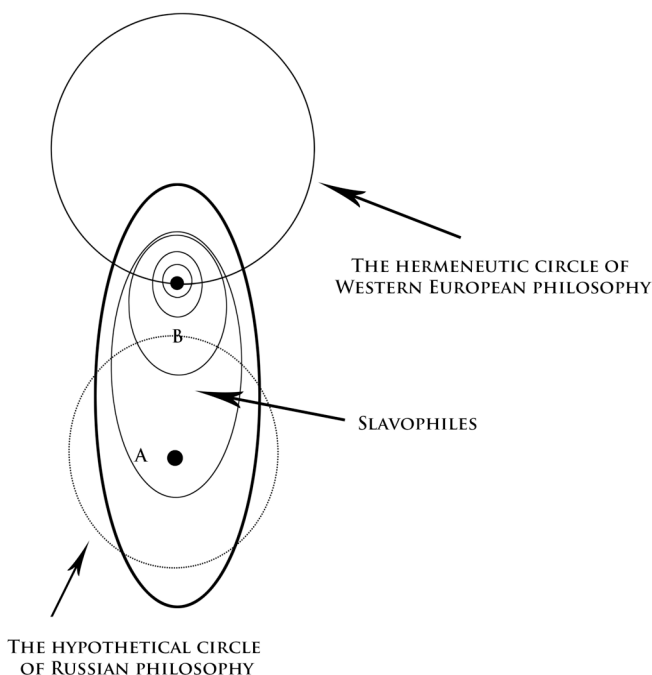


Figure 3. The Russian Hermeneutic Ellipse; Structural Image of the Position of Slavophiles

The Slavophiles were the first to record a *premonition* of the very possibility of Russian philosophy. They did not complete, and even did not really begin the process of its creation, but they asserted *the first intuition* of the *hypothetical Russian hermeneutic circle* (marked with a dotted line in figure 3) in the framework of archeomodernity.

The Slavophiles discovered and showed *the elliptical character of Russian culture*; they approached awareness of

archeomodernity and tried to *overcome* it by turning to a hypothetical “*folk tradition*,” to Holy Rus’, to the Grand Duchy of Moscow, to peasant life and Russian Orthodoxy.

Synchronously with them and in the same cultural, historical and social context, the phenomenon of archeomodernity was also revealed at the *opposite* focus, at point B (Figure 3). The brightest representative of such an autopsy was Peter Chaadaev, a student of the famous conservative philosopher and émigré from France, Joseph de Maistre. Like the Slavophiles, Chaadaev discovered the *pathology* of the Russian ellipse, keenly grasping the ugliness and grotesque distortion of Russian culture, which is the deep periphery of the West and an historical anomaly. But unlike the Slavophiles, Chaadaev saw a different direction in overcoming this state of culture: *complete and absolute integration into the Western paradigm*, that is, *from the Russian hermeneutic ellipse to the hermeneutic circle* of Western European philosophy. Chaadaev suggested clearing archeomodernity of the archaic focus (A) so that Russian culture would be maximally integrated into European culture. In this way, Chaadaev’s analysis of the soreness and inconsistency of the Russian archaeomodern ellipse as a whole coincided with the symmetrical analysis of Slavophiles, but *oppositely evaluated*.

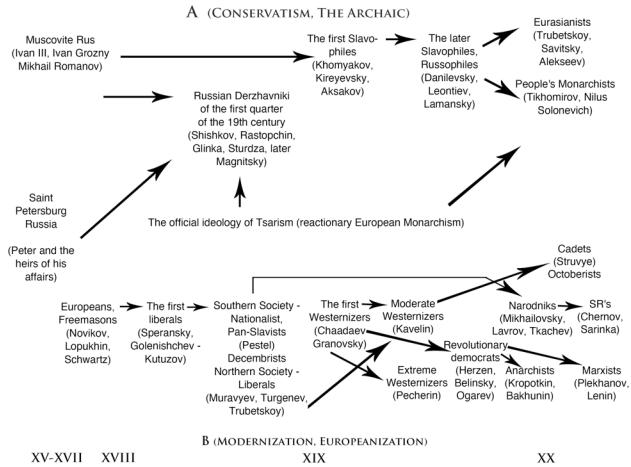


Figure 4. Russia's Ideo-Political Tendencies and the Archeomodern Poles

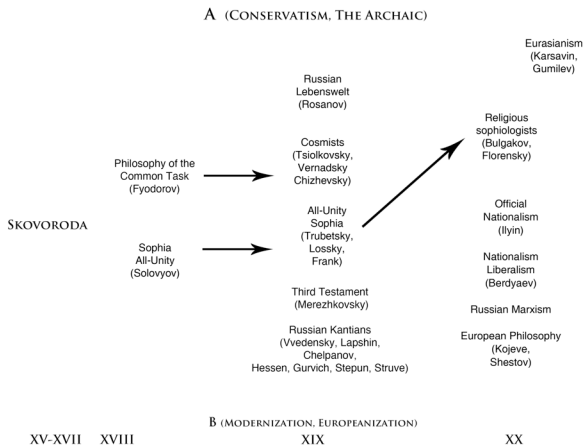


Figure 5. Philosophical Schools and the Archeomodern Poles

Figure 4 shows the main ideological currents of Russia from the 18th to the early 20th centuries in relation to the poles of the hermeneutic ellipse. They constitute the context in which the first attempts were made to create Russian philosophy proper. Purely philosophical tendencies are presented in Figure 5.

Between the Slavophiles, who were interested in Pole A, and the Westernizers, who concentrated on Pole B (Figure 4), the formation of 19th century Russian culture took place, in which for the first time (if we do not count the Skovoroda's imitational attempts in the 18th century) the type "Russian philosopher" arises. This "type" expresses the hermeneutic ellipse of archeomodernity, and it is this peculiarity that constitutes a reliable instrument with which we can make the correct deconstruction of Russian philosophy.

Two Russian Archeomodern Thinkers

Let us take a closer look at two thinkers who were contemporaries of each other and to whom it is customary to apply the concept of "Russian philosopher." They are Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov (1853 - 1900) and Nikolai Fedorovich Fyodorov (1829 - 1903).

Vladimir Solovyov and Nikolai Fyodorov can be regarded as two philosophers, expressing different sides of Russian archeomodernity. Both of them are undoubtedly *archaeo-modernists*; in their works both modernist (Western) and archaic (actually Russian) elements are thoroughly and inseparably mixed. Obviously, neither thinker reflected clearly on them or realized the incompatibility and heterogeneity of these elements. That is, they did not realize the limits in their philosophizing between "Russian" and "non-

Russian.” But at the same time, it can be noted that the Westernization pole (focus B) is more vividly present in Vladimir Solovyov, who spoke as an advocate of Catholicism and the unification of all Christian Churches, while the popular, archaic, irrational, began to make itself felt more in Nikolai Fyodorov.

Moreover, from the point of view of estate origin, Solovyov was a native of the peasants, although later his ancestors followed the spiritual path, and his father, S.M. Solovyov, was an eminent Russian historian, while Fyodorov was the illegitimate son of Count Gagarin. Something initially “Smerdyakovskoye” was in both of them: the Solovyovs made their way from “rags to riches” (from focus A to focus B), and Fyodorov, on the contrary, collapsed “from princes to mud,”¹ into a modest and poor life, named by a false name of a peasant godfather (and not Gagarin), although the family of the real father (in particular, his uncle Konstantin Ivanovich Gagarin) supported him financially at first.

Vladimir Solovyov: On the Margins of European Discourse

In Solovyov’s philosophy, the foci of the Russian archeo-modern hermeneutic ellipse are distinguished quite simply. Located in focus B, the Western European core, are the complex of his *liberal* ideas, the idea of *personality*, the fascination with Western European philosophers, and especially Hegel, and as a religious expression (quite in the spirit of de Maistre or Chaadaev) attachment to Catholicism (still historians are not sure whether the philosopher accepted Catholicism as a confession before his death or died Ortho-

dox). Solovyov's ideological commitment to Catholicism is obvious: the programmatic work "Russia and the Universal Church" leaves no doubt.² These elements of Solovyov's conviction can easily be interpreted as the extreme periphery of the European hermeneutic circle.

This peripherality is expressed not simply in the syncretism of Solovyov's borrowings from diverse sources, although to the extent that Solovyov does, it is simply unthinkable for a truly European thinker: Solovyov appeals simultaneously to rationalism, dialectics, materialism, evolutionism, positivism, scholasticism, and mysticism, and sometimes in its most extreme and dark expressions. Such indifference to the autonomous structure of European philosophical trends, the inability or unwillingness to make a choice and develop one's thought within a single school or several strictly defined schools, deprives Solovyov of any significance for European philosophers. Solovyov's interest in a wide range of mutually exclusive European ideas can be recognized as commendable, but his promiscuousness, haste and feverishness in conclusions and generalizations disqualify him as a philosopher in the European sense of the word, marginalize him, and turn into a "eccentric" and "original."

At the same time, Solovyov's anachronism, his detachment from the problematic with which later twentieth century European philosophy seriously occupies itself, is striking. One gets the impression that the West European era is flattened with him into some indistinguishable lump, and the problems of the Renaissance, scholasticism, the early modern, Romanticism, German classical philosophy, Kantian and neo-Kantian epistemology, early phenomenology, psychology and the latest positivistic and nihilistic

tendencies are considered in the same breath. At the same time, he treats with genuine interest, attention, and faith figures obsolete in the West for many centuries, and Neo-Platonism and Hermeticism, which were at the outskirts or even beyond the limits of philosophy in the 19th century.

Solovyov does not grasp the main point in Western European philosophy: its historical nerve, its logic, what Heidegger called *Gestell*. Western philosophy attracts and repels Solovyov: he gets lost in her labyrinths.

It is not surprising that his teaching did not make a big impression on Western philosophy and did not have a significant impact. De Maistre, Bonald or Cortes expressed in some detail the universality of Catholicism, theocracy and theosophy, while there were plenty of liberal thinkers and humanists, even of the highest quality, in Europe without Solovyov.

The Image of Sophia: Sickness and Insight

But the second side of Vladimir Solovyov's work was much more original. With good reason it can be attributed to the A focus of our hermeneutic ellipse (Figure 4). It is about the *image of Holy Sophia*. In the spirit of the medieval, and not at all modern style of thinking, the idea of "Holy Sophia" comes to Solovyov in a "mystical vision" that, in the framework of 19th century rationalism, could only be regarded as exotic, or even insane. The interpretation of this "vision" or "insight" in quasi-rational theories forms the nerve of Solovyov's theories throughout his life. The exaltation and naivety of these searches sometimes went so far that at one time the philosopher was ready to accept the adventurous occultist and charlatan Helena Petrovna

Blavatsky, who was simultaneously an agent of influence of the Russian special services, as the “incarnation of Sophia.”

Solovyov’s attitude to Sophia was anything but philosophical, in the understanding of 19th century European philosophy. Rather, it resembled the exalted mysticism of Catholic characters like Heinrich von Suso, who had become so accustomed to contemplation of the “female angel” who appeared to him in the air that he wove floral wreaths for his heavenly beloved. In the 14th century, this was already borderline, but in modernity no “serious” philosopher allowed himself such “eccentricity,” with the exception of charlatans, spiritualists and occultists.

Many other of Solovyov’s manifestations in life were on the verge of direct insanity. Asmus writes about some biographical details of his nature with reference to his friend Trubetskoy:

Trubetskoy testifies that Solovyov had “all sorts of hallucinations, visual and auditory; besides the terrible ones, there were comical ones, and almost all were unusually absurd.” Once, for example, while lying on a sofa in a dark room, he heard a sharp metallic voice in his ear, which said: “I cannot see you because you are so surrounded.” In another case, early in the morning, when Solovyov had just woken up, an oriental man in a turban appeared to him. He said “extraordinary nonsense” about the article about Japan just written by Solovyov (“I was driving along the road, reading about Buddhism; here’s Buddhism for you”) and poked him in the stomach with an unusually long umbrella. The vision disappeared, and Solovyov felt severe pain in the liver, which then lasted for three days.

He almost always experienced these and other painful sensations after visions. On that point, the same Trubetskoy once said: "Your visions are simply hallucinations of your diseases." Solovyov immediately agreed with him. But, as Trubetskoy says, this agreement cannot be interpreted in the sense that Solovyov denied the reality of his visions. In his mouth, these words meant that the disease makes our imagination susceptible to such effects of the spiritual world, to which healthy people remain completely insensitive. Therefore, in such cases, he did not deny the need for treatment. He recognized in hallucinations the phenomena of a subjective and, moreover, sick imagination. But this did not prevent him from believing in the objective cause of the hallucinations, which we imagine and project into external reality through the medium of subjective imagination. In a word, in his hallucinations he recognized mediumistic phenomena. No matter how we interpret spiritual phenomena, whatever our view may be on their cause, one cannot but admit that Solovyov experienced these phenomena very often.³

The remark about Solovyov's "absurd hallucinations" is extremely expressive: it emphasizes that Solovyov was the victim of a torrent of uncensored attacks by the unconscious rising directly from the archaic core, not only of his personality, but also of Russian culture itself, of which Solovyov was, of course, an expression.

If we disregard the clinical side of Solovyov's inner life, we can try to give his view of Sophia a rationalized form.

Sophia was for Solovyov the key to the interpretation of the world, an instrument of contradictions of consciousness,

a route to overcome opposites in various fields. He did not give a clear definition of this figure, and could not give one, since it reflected the structure of his irrational intuition, being a symbol of the *universal feminine principle*, applied in some situations to the Divine itself. Of course, Solovyov did not invent this image on his own. In the traditions of the Western European mystics, we encounter an appeal to Sophia from Heinrich Suso, Jacob Boehme, Gottfried Arnold, and Goethe; it is present in some places of the Old Testament, and in the patristics. But for modern philosophy and the second half of the 19th century, such a topic looked like a perfect anachronism, which marginalized Solovyov and his teachings even more in the eyes of the representatives of Western philosophy of that time, which was coming to its final conclusions in the style of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. To argue about Sophia in the era of the clear discovery of the essence of Western philosophy as a growing and total nihilism was, at least, strange and untimely.

The appeal to Sophia, absurd in the context of the Western philosophy contemporary to Solovyov, which, undoubtedly, had a significant influence on him, is perfectly explained by the influence of the A focus of the Russian archeomodern ellipse (Figure 3). This is a natural manifestation of the “strange attractor” of the Russian mentality and Russian culture in their archaic dimension, the voice of the archaic, woven into the discourse of modernity. Putting the *irrational* concept of Sophia at the center of a (quasi) rational philosophy, Solovyov, in fact, launches the typical underlying mechanism of archeomodern interpretation: he seeks to explain *the reasonable through the unreasonable, the logical through the illogical, the orderly and structured through the intuitive, chaotic and eluding all clarity*.

Being partly modern and western, in his views Solovyov, in fact, digs deep into the psychological dimensions of Russian culture, plunges into the collective unconscious of the people, submits to the penetrating energies of “*numinosity*,”⁴ that sacredness, that precedes any theology, theories, cults and religions. It is not by chance that the followers of Solovyov, who created the cultural paradigms of the “Silver Age,” somewhat later will decipher this image in this way, and Blok will openly and unequivocally identify Solovyov’s *Sophia* with *Russia*, the Russian soul and the secret national [narodnoy] identity.

Although not a monk or even a regular attendee at religious services, Solovyov remained a virgin throughout his life; virginity, purity, and chastity were at the same time the stem line of his thinking. This is the archaic feature of the radical striving for *integrity*, completeness, the restored androgyne, the will to which is projected not only on the field of ideas, but also on personal practice (something completely unthinkable in libertarian or even formally moralistic modern society). Solovyov seeks “theurgically” to embody his irrational ideal in life and fate and follows this path with all the fanaticism more characteristic of the shaman who performs the sacred transgression, or the Buddhist monk, than of the rationalist thinker.

In *Sophia* and *sophianism*, as a property of *Sophia*, the properly *Russian* in Solovyov is revealed as the layer of worldview that expresses *the archaic experience of a people* who refuses to live in the highly differentiated traumatic structures of the Western modernity and prefer the integrality of a direct and total holistic worldview that precedes the division into strict pairs of mutually exclusive concepts: spiritual-physical, divine-earthly, male-female, rational-emotional, ethical-aesthetic, subjective-objective, etc. *Sophi-*

anism is the slightly “ennobled” name of direct and pre-rational archaism, rooted deep in the soul, several floors below not only the enlightened rationalism of modernity but also the religio-statist Orthodox logos of the Russian Middle Ages.

In the image of Sophia, Solovyov gives free rein to the archaic intuitions of the Russian unconscious, allowing it to spontaneously and almost without censorship make its way to the deep wellsprings of the popular, ancient element, wholly unconscious and irrational, but striving to express itself, to break out of the oppression of the crookedly established logos of Western elites. *This is where the beginning of a properly “Russian philosophy” could have been localized.* After having sensed Sophia as an archaic focus that had previously inspired and directed the intuitions of the Slavophiles (who realized it, however, less clearly, vividly and concentratedly), Solovyov could have attempted to lay the foundation of “Russian philosophy” as a Russian circle itself, and not as an archeomodern, pseudomorphic ellipse. This is also how the steps of his followers, Bulgakov, Florensky, and even the poets and artists of the Silver Age, should be interpreted.

Sophiology is the closest experiment in our history to the goal of *proving the possibility of Russian philosophy*. We can say that on account of this intuition we were closer to the emergence of Russian philosophy, to its actualization, than ever.

But at the same time, Solovyov does not draw all the conclusions from his intuition. In the process of his reflections, he constantly goes astray on Westernism, looks to express his insights with philosophical concepts, judgments and theories completely inconsistent with their archaic

nature. Not fully understanding the “luminous dimension” of Russian existence that he himself has discovered, he hastily tries to reconcile it with European theocratic utopias of a completely different nature and character, and, most importantly, that belong to a radically different philosophical circle. Thus, Solovyov remains archeomodern.

All-Unity as flight from philosophy

Another key point of Solovyov’s reflections is the thesis of “all-unity.” It also represents an echo of the deep archaic intuition about the “cohesiveness”⁵ of all oppositions and differences.

“All-unity” is not “monotheism” in the Christian sense. It is also not the materialistic monism of modern science. It is a form of self-perception of the intentional (in the sense of Brentano and Husserl), pre-philosophical, prelogical principle [*nachalo*], which calms the neurosis of rational distinctions and pacifies a person in the element of gentle motherly darkness. But Western European philosophy in its basic sources is founded precisely on a radical and irreversible break with such an “infantile,” “female” state and experience, on the adoption of the heroic and masculine position of an eternally discriminating and therefore deeply tragic reason as its only destiny. Solovyov’s all-unity is anything but philosophy, since it reflects not just non-philosophical, but counter-philosophical experience, expressing the circumstances under which philosophy as such cannot arise. The most that philosophy based on the principle of unity appeals to is the final reconciliation or transcendence of pure being that lies beyond the horizon of philosophy as its unattainable source, goal, hypothesis, premise. Non-all-

unity is an absolute condition of philosophy. If Solovyov would have clearly realized this and would have been able to match the thesis of unity, as well as the thesis of Sophia, with the Russian Pole, then he would reach a highly important, perhaps decisive argument. - If we think "sophially," if we think "all-unity" starting from "all-unity," in a word, if we think in the Russian way [по-русски], then we find ourselves in a zone strictly contrary to the basic principles of Western European philosophy, and not only its separate branches (past or modern), but its own fundamental architecture, including Western religious philosophy (both Christian and pre-Christian). This would be insight into the possible philosophy of the Mother, organized completely differently than the philosophy of the Father. But Solovyov interprets this extremely important intuition in an unfavorable way, trying through the "stickiness" ("glichenoidism" in psychiatry) of consciousness to artificially combine the West, which he understands poorly, with Russia, which he acutely feels but cannot adequately translate to the level of thinking. When Solovyov talks about the East, it turns out to be a caricature drawn from European philosophical feuilletons: Europe does not understand the East, does not know it and is not really interested in it, considering it by default the "not fully [nedo] West," in the same spirit as the Greeks considered all non-Greeks to be "barbarians," not only speaking other languages, but not speaking at all, releasing a set of meaningless sounds; that is, as some kind of "animals."

At times, for instance in the article on "Three Forces,"⁶ Solovyov comes closer to understanding the peculiarity of the Russian idea, its difference from the Western (and Eastern); that is, he stands close to "Russian philosophy," the contours of which he seems to already distinguish. But here

he again slips at once into pseudo-Western universalism, conservative European projectionism, promiscuous and unreasonable liberalism. Speaking about the fact that the Russian people has a “universal mission,” he describes it as the mission of the “builder” of the Universal Church, meaning by this the unification of Christianity under the auspices of the Pope.⁷ And so it is everywhere.

In a word, Solovyov remains captive to the archeo-modern and as a whole leaves behind a simulacrum-heritage. Taken as it is, it only exacerbates the archeo-modern and strengthens the hopelessness of the hermeneutic ellipse. Focus B (Westernism) in this ellipse blocks the development of Focus A (the possibility of the Russian hermeneutic circle, that is, Russian philosophy itself), but Focus A (Figure 4), in turn, takes revenge on and sabotages rationality through the active and frequent intrusions of the uncensored unconscious, distorting the orderliness of logical structures, turning thinking into a farce and reforms into a disgrace. As such, Solovyov’s “philosophy” is a misconception. But if we manage to separate and isolate the actual Russian, archaic, deep, “numinous” moment from it, if we manage to unravel the snares of Westernism and rescue *the element of Russian Sophia* from them, then we can decipher the most important message that it contains. And in this case it will turn into a most valuable fragment of the new, only possible (or impossible: it remains to be determined) Russian hermeneutic circle (not ellipse) itself.

Nikolai Fyodorov and the “Dead Fathers”

Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov,⁸ Solovyov’s contemporary, is also an archeomodern philosopher. *He does not so much think as rave*, but in a slightly different mode than

Vladimir Solovyov. It is significant that he lived his whole life as a secular virgin, not as a monk and not as a pious Christian, but rather as a shaman, squeezing out from his askesis flashes of numinous visions and intuitions. If Vladimir Solovyov contemplates the mystical Sophia, then Nikolai Fyodorov *resurrects the dead*. If we turn to our hermeneutic ellipse, here we are clearly dealing with focus A (Figure 3), with a vivid expression of the archaic principle. That the dead are alive, that they haven't gone anywhere and live next to us, is a deep, radical *intuition of the archaic consciousness*. In the form of theological hope for the events of the end times, it is present in the developed and highly differentiated Christian doctrine. But Fyodorov clearly does not have that in mind, but rather the haunting, *archaic practice of ecstasy*, during which the dead are not raised by God, nor by transcendental power, but by means of immanent, purely human, methods and procedures present here and now. He's talking about a kind of *necromantic theurgy*, practiced in some Neoplatonic schools (e.g. Iamblichus and his followers from the Syrian and Pergamon schools of Neoplatonism). At the same time, Fyodorov intended to use the latest achievements of the exact sciences for the resurrection of the dead, research in the fields of chemistry, magnetism, physics, etc. Further, the development of science was necessary, according to Fyodorov, to explore the cosmos after the whole place on earth was filled with the resurrected dead. In addition, the importance of the development of spacecraft was dictated, in his opinion, by the fact that "particles of the dead" could fly into space, and humanity must find them and bring them back. At the same time, completely in the manner of the *skopty*, he advocated the rejection of the "Cult of Wives" (that is, of natural birth) and

of food (since “food contains particles of dead ancestors”). People must learn to control natural and atmospheric phenomena and after that they will be able to fly wherever they want.

With such ideas, in the sober and rational Western world one could only claim to be in a psychiatric clinic and not to be a philosopher. In Russia, the “philosopher” is more than a philosopher, and Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Platonov and Shaginyan, Tsiolkovsky and Vernadsky admired Fyodorov, as did the left (Parisian) Eurasians (Karsavin, Efron, Suvchinsky).

Fyodorov’s psychopathology could have become a pole of pure archaism if he had been able to find exact formulas for it in the direct experience of Russian life [being]. In this case, it would *not be a pathology but a therapy* individualizing the submerged energies that accumulate in the Russian collective unconscious and strive to break free. The fact that the dead are alive (and, accordingly, the living are dead) is an expression of *the deep intuition of the “whole,”* the numinous perception of the human as an *eidos*, as an archetype, scattered into many singularities, but retaining its identity in the special ontological and anthropological dimension. If the world of the act is the decay of totality and the dismemberment of the *eidos*, then the human soteriological task is to restore this lost unity, to recreate it, to put the fragments together, to revive what only seems to be dead. This impulse carries in itself convoluted versions of temporality, the idea of qualitative space, and an insight into “being-toward-death” and the pure element of “care” (if we use the existentials of *Dasein* identified by Heidegger).

In a word, Fyodorov, like Solovyov, comes close to the pole of the Russian arche, so that at a certain moment it

seems that he is about to short-circuit the mechanisms of the archeomodern and set sail in the free ocean of pure Russian delirium, isolating the structures of the unconscious and thereby, in turn and for its part, to approach the constitution of Russian philosophy.... But...this does not happen, and Fyodorov, imperceptibly to himself, slips into the discourse of Westernized modernism, begins to talk about progress, the value of the museum and the development of technology, the ability to control the weather and build perfect machines. Unable to withstand the attacks of the elements of the unconscious in himself, under the influence of the censorship of the nobility side of his genetics, Fyodorov again and again breaks off into pseudo-rationalism, praises Western science and combines the impending resurrection of the dead with the achievement of the technical genius of "enlightened humanity." And the combination of deeply irrational (purely Russian) intuitions with scattered fragments of Western European rationalism (even more peripheral and ridiculous than Solovyov's philopapism) significantly devalues Fyodorov's texts, giving his teachings the property of a painful and contradictory pathological stream of consciousness.

And again, as with Solovyov, taken as it is Fyodorov's legacy represents a repulsive trash heap of judgments, remarks, and fragments, parodying the process of philosophizing (not only Western, but also Eastern – for example, Chinese or Hindu, where necessarily there is logic and order, albeit different from the Western European variant). Fyodorov's thought fits completely into the hermeneutic ellipse. But if, having overcome our squeamishness, we try to understand it more deeply, like in the case of Solovyov, we will find there the clearly distinguishable presence of

focus A (Figure 3), individual insights and points related to a possible “Russian philosophy” that did not become actual in this case.

The two most representative Russian thinkers of the 19th century - Vladimir Solovyov and Nikolai Fyodorov - are monuments to *how* Russian philosophy failed; how archeomodernity managed to tame and render bloodless, pervert and ultimately destroy the awakening Russian thought.

And again, this can be treated in two ways: observe *the failure* or, on the contrary, see the flickering *confirmation of this very possibility*. If something gravitated toward taking place, but did not take place, maybe it will *take place sometime later*, in new conditions and at a new historical turn (wherever it leads - to the abyss or to heaven, and even if it would be a turning in one place, a spinning top, “driven by a demon.”

The Silver Age and Sophiology

The intuitions of Solovyov and Fyodorov formed the basis of the cultural paradigm of the Silver Age. Sophiology and the doctrine of “all-unity” were developed by the followers of Vladimir Solovyov: S.N. Trubetskoy, E.N. Trubetskoy, S.L. Frank, N.O. Lossky, P.A. Florensky and especially S.N. Bulgakov, who tried give it the most systematic expression.

Sophiology had a tremendous impact on the Russian symbolic poets and acmeists (V. Bryusov, A. Blok, A. White, N. Gumilev, A. Akhmatova, I. Annensky, Vs. Ivanov, F. Sologub, Z. Gippius, K. Balmont, S. Gorodetsky, N. Kuzmin, O. Mandelstam), as well as the artistic, theatric and literary circles close to them. All cycles of Blok’s poetry can be inter-

preted as the poetic unfolding of the intuition of Sophia, opening up either in the image of the Beautiful Lady, or in the form of Virgin Russia.

One way or another, V. Rozanov, N. Berdyaev, D. Merezhkovsky, M. Gershenzon and almost all Russian philosophers commented on the sophiological theme.

The Leaders of Russian Sophiology: Bulgakov and Florensky

Sergei Bulgakov and Pavel Florensky are a special case in this chain. Both are classical carriers of archeomodernity: their personal fate, ideas, and intellectual path fit perfectly into the hermeneutic ellipse. In both, we find fluctuations between extreme modernism (Bulgakov's early Marxism, Florensky's rapprochement with the Bolsheviks) and extreme forms of the archaic (the sophiology and *imyaslavie* characteristic of both). In addition, Florensky created the "doctrine of imaginary geometry" in the early 1920s,⁹ on the basis of which he ingeniously proved the validity of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic geocentric cosmology of Dante and the error of Copernicus, and he did this on the basis of Einstein's theory of relativity, the experiments of Michelson and Morley, and the mathematics of G. Riemann and F. Klein.¹⁰ It is indicative that in his youth he was significantly influenced by the personality of Archimandrite Serapion (Mashkin), an extravagant, exalted, and contradictory, figure, suffering from alcoholism and insanity, who combined various extremes: love for the French Revolution and calls for tough theocracy, opposition to secular authorities and apologetics for secret political killings, etc. (a typical case of Russian archaeomodernity in its clinical form).

The figures of Bulgakov and Florensky are extremely

demonstrative in the sense that the problem of the *compatibility of Russian philosophizing with Orthodoxy* is seriously raised for the first time in their creative searches. Therefore, an analysis of their theories leads right up to a very important topic: *what place does the Orthodox tradition and Orthodox dogma occupy in the general structure of Russian archeomodernity.*

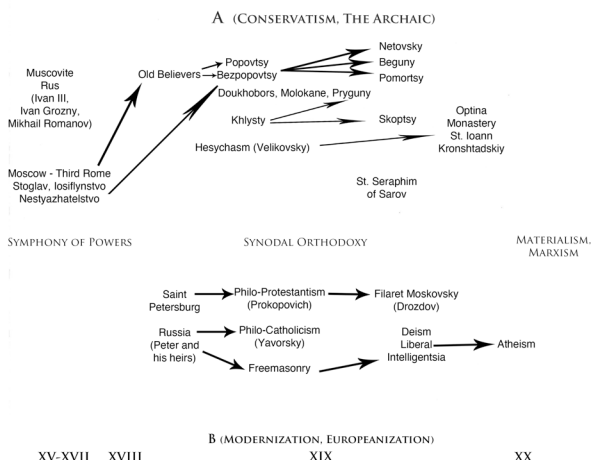


Figure 6. Russia's Religious Forms and the Archeomodern Poles

From the very beginning, it should be emphasized that we are talking about *New Believer* Orthodoxy, that is, about that religious form that became official and dominant in the Russian Empire after the schism of the 17th century (see figure 6). It is precisely from this moment that the history of the Russian archeomodern and, accordingly, the establishment of a hermeneutic ellipse with two foci should be counted.

The Slavophiles made the first attempts at a philo-

sophical comprehension of the Russian Orthodox tradition. But in their approach, Orthodoxy *in general* was perceived as something related to Russian identity, that is, to pole A of our ellipse (figure 3); they did not go into theological nuances. Vladimir Solovyov focused more concentratedly on understanding the religious and dogmatic principles of Christianity, but, as we saw, he did not find anything better than to turn to ecumenical Catholicism (the influence of pole B in figure 6). In the work of Bulgakov, who at a certain point accepted the priesthood, and in the case of Father Florensky, who became a priest even earlier, we see serious attempts *to systematically comprehend the Orthodox theological problematic* and raise the question of its relationship with both Christian dogma in general and modern philosophy and science.

One circumstance is extremely important in this initiative. Under the influence of sophiology and the image of Sophia, Bulgakov and Florensky already by virtue of this gravitated toward the *archaic* pole of the hermeneutic ellipse, and, therefore, in their theories, one can trace how this *intuitively demarcated* pole manifested itself in connection with church dogma. The *seriousness* of the intentions of both thinkers and their unquestionable theological *competence* are a reliable basis for using their example to trace the deep features of the archeomodern itself in its interaction with the Orthodox faith. And here the fate of Bulgakov's and Florensky's ideas and teachings is extremely revealing far beyond the boundaries of the individual fate of these philosophers.

If the theological declarations of Solovyov, and especially Fyodorov, are still difficult to consider as something coherent and systematized, then the views of the two repre-

sentatives of the next generation are a much more serious phenomenon.

Bulgakov and Florensky: The Attempt to Think in Russian Way

Sergei Bulgakov and Pavel Florensky were deeply Russian people, both from the small county clergy. Bulgakov (1871-1944) was born in the Oryol region in Livny, and Florensky (1882-1937) in the Elizabethan province (in the territory of present-day Azerbaijan). Florensky's mother was an Armenian from a noble family (Saparovs / Saparyan). Both were people of outstanding intelligence and multifaceted abilities, having mastered many scientific disciplines, including mathematics, economics, etc. Throughout their lives, both were engaged in philosophy, especially related to the religious and dogmatic issues of Christianity.

We can assume that Bulgakov and Florensky set themselves the task, developing the ideas of Solovyov, whom they considered their teacher, to build *something like Russian philosophy*, based on the Russian pole itself (focus A (Figure 3)) that the Slavophiles and Solovyov had sensed, with conscious *rejection* of the Western pole, both modern and historical. Carried away at one time by Western philosophical theories and even Marxism (Bulgakov in his youth was one of the most prominent representatives of the radical Marxist intelligentsia and wrote a number of serious works on political economy in a socialist and even communist spirit), they gradually and consciously abandoned them, focusing on attempts to build something *fundamentally new*, related to the peculiarity of Russian culture and Russian society. In this, they went further than Solovyov and Fyodorov, continuing, to one degree or another, the tenden-

cies of attempts by Russian people to independently think for themselves and comprehend their society and their history, outlining their new horizons.

Bulgakov and Florensky saw Russian Orthodoxy as the point *that most fully represents Russian identity and the deep foundations of the Russian mission*, and, therefore, *they identified to some extent the archaic pole of Russianness* - focus A (figure 6) - *with Orthodox tradition and Orthodox theology*. At one point, Bulgakov publicly announced that philosophy was not able to give real answers to the main questions and that truth should be sought exclusively in the bosom of church dogma. In accordance with this, he took a church rank. Figure 4 above will help understand how much that accords with the reality.

However, in this case, Bulgakov and Florensky were by no means content with simply *reproducing* church canons and dogmas: they tried to understand them, comprehend them, perceive them anew, freshly and passionately, as a fundamental life- and philosophical program. In fact, they recognized in Orthodoxy and Orthodox teaching *the possibility of Russian philosophy* that we are exploring in this work. They worked out this hypothesis about the identity of a possible Russian philosophy, the Russian hermeneutical circle, with Orthodox dogma, seriously and thoroughly. Therefore, the results of their labors are of enormous importance to us.

Sophia, Hesychasm and Imyaslavie

The starting point in their theories should be recognized precisely as the thought of Sophia - sophiology. You could even say that *they considered Orthodoxy through sophiology*, and not vice versa. This is fundamental; it allows you to

clearly identify in their motivation the *archaic principle* itself, breaking through to the surface from under the tightening and painful fetters of focus B, imitating European rationalism (figure 4).

The attention of the sophiologists in Orthodoxy was focused on the *Neoplatonist* line - the mystic Areopagiticus, the teachings of the Cappadocian fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Maximus the Confessor), the Hesychast tradition (St. Simeon the New Theologian), and especially the teachings of St. Gregory Palamas about “divine energies.” In all these sections of Orthodox theology, sophiologists singled out the idea of the direct connectedness of the created world and the Divine world, their inextricable combination, the saturation of nature and human life with angelic and divine powers. This was the core of sophiology, to identify in the valley world the reality of the presence of the highland world, to discover the transcendence of the immanent in all surrounding things, down to the lowest and most ordinary, bodily and “profane,” and to experience it in an impassioned and direct sacred (numinous) experience. The doctrine of St. Gregory Palamas, who formulated the main points of Hesychast mysticism, philosophically emphasized the presence in the Divine Trinity along with the three Persons (hypostases) of *non-hypostatic* “energies” (literally, “actions”) that pour out of it forever – both when Creation is, and when it is not. Moreover, their outpouring is not strictly connected with the “housebuilding” (“economy”) of each of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, with the housebuilding of the Father (creation), the housebuilding of the Son (salvation) and the housebuilding of the Holy Spirit (comfort, fulfillment); but at the same time they participate in all these housebuildings, just as the Persons of the Trinity

themselves, being One, participate in the housebuilding of each of Them. The doctrine of “divine energies” was developed by St. Gregory Palamas in the course of his polemic with opponents of the Hesychast practice of “smart doing” [*umnoe delanie*] and contemplation of the Light of Tabor, first with Barlaam of Calabria (teacher of Petrarch, Uniate and Platonist, who converted to Catholicism at the end of his life and ended his days in the West as bishop), later with Akindynos and Nicephorus Gregoras. Palamas proved the “uncreated nature” of the Light of Tabor, which was revealed to the apostles at the time of the Transfiguration of Christ, and insisted that with the help of monastic spiritual practices - the creation of the Lord’s prayer, special contemplations based on the immersion of the mind in the heart, immobility - one can comprehend the vision of this Light of Tabor even today. After complex and diverse events, proceedings weighed down by political collisions between the two Byzantine dynasties - the Kantakouzenos and Palaiologos - the Byzantine Church recognized the teachings of Palamas as strictly corresponding to Orthodox dogmas, and after his death he was canonized and elevated to the rank of saints; his opponents were condemned and deposed.

In this, sophiologists saw the possibility of interpreting Holy Sophia as a personified image of the “divine energies” of the Hesychast doctrine, interpreting them as an additional way of connecting the world with God in relation to the three main “economies.” The teachings of Palamas were given extreme expression in the movement of the so-called “name-worshippers,” which began in 1907 with the publication of the book of the schemamonk Hilarion (born Domrachev) *On the Mountains of the Caucasus*,¹¹ where he described the experience of hesychast practice and espe-

cially emphasized the significance of the Lord's Prayer, capable of working miracles. In his simple and straightforward narrative, this elder, among other things, argued that the miraculous power of this prayer was that "*God himself is contained in the name of God.*" This theory was regarded as a creed in St. Andrew's monastery on Mount Athos by the monk Antony (Bulatovich), adopted by many in the St. Panteleimon Monastery and captivated a large number of Russian monks in Russia and, more broadly, representatives of the Russian intelligentsia. Bulgakov, Florensky, and the philosopher Losev also joined the "name-worshippers." Despite the fact that this teaching was recognized as heresy, and the Russian monasteries on Mount Athos had to be taken by storm in order to eradicate it, Bulgakov remained a supporter of the "*imyaslavie*" even in 1920-30 (in 1953 his book *Philosophy of the Name* was published posthumously in Paris).¹² These theological motives of the Hesychast (Palamite) teachings brought to their most radical conclusions are closely associated with sophiology. With regard to theological problems, the doctrine of Sophia is a consistent desire to overcome the dogmatic abyss constituted in the ontology of Christianity by the dogma of "creation from nothing" and the strict transcendence of God. This differential of the Creator's radical transcendence in relation to creatures is directly related to the structure of monotheism as such, and, from Heidegger's point of view, it is the essence of Plato's teachings on ideas and the main distinguishing feature of Western European philosophy, which, moving progressively from Plato to Nietzsche, only increases at each stage the gap between the form and the copy (later, the subject and the object) and more and more asserts a referential understanding of the truth. If we accept this position of Heidegger, then we can interpret sophiology as a striving to

enter upon the path of building a philosophy (in this case, religious philosophy) that would be *different* from the main force-line of Western philosophy. In other words, in sophiology we are dealing with the desire to *mediate* the contrast between the Creator and the creature, characteristic of dogmatic monotheism, but at the same time to deviate from the high (and constantly rising) *differential* of the main path of Western philosophy, which inherits this vector also in modern times, although in another post-Christian, bourgeois-democratic, progressive and positivist context.

On the Threshold of the Russian Circle

Here we see an almost conscious, reflective desire to leave the B pole of the hermeneutic ellipse and even, perhaps, to *destroy* this very *ellipse*, forming an independent *circle* of autonomous and original Russian thinking around focus A (figure 3). Orthodox mysticism and Hesychasm, including its extreme form, *imyaslavie*, are seen by sophiologists as quite suitable for this religio-dogmatic platform. *Imyaslavie* comes from a simple theological process: a genuine, ardent faith in the reality of the transcendent principle (God) removes its transcendence, *overcomes* it; on this basis, opponents of *imyaslavie* accused its adherents of “pantheism,” of bringing God down to the world and its elements.

Approximately the same accusations were formulated against the doctrine of Sophia in Bulgakov’s version, since, according to the prosecutors, sophiologists introduce a “*fourth* hypostasis” into the Holy Trinity, Sophia proper, which is something *intermediate* between the uncreated God and the created world. And the appeal to this “hypostasis” is called upon to remove the fundamental model of creationist

referentiality (Creator-Creation). Identification of the name of God (sign, material - sound - symbol) with God himself as a miracle of smart doing, accomplished in the zone of presence of Holy Sophia (the immanent presence of God, by analogy with the Kabbalistic doctrine of the Shekinah or Sufi theories about the “closeness of the Friend”), was for the sophiologists the most important conceptual element, allowing one to select a thought code to substantiate one’s position as far as possible from the dominant Western European rationality. Alexander Blok, who identified Sophia with Russia, was extremely close to the truth: *in sophiology, an attempt was made to ground the possibility of Russian philosophy proper*, relying on a specifically interpreted *hesychast* teaching brought to its logical limits (even going beyond them!)

Here we see that for Solovyov, Bulgakov, Florensky, the name-worshippers, and Fyodorov, an intuition of focus A (figure 3), that is, the archaic core, is closely and inextricably linked with the idea of *immanence*, with the idea of *inclusion*, with the desire at any cost and by any means *to overcome the division in the nature of thinking*, to establish an authority [*instantsiya*] that could serve as a point of *reconciliation of opposites*, here and now. And since in “normal” conditions such duality cannot be overcome, philosophy itself and life itself were enlivened by *eschatological expectations and forebodings*, invested either in the optimism of revolutionary enthusiasm and faith in the “progress” of mankind or in a gloomy interpretation of modernity as the Apocalypse in the spirit of the “Three Conversations”¹³ of the late Solovyov or the last book of Bulgakov “The Apocalypse of John.”¹⁴

Orthodoxy in its mystical core is seen by sophiologists as an expression of this *immanence*, and therefore they logically

support all the tendencies in it that most clearly emphasize the immanence and proximity of the Divine to the world and man.

Russian Questions

Here we come to a very important boundary. The Russian Orthodox Church both in Soviet Russia and abroad reacted to such an interpretation of the Orthodox doctrine extremely warily, and in some cases severely negatively. The name-worshippers were excommunicated and, as we saw, physically defeated (many were imprisoned), and Bulgakov's teachings on Sofia were formally condemned as inconsistent with the dogmas of the Church and the truth. At the same time, Bulgakov himself was neither excommunicated nor even banned from serving. This means that sophiologists, on their way to building Russian philosophy, reached *the border* of what could be acceptable to Orthodoxy (at least in its New Believer form), and even took several steps *beyond* this border. This leads us to an important point: if, we throw away the numerous strata of archaeomodern and Westernist influences among the sophists themselves (Bulgakov at some point in his life was fascinated by Catholicism for a short period of time, and in Paris he was actively engaged in the ecumenical movement, which has little to do with the search for a purely Russian philosophy) and concentrate on their intuitions of focus A (Figure 3), then we will need to re-examine the question *to what extent and in what formulations would the archaic principle of Russian thinking and the Russian philosophy potentially elaborated around it correlate with Russian Orthodoxy?* The fact that there is a certain connection between them is certain. But the formalization of this connection in the form of

sophiological theories shows us the boundaries and limits of this process and attitude.

Let us formulate this problem, taking into account the experience of anathematization and excommunication of sophiological and radical hesychast searches, as follows:

- Is it possible to build Russian philosophy on the foundation of Russian Orthodox dogma without entering the zone of “heresy”?
- Is a possible Russian philosophy compatible with Orthodoxy in general (at least with modern Orthodoxy)?
- Is it necessary to search in the future for that structure that could serve as a transitional module between the intuitions of the Russian focus and ecclesiastical Orthodox dogma?

Such questions, extremely important for a new approach to elucidating the possibility of Russian philosophy, can be raised because of the vibrant and extremely important path that Russian sophiologists took in their tragic and complex fate, which was nevertheless extremely colored by the archaeomodern (from which they essentially did not free themselves).

Konstantin Leontiev: Byzantianism

Slightly distinct from the schools of Russian thought at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries that we have been examining is another Russian philosopher,

Konstantin Nikolaevich Leontiev (1831-1891). From the point of view of philosophical and dogmatic problems proper, he is significantly inferior to Soloviev, Bulgakov, and Florensky, but in a number of ways he differs from them in the direction of greater intellectual sobriety and mental poise. The aestheticism and peculiar dandyism of his early period of creativity indicate that in some form neurotic disorders were far from unknown to Leontiev, although they were apparently less profound than those of other Russian philosophers and did not go into the sphere of psychoses, which, most likely, most of them suffered.¹⁵

Leontiev came from among the Russian district nobility; that is, he was a rare Russian philosopher who belongs to the aristocracy on both sides; not a bastard, not a former serf and not a native of the provincial clergy. That is, according to his initial class and sociological characteristics, Leontiev was initially placed in the zone of proximity to the B focus of the Russian hermeneutic ellipse (Figure 4). Leontiev's early works, mostly literary, are distinguished by liberal aristocratic romanticism and freedom of presentation: their specific libertarian plots served as the reason for their prohibition of publication by the royal censor.

Gradually, a turning point occurs in Leontiev's views. He connects his miraculous recovery from a deadly disease (presumably cholera) with the appearance of the Virgin and decides after the unexpected recovery to become a monk. In 1891, shortly before his death, he took a secret tonsure in the Predtechev skete of the Optina desert under the name "Clement."

Leontiev, who belongs to the late Slavophiles, set himself the task of justifying the originality [*samobytnost'*] of Russian civilization as a completely *independent* phenomenon in comparison with Western civilization. Without delving into

the structure of the popular unconscious and being relatively insensitive to the archaic elements, he tried to give a rational description of what *Russian intellectual and sociological originality* [*samobytnost'*] could be. Leontiev's path is unique in that at all stages of his fate he is characterized by a certain rationalism, which even during the period of fascination with Orthodox mysticism and his entering a monastic path does not change him, keeping him from the direct influence of the archaic pole A (Figure 4) in its various expressions, despite the fact that he was personally acquainted with Solovyov and heatedly argued with him about faith and religion.

Leontiev's type is more reminiscent of European conservatives such as Donoso Cortes or Maurice Barres, who in their youth actively participated in liberal-modern politics and belonged to revolutionary-romantic circles, and later switched to conservative and counter-revolutionary positions. Leontiev traversed a similar route, taking the side of the uniqueness [*samobytnost'*] of Russian civilization consciously and rationally. The structure of the western pole was crystal clear for him; the general logic of Western European culture, which he did not try to "idealize," "reinterpret," or "improve" (like many other Russian philosopher-archaeo-modernists) was clear (within certain limits) but he simply proposed to *completely discard it*, focusing on the search for *Russian culture's own spiritual and intellectual foundations*. We can say that Leontiev performs an extremely important act: he, in fact, breaks with the dominance of the ellipse and offers to consciously and *rationaly* (!) (without the charismatic shamanistic encroachment) erect the building of "Russian philosophy," that is, create an independent *Russian philosophical circle* (not an ellipse). He invests in the possibility of Russian philosophy, albeit grounded by

him from the outside, quite superficially and approximately, all his faith.

But Leontiev from the very beginning was interested not so much in establishing the Russian archaic focus A (Figure 3), although, as we can see, mysticism plays a significant role in his life, as in sketching the periphery of this possible Russian circle, describing schematically its general structure, the Russian *contour*. And in this he does not turn to the West, but *to the East* for the search for inspiration, considering the sociological structure of the Ottoman Empire as a source of inspiration for substantiating his own Russian culture, autonomous from the West. In this Leontiev repeats the historical gesture of Ivan the Terrible's ideologist Ivan Peresvetov, who admired the Ottoman society back in the 16th century (his famous formula, which claimed that Russia needed "Turkish justice and Christian faith"). Leontiev establishes the similarity and proximity of the imperial culture of the Turks with the Russian Empire and notes that, purely theoretically, a society with its own social structure, culture, philosophical tradition and religious principles, which does not have direct intersections with the fate of the West and follows its own logic, may well exist. Imperial Turkey, where he served as consul for some time, becomes evidence for Leontiev that it is possible to create and maintain for centuries a social order, fully developed and competitive from all points of view, *in complete isolation* from the Western European cultural tradition. If this is possible in the present and was possible in the past, then why not take it as a model and build on this basis *a project for a future social system*, entirely based on Russian values, traditions, principles and beliefs, regardless of whether they are Western European standards or not?! In essence, Leontiev calls for the history of civilizations to be considered *plurally*,

justifying the possibility of the existence of *several* parallel historical and cultural models, each of which flows from its own sources and follows its own paths, colliding and intersecting, but not imposing universal development paths on each other.

Leontiev did not go very far in describing what *exactly* the structure of Russian civilization and, accordingly, Russian philosophy could be. He only singled out, as its basis, *Orthodoxy restored in its original cultural and traditional parameters*, which he proposed in the sociological sense to identify with *Byzantism*.¹⁶ In the spirit of Byzantism, he demanded to revive the spiritually laden (with a historical mission) autocracy, to increase the role of the Church and Orthodox traditions in public life. At the same time, in rejecting of the West, and especially the modernizing tendencies inherent in it in the spirit of *bourgeois democracy*, he proposed to go all the way, to the point of supporting the anti-capitalist initiatives of socialism, which he intended to unite with the monarchy. In his case, such a combination was not archeomodern, but something directly *opposite*, a radical and consistent *rejection of Westernism*, expressed in that period by the main sociopolitical and philosophical paradigm, liberal democratic *capitalism*.

Leontiev took seriously the possibility of building an original Russian society beyond the dead-end of pathological archeomodernity and formulated several starting points from which he urged that this initiative be implemented.

During his life, and even after his death, Leontiev's ideas did not arouse much enthusiasm in Russian society and did not receive proper development. His attempt to break out of the archeomodern ellipse to the Russian hermeneutic circle itself was a solitary one and was not picked up by anyone. Nevertheless, it is invaluable. In Leontiev, unlike the sophi-

ologists, we are not interested in intuition, but in fully *rational* cultural and socio-political statements and anticipations of the description of a coming distinctive Russian society based on completely *logical* structures, although this logic is fundamentally different from European one. Leoniev does not so much reveal the unconscious core (focus A, Figure 3) as outline, albeit in a fragmentary way, the *contours* of a possible Russian philosophy, which he designates as *Byzantism*.

At the same time, though convincing sociopolitically and tempting from a philosophical point of view, this initiative does not tell us anything about the problems of correlating a possible Russian philosophy with the dogmatic content of the Orthodox tradition. Therefore, the proposal of a conscious rational affirmation, restoration, and acceptance of the fullness of the Orthodox tradition and, accordingly, *mystical theology*, does not give a definitive answer to the question: to what extent and in what form is this possible from the point of view of the ruinous justification of the Russian original identity. And the fate of the sophiologists and sophiology revealed how many difficulties exist along this path.

Danilevsky: The Slavic historical and cultural type

Another Russian thinker belonging to the late Slavophiles was Nikolai Yakovlevich Danilevsky (1822-1885). Danilevsky came from a line of high-ranking aristocrats. His father was a general. He was not a professional philosopher, focusing primarily on natural science, in particular, botany. In his fundamental work *Russia and Europe*,¹⁷ Danilevsky approaches the fundamental position of *the plurality of civilizations* or, as he puts it, "*cultural-historical types*." Separating

Western civilization and, accordingly, Western European philosophy into a separate *Romano-German* cultural-historical type, Danilevsky not only relativizes the humanistic [classical, *gumanitarnuyu*] paradigm of Western culture, but describes the natural sciences of the West as a product of regional, *local* development, which has rather limited (and by no means universal) applicability. Danilevsky proves this point in detail in his work on criticism of Darwinism.¹⁸

From Danilevsky's point of view, the Romano-Germanic cultural-historical type is *only one of possible models of spiritual development*. Other cultures and peoples are able to create, and created repeatedly in antiquity, cultural-historical types based on *completely different* assumptions and value principles. Each of the cultural-historical types has its own limited geographical area of distribution and its own historical time cycle, within which this type develops. Therefore, instead of the idea of universal unidirectional *progress*, it is necessary to switch to a cyclical understanding of history and to measure it with a series of local *cycles* coexisting side-by-side and sometimes interacting with each other. The prototype of this approach can be seen in the works of the Italian philosopher and historian Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), and two centuries later very similar theories are formulated by the German philosopher Oswald Spengler in his famous work *The Decline of the West*,¹⁹ followed by the English historian Arnold Toynbee.²⁰

As applied to our figures (Figure 1 and Figure 3), the approach proposed by Danilevsky can help to clearly distinguish the Western European hermeneutic *circle* in the hermeneutic *ellipse* - not as an *organic* part of the ellipse, but as an external, extraneous, *foreign structure* that can be isolated, separated and placed into the corresponding *Romano-Germanic context*. In other words, the West

European hermeneutic circle as a Romano-German cultural-historical type can be considered as *one of* the possible (and real) versions of philosophy *alongside others*.

Danilevsky named ten cultural-historical types as valid and historically actual. Nine of them belonged to other spiritual forms and had a distinctive structure, different from the European cultural type, thereby proving the need for a *plural* understanding of culture and civilization. At different historical moments, each of the cultural-historical types is in different phases of historical development, so some of them disappeared, some continue to exist, some are on the rise, others are in decline. In addition, besides the actual, already established cultural-historical types, new formations may well arise and develop. Danilevsky believed that before our eyes a new cultural-historical type was being formed with a center in Russia, which he called "*Slavic*."

Thus, Danilevsky made a most important discovery: he *sociologically* substantiated the possibility of Russian philosophy on the basis of the Slavic language and special cultural values, which, unlike other cultural-historical types, *had not yet received a complete and final formulation* and were in an embryonic state. Danilevsky does not specify in detail what the structure of the Slavic cultural-historical type is, limiting himself only to general descriptions. But from a philosophical point of view, he accomplishes a great deal, allowing us to identify the Romano-Germanic cultural type as a hermeneutical circle, *artificially, violently and externally imposed* on Russian society and *imposed on it as "universal," while in reality* it is the product of a geographically external and temporally limited structure. In other words, Danilevsky's theory describes *the methodology* on which the construction of the future Slavic cultural type should be based, taken as a *project*, the implementation of which is

impossible without a preliminary liberation from the groundless pretensions of Westernism to universality, that is, *without the liberation of Russia from Europe and European influence*.

The lack of elaboration of the topic of the positive content of the Slavic cultural-historical type and the approximate formulations do not diminish the importance of Danilevsky's ideas: according to his own conviction, in the case of the Slavic cultural-historical type, we are not dealing with something already existing, completed and fulfilled, but only with *the initial stage of the process* of its formation, which can go along a variety of trajectories. If one can say something about *the roots and seeds* of this structure being developed (which includes, of course, Orthodoxy, the characteristic features of Russian folk life and certain milestones in history, for example, the centuries-old struggle against Europe and its military, political and cultural aggression), *it is impossible to say anything definite* about the nascent phenomenon itself. In other words, Danilevsky outlines *the sociological field* for the emergence of Russian philosophy and stops there without specifying the content and structure of this phenomenon, since so far it is only a matter of justifying the possibility. And Danilevsky copes with this (sociological) task perfectly.

From a philosophical point of view, Danilevsky's theories also have the merit that they make it possible to strictly identify *the western component* in the archeomodern complex and *to bracket it*. In the paradigmatic scheme of the hermeneutic ellipse (Figures 1, 3, 4), this can be interpreted as *a call to extract from the structure one of the foci, focus B*. This, according to Danilevsky's plan, should naturally lead to the normalization of the hermeneutic situation and the gradual creation of an organic Russian hermeneutic circle

around focus A, which will no longer be subject to artificial pressure from the second focus that turns the circle into an ellipse.

Danilevsky, like Leontiev, does not penetrate into the essence of pole A intuitively. He does not give vent to the archaic principle in his works, but describes the possibility of Russian philosophy from the outside, sociologically. On the whole, Leontiev and Danilevsky, probably came closer than other Russian thinkers to *dismantling the archeomodern*, set out the conditions and described the methods of this dismantling, pointed to the historical, sociological and cultural context in which it should be carried out, and formulated the initial settings (the boundary conditions and preliminary hypotheses) regarding what value reference points should be laid in the foundation of the organic Russian hermeneutic circle.

The Eurasianists and the Russian Cause

The next stage, continuing the tradition of Leontiev and Danilevsky, was the work of the Russian Eurasians of the 1920s and 30s: Trubetskoy, Savitsky, Alekseev, Vernadsky, Ilyin, Suvchinsky, Khara-Davan, Bromberg, etc.. Except for the followers of Solovyov, the Neoplatonist Karsavin (1882-1952), and Seymon Frank, who was inspired by Solovyov's idea of all-unity and Karsavin's neo-Platonism and sometimes published in Eurasian publications, there were no philosophers among the Eurasianists, but they all contributed one way or another to clarifying the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy.

The Eurasianists developed the approach of Leontiev and Danilevsky, elevating the concept of Russia as *an independent civilization* into a socio-political dogma and world-

view. They gave this meaning to the concept "Russia-Eurasia," which served to emphasize that Russia should be understood precisely in this civilizational sense. In our Figure 1, this corresponds to the call to build a purely Russian circle around focus A.

Continuing Leontiev's Turkophilia and opposing the Western approach of the Slavophiles, Eurasians sought to *push Russia further to the East* (the Eurasian manifesto, written mainly by Savitsky, was called "Exodus to the East,"²¹ and the main book of the founder of Eurasianism, Trubetskoy, was "The Legacy of Genghis Khan"²²) and rethink the significance of Russia's contacts with Asia and, first of all, the role of the Mongol conquests in Russian history. Starting from Danilevsky's concept of the multiplicity of cultural and historical types, the Eurasians identified another cultural and historical type, the "Turanian," characteristic of nomadic Eurasian empires (from Scythians and Sarmatians to Turks and Mongols) and showed its influence on Russian culture and especially on the socio-political and strategic features of Muscovite Russia, which borrowed from the empire of Genghis Khan the most important skills of imperial construction and a number of special sociological features. If for the Westerners these features were arguments for explaining Russia's "backwardness" compared to the West, the Eurasians interpreted them as signs of the peculiarity of Russian civilization, *which there is no reason to be embarrassed by and no need to overcome*. From their perspective, the influence of nomadic Great Steppe societies on the Russian people and Russian society was *more positive* than European influence. Alexander Nevsky's alliance with the Horde contributed to the preservation of Russia from warlike Catholicism, which announced a crusade against the "eastern schismatics" in the 13th century.

At the same time, the “Yasa” of Genghis Khan practiced religious tolerance, which allowed Eastern Russia to maintain a religious and cultural identity, while the Russians in Lithuania, and then in the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom, were stifled by religious and cultural oppression and were gradually turned into second-class people because of their Orthodoxy.

The Horde gave to Russians a will to *the centralization of political power*, a militant steppe ethics, and a taste for creating gigantic continental state formations. The Russians took over the baton of Turan from the Mongols and, after the Horde weakened and collapsed, united all of Northeast Eurasia under their rule, restoring the geopolitical unity of the Turanian territories. However, the Eurasian worldview was directed not so much at a positive reassessment of the cultures of the East and the contribution of the steppe peoples to Russian history, as to justifying the possibility for Russia of an original path of development, confirming its civilizational peculiarity in comparison with the Romano-German world, and criticizing European universalism. In addition, the Eurasians reinterpreted the October Revolution of 1917, recognizing in the Bolsheviks not only “conspirators” and “destroyers,” but *exponents of certain dispositions of the Russian people*, who supported the new government, hoping to overthrow the pro-Western (archeomodern) monarchy, which the Eurasians polemically called nothing else than the “Roman-German yoke” that reigned in Russia since Peter I. According to Savitsky, the Russians are destined to lead the world movement against European imperialism – military, colonial, axiological, cultural, economic, etc. – and to lead cultures and civilizations against those who seek to impose their local criteria and assessments on the world as “universal” and “general.”²³

This is the world-historical mission of the Russians, the *Russian cause*. It was on these strings of the Russian soul, according to the Eurasianists, that the Bolsheviks played with their “internationalism,” “world revolution” and “anti-imperialism.”

As in the case of Leontiev and Danilevsky, we do not encounter breakthroughs and insights among the Eurasians directly on the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy. But they significantly expanded and fundamentalized the sociological, historical, cultural, ideological, political, and geopolitical contexts within which this possibility could be grounded and proved. They did tremendous preparatory work aimed at dismantling archeomodernity and Westernism in Russian society and at accessing creative philosophical activity. But they *did not produce* this activity itself, focusing only on approaches to it. This is explained by the difficult political conditions of residence in exile and the problem of the establishment of a totalitarian Bolshevik regime in Russia, as well as by the fact that archeomodernity still retained its influence on Russian intellectuals, making them again fall into the trap of Westernism in difficult situations, fearing the complex prospects of originating that which, strictly speaking, never existed, *authentic Russian philosophy and Russian culture*.

So, at a certain moment in the internal Eurasian split, the founder of the movement, the linguist Trubetskoy, under the influence of the difficulties faced by Eurasianism, began to speak out that Russian culture nevertheless remains within the framework of the Western European and by no means Eastern tradition (it is curious that his assessments of Indian religions are a typical Eurocentric caricature).²⁴ The archpriest George Florovsky criticized and left the ranks of the Eurasianists in the name of the

“purity of Orthodoxy,” repenting of the “Eurasian temptation,”²⁵ and he ended his journey with a rather unintelligible work on the “Ways of Russian Theology” and participation in the ecumenical movement.²⁶ And in the 1930s the Parisian Eurasianists (Suvchinsky, Efron and Karsavin, who joined them at a certain stage) became too close to Bolshevism and tried to take the ideas of Fyodorov as a surrogate for Eurasian philosophy. All these obvious signs of archeomodernity do not detract from the significance of the Eurasian movement for the topic we are considering. Their ideological course was consistent and extremely valuable, aiming at creating the prerequisites for grounding the possibility of the Russian hermeneutic circle and clearing the rubble of the last centuries of Russian history, including the contradictions contemporary to them of the Soviet period.

Pyotr Chaadaev – Philosophy as Russophobic Practice

Let us briefly consider the thinkers of the opposite camp - Russian *Westernizers*.

Chaadaev most clearly expounds the “smerdyakovistic” program of Russian Westernism in his “Philosophical Letters.”²⁷ Chaadaev is surprisingly perceptive in his description of archeomodernity, and the fact that he smashes it to pieces by relying on Europe as a model and standard does not detract from the significance of its analysis. If you constantly keep in mind the “Russophobic” intention of the author, his admiration for the West as an initial position and do not pay attention to it, then the picture of Russian society Chaadaev draws will be extremely accurate. Here, for example, is a Chaadaev passage about Russian philosophy:

. . .

The primitive peoples of Europe, the Celts, Scandinavians, Germans, had their druids, their skalds, their bards, who in their own way were strong thinkers. Take a look at the peoples of North America, who are eradicated with such zeal by the material civilization of the United States: among them there are people who are amazing in depth. And now, I ask you, where are our sages, where are our thinkers? Who among us has ever thought, who is thinking for us now?²⁸

If you understand this passage literally, it will constitute an ill-founded claim that the Russians did not have a culture, that they are not able to think, not only in comparison with Europeans, but even in comparison with the North American Indians! But behind the “smerdyakovshchina” a precise observation appears. One has only to replace the word “think” with the word “philosophize” and Chaadaev will be absolutely right (however, the example with the North American Indians will in any case be clearly unsuccessful: the Indians have culture, myths, thinking, but they have no philosophy). “And now, I will ask you, where are our sages, where are our thinkers? Who among us has ever philosophized, who philosophizes for us now?” And in this form, the remark is valid. It is significant that Chaadaev himself calls his text “Philosophical Letters”: before us is an attempt by the Russians to begin to philosophize after discovering the absence of a philosophical tradition in the past. What came before, Chaadaev recognizes as an unsuccessful “imitation of the West”:

. . .

What is simply a habit, an instinct in other nations, we have to hammer into our heads with a hammer. Our memories go back no further than yesterday; we are, so to say, strangers to ourselves. We move so oddly in time that, as we advance, the immediate past is irretrievably lost to us. That is but a natural consequence of a culture, which is wholly imported and imitative. There is no internal development, no natural progress, in our society; new ideas sweep out the old, because they are not derived from the old but come from God knows where. Since all our ideas are ready-made, the indelible trace left in the mind by a progressive movement of ideas, which gives it strength, does not shape our intellect. We grow, but we do not mature; we move, but in a diagonal, that is, a line which does not lead to the desired goal. We are like children who have not been taught to think for themselves when they become adults, they have nothing they can call their own—all their knowledge is on the surface, their soul is not within them. That is precisely our condition.²⁹

Thus, Russian culture, according to Chaadaev, is “wholly imported and imitative.” At the same time, *Chaadaev does not complain that it was imposed on the Russians, but that it did not penetrate deeper, was not assimilated properly, did not become the Russians’ own, and did not take root deep into society.*

And the most important thing in this passage: “We don’t have any internal development or natural progress,” Chaadaev complains and hits the target. The picture he describes is a vivid description of the sabotage that the archaic pole carries out in relation to the modern pole, the pole of “progress” and “development.” It is this pole, pole A (Figure 4), that is responsible for the fact that Western influ-

ence does not reach the depths of the national soul, does not penetrate beyond the surface layer, does not bring about responsibility, fidelity, or an understanding of ideas, theories, concepts, and teachings.

And further:

...It is obvious that this strange situation, when this people can't concentrate its thoughts on some set of ideas that would gradually unfold in society and little by little flow from one another, when all its participation in the general movement of the human mind is reduced to a blind, superficial, and very often stupid imitation of other nations, must strongly influence the soul of each person in the people. That is why, as you can see, we all lack some kind of stability, some kind of consistency in the mind, some kind of logic. The syllogism of the West is unfamiliar to us. In our best minds there is something even worse than lightweightness. The best ideas, devoid of connection and consistency, like barren delusions, are paralyzed in our brains.³⁰

"The syllogism of the West is unfamiliar to us," but "the best ideas (meaning the ideas of the West)...are paralyzed in our brains." That is accurate. Looking from the position of some "perfect" European, who, unlike the rest of the Russians, penetrated the essence of the European spirit, its "syllogism," and got the opportunity to contemplate this spirit without distortion, Chaadaev really begins to "philosophize," and his letters in fact deserve the name "philosophical." But this philosophy belongs to the European hermeneutical circle; it is anything but Russian philosophy. This is non-Russian philosophy and, in his case, openly

Russophobic philosophy. It is natural that everything about the Russian people irritated Chaadaev, even its appearance:

I even find that in our look there is something strangely vague, cold, insecure, characteristic of the peoples standing on the lowest levels of the social ladder. In foreign lands, especially in the South, where people are so animated and expressive, I have compared so many times the faces of my fellow countrymen with the faces of local residents and have been struck by the muteness of our faces.³¹

The “muteness of Russian faces” arises from the fact that Chaadaev does not find in them something that would be consonant with European history, the European logos, European philosophy. There is no Western discourse in these faces. “And since there is no Western discourse,” Chaadaev concludes, “then there is no other one.”

Chaadaev clearly understands that Russia is outside of history (here again we should recall the connection between history and the history of philosophy substantiated by Heidegger, which are strictly one whole for the people of the West).

Spread between the two great divisions of the world, between East and West, resting one elbow on China, the other on Germany, we should have combined in ourselves the two great principles of spiritual nature, imagination and reason, and unites in our civilization the history of the whole globe. Providence did not give us that role. On the contrary, it was as though it was not at all concerned with

our fate. Refusing us its beneficial effects on the human mind, it left us entirely to ourselves; it did not want to interfere in our affairs in anything, did not want to teach us anything. The experience of times does not exist for us. Centuries and generations have been barren for us. Looking at us, we can say that in relation to us the universal law of mankind is nullified. Lonely in the world, we didn't give anything to the world, we didn't take anything from the world, we didn't bring a single thought to the mass of human ideas, we didn't contribute to the forward movement of human reason, and we distorted everything that we got from this movement.³²

And again a surprisingly insightful remark. Chaadaev sees that the Russians are shying away from history, that is, *from time*, and gravitating rather to *space*, "stretching between the two great divisions of the world." In this he sees Russia's evil fate. We will see later that these same qualities and the non-diffusion of the "universal law of mankind" on us can be interpreted in a completely different way and imbued with a completely different meaning. In any case, Chaadaev frankly defines in a crystal clear way the direction in which the Russians should go if they want to engage in philosophy, rather than wander in archeomodern dead ends. This direction is associated with entering the European hermeneutical circle and searching for its individual place in it. This route is logical, but it is something other than Russian philosophy. The incompatibility of Russianness and philosophicality Chaadaev himself demonstrates extremely convincingly: in order to philosophize, one must defeat Russianness, first of all, in oneself, and thereby carry out an act of spiritual emigration, moving one's soul to

Europe, the “homeland of syllogism.” Philosophy is *not here*. “Russian philosophy” is a euphemism or nonsense. Chaadaev poses the dilemma, “Either philosophy, or Russia,” and chooses philosophy. He has every reason for that.

In principle, for our study, Chaadayev’s position is extremely constructive, since with its frank Westernism and Russophobia it discovers archeomodernity, breaks with it and even partially overcomes it in the direction of focus B and further to the very center of the European hermeneutic circle outside Russia.

“There, there, to the West”

Chaadaev’s philosophical, spiritual emigration was developed and embodied in the poetry and personal fate of an even more extreme Westernizer, the ideal archetype for this movement, Vladimir Sergeevich Pecherin (1807–1885). Pecherin was a Westernizer from his earliest youth. Here is how he wrote about this himself in correspondence with Fedor Vasilyevich Chizhov:

From childhood, I felt some strange attraction to educated countries, some dark desire to move to a different, more human environment; in the steppes of southern Russia I often watched the setting sun, fell to my knees and stretched my arms to it: ‘There , there, to the west...’³³

Pecherin ended his life in full accordance with this desire. He emigrated to Ireland (the westernmost part of Europe!), converted to Catholicism and became a Catholic priest. To

him belong the poetic lines (not published during his lifetime) summarizing the “smerdyakovite” agenda:

How sweet it is to hate one's motherland
And eagerly await its ruin
And in its destruction to discern
The dawn of universal rebirth!³⁴

Moderate Westernizers

Such pure cases of radical and responsible choice for an exclusively Westernized paradigm (up to emigration and a complete *change of identity*, including religious identity) in Russian history are extremely rare, and, as a rule, the majority of Russian Westernizers - Annenkov, Belinsky, Herzen, Kavelin, Ogarev, Turgenev, etc. - remained within the framework of archeomodernity, falling occasionally into “patriotic feelings” or simply slipping into archaic indistinctness. This trend is clearly visible among liberals (such as Kavelin) and revolutionary democrats (such as Herzen and Ogarev), who in different contexts and under different circumstances sensed their difference from the European cultural-historical type and strayed into contradictory and unclear forms of presenting their positions. The archeomodern nature of the dispute between Westernizers and Slavophiles was once quite subtly noticed by Herzen, who pointed out the structure of the hermeneutic ellipse:

Yes, we were their opponents, but very strange ones. We had one love, but not an identical one. From the earliest years, they and we have had one powerful, unaccountable, physio-

logical, passionate feeling that they took for a recollection, and we for a prophecy: a feeling of limitless, all-embracing love for the Russian people, Russian life, the Russian cast of mind. Like Janus or like a two-headed eagle, we looked in different directions, while one heart was beating in us.³⁵

Just as the Russian Slavophiles could not completely break with Westernism *and begin the full-fledged construction of Russian philosophy*, the Russian Westernizers were unable to follow the logical (Russophobic) route of Chaadaev-Pecherin and try to adapt to the “new homeland,” where the keys were to European culture and philosophy, on whose behalf they tried to speak in Russia and on the model of which they were going to remake it. This indistinctness is fully explained by the dominance of the hermeneutic ellipse, but that does not make the works of Russian intellectuals - both *relative* Westernizers and *relative* Slavophiles - more meaningful. Both hover somewhere halfway, to say or do something intelligible, definite, and consistent. The “heart” in Herzen’s passage can be compared with focus A, but neither Slavophiles nor Westernizers paid attention to it. The Slavophiles only declared their intention to go in that direction, but they did not dare to make a decisive gesture and plunge into themselves, into the heart of Russia. At the same time, Westernizers, choosing the mind, “progress,” reason, science, “enlightenment” and philosophy as their reference points, in turn, were tied to the Russian heart like an anchor. Compared to Smerdyakov, Chaadaev and Pecherin, Russian Westernizers, marked by a sincere love for the people and their traditions, were winning morally, but at the same time, from a technical point of view, they only confused the overall picture, while the radical and

almost caricatured Westernizers, by contrast, helped cope with the painful impasse of the archeomodern.

The Russian “Lebenswelt” of Vasily Rozanov

Vasily Rozanov stands apart from other Russian thinkers. In a certain sense, he is the most Russian of them, and, therefore, is closest to the archaic pole itself. Rozanov knows the West and European culture, understands them, and utterly and fully rejects them, consciously and radically. In this, he follows the paths of the Slavophiles, especially Konstantin Leontiev, whom he valued, perhaps, above the others. And although Rozanov, a philosopher, did not create a complete philosophy, his intuition, insight, and revelation are closest of all to proving that Russian philosophy is possible, that is, closest to this philosophy. Rozanov himself does not create it, but he comes close to its justification, stands on the threshold, and anticipates its imminent possibility. This presentiment is fragmentary and preliminary, but at some points, unfathomably deep.

Rozanov's method of philosophizing itself at certain points anticipates Heidegger's existentialism. He discards Western “metaphysics” from the threshold (though without completely understanding it, unlike Heidegger, which is not important) and turns to what seems to him to be unconditional, evident, and present. Modernity's metaphysics has turned the world into a mechanism:

Cartesian abomination: an animal is a machine, and a man is a thinking spirit, cogito ergo sum - this typical Catholic and even Christian filth penetrates the whole of European civilization.³⁶

. . .

But the zoological approach of the materialists and supporters of evolution is not at all congenial to Rozanov.

Darwin did not notice that nature's eyes shine. He made her matte.

It is all matte with it, without oil and juice. But there is juice.

Nature with dead eyes. Brrr ...

He gave dirty tricks, not zoology.

"Music is not necessary, there is a gramophone": here is Darwinism and the history of Darwinism.³⁷

Rozanov *completely hates* European civilization, especially modern European civilization. This is how he understands her basic truths:

Man descends from monkey.

Atoms. And they are moving. That's all.

Pieces and their movements. Such is cosmology. Where can a tender one be born here.

Where can a tender one stay here.

Man is beast. *I* and *you* are two beasts.

The system of bestial relations is sociology (Comte, Spencer)

The world is generally pigs. All of them must be sated.

And "satiety" is a world problem (socialism).

Tell me, please, where can a "sacred" one stay here (...).³⁸

. . .

The concentration of the West is its philosophy, which is continuous “narrowing”:

All definitions [determinations] are a *narrowing* (philosophy).

And you do not need to define [determine].

May the world be undefined [indeterminate].

May it be free.

...

...

...

...

...

...

This is the beginning of chaos. It is as necessary as reason and conscience.³⁹

And vice versa:

On a subject you need to have 1000 points of view. Not two or three: but a thousand. These are the ‘coordinates of reality.’ And reality is determined only after 1000 points of view on it.⁴⁰

The “coordinates of reality” – that is an attempt to grasp the world and its own being in the existential moment of their phenomenological discovery, beyond abstract, normative prescriptions. Rozanov seeks to convey these coordinates as accurately as possible, at the cost of any sacrifice, first of all,

the sacrifice of rationality, logic, consistency, and compliance with the standards of “education” and “enlightenment.”

To hell with *ratio*! I want porridge with truffles. And I’m hoping for heaven, because I admit and affirm hell forever.⁴¹

At the peak of the rejection of *ratio*, Rozanov reaches real prophetic heights; his thought approaches the boundaries of the imaginable:

The first of people and angels, *I* saw his *boundaries*. And to see the bounds [also: face], the boundaries, means to see the non-divinity [nebozhestvennost’].

I saw first his non-divinity. And I didn’t go crazy. How did I not go crazy? Well, maybe I have gone crazy.⁴²

Amazingly, Rozanov has many references specifically to archeomodernity; he feels it subtly, he experiences it, he suffers from it.

Russia is a country where everyone has come off his axis. And they try to jump onto a foreign axis, sometimes onto several foreign axes. And they smash the nose and make our poor Russia ugly and miserable. The traces and consequences of 200 years of “imitative civilization.”⁴³

. . .

Instead, Rozanov formulates his message for the Russians:

Here's what, Russian person: revolve near your axis.

The one you are ingrafted on by birth, ingrafted on by Providence.

Where you have a "Destiny."

Do not scatter. Focus. Think of "yours" and "yourself."

Even if you have a destiny for "scatteredness" - well, do not hold back - "be scattered in everything." Then clarity will come out. Man will be clear and life will be clear. Or else, twilight and confusion. Nothing is visible. After all, with us how is it: a scattered person plays the role of a concentrated person, a gloomy person plays the role of a merry fellow, a windbag usually plays the role of a politician. All colors are mixed, the colors are motley and you can't make out anything.

Let lechery be lecherous, frivolity, frivolous, let things return each to its own style. Or else all life has become feigned and fraudulent.⁴⁴

Rozanov's striving for phenomenology also makes him concentrate *on what is Russian*, since in the world around *him* there is only what is Russian, though thoroughly fouled by the archeomodern (a mixture of Russian and non-Russian).

Rozanov almost finds *Russian Dasein* and penetrates into its essence. Some of his formulas can be recognized as

canonical in the definition of the Russian Principle [*Nachalo, Beginning*]:

Russians do NOT NEED anything.⁴⁵

It is significant that in his texts *material objects* and *foodstuffs* play a huge role. He brilliantly foresees the connection of food with the Russian Principle [*Nachalo, Beginning*]:

What is the Russian man: he ate, he fell asleep. And there was absolutely no reason to add “industry and trade” here.⁴⁶

Amplify introducing the topic of eating into philosophical publicism, he reveals the fundamental side of the Russian “life world,” in which food plays the role of a special language, sometimes more intelligible than verbal constructions proper. Throughout his life, Rozanov shows constant concern about food and, with a fatal regularity, dying, suffers from hunger. On the last pages of his book before dying, *Apocalypse of Our Time*, Rozanov writes:

The food experience is now the main thing. And I noticed that, to shame, they all notice equally. The poor man is no longer ashamed, the bitter man is no longer ashamed ... ”⁴⁷

And in the last letters to Merezhkovsky and Gippius it is very piercing and desperate:

“Would [that I had some] pie...would [that I had some] curd...”⁴⁸

This is not a situational statement; in this is all of Rozanov. Frankly and sincerely, he describes the Russian “lifeworld” to its lowest point, to the fundamental eschatological apocalyptic philosophy of matter.

Rozanov *raves* and does it charmingly, naturally and aesthetically, without hiding what he does. We will meet all the main motives of Rozanov’s work (Russianness, anti-rationalism, food, sleep, the divinity of the world, and most importantly *chaos*) in the next section of the book, where we will analyze the structures of Russian Dasein.

Dmitry Merezhkovsky: the third testament and two abysses

The case of Rozanov’s friend, the philosopher, historian and writer Dmitry Merezhkovsky, is telling.

Like all the astute Russians of that time, Merezhkovsky is acutely aware that “something not quite right” is happening, but he cannot understand *exactly what*. Trying to rationalize the archeomodern Russian neurosis, he creates (with little relation to Western European philosophy, but much relation to the structure of Russian cultural pathology) the theory of the “two abysses” and the concept of the “Third Testament” (“new Christianity”) that claims to overcome them. One “abyss” Merezhkovsky calls the “pagan system of the flesh,” and the other, the “spiritualistic abyss of the spirit, of consciousness.” Between them is an eternal struggle. And the meaning of this struggle is for both abysses to be overcome in a special dialectical

moment of synthesis, when the “third testament” is realized.⁴⁹

Leaving aside the pompous generalizations that parody at the same time the rationalistic Western European philosophy of the 19th century and Gnostic mysticism, one can easily recognize in Merezhkovsky’s construction a reference to the same hermeneutic *ellipse*. Merezhkovsky (like Rozanov) feels that its foci are *painfully irreducible to each other*: he experiences focus A (Figure 1) as “paganism” and “flesh,” “Russian flesh”, and focus B (Figure 1) as “spirit,” “European spirit.” But like Solovyov, with his “all-unity” and sophiological universalism, expressed in a theocratic universalist utopia, he tries to reconcile them. Realizing that this is impossible to do *in the present*, Merezhkovsky attributes the longed-for moment of “recovery” from the schism to the messianic future. It is important that Merezhkovsky, Rozanov and the sophiologists intuitively perceive the archaic, properly Russian pole as “flesh,” “paganism,” matter,” “substance.” Such, on the whole, is the psychotic attitude of the Westernized elites towards the autochthonous Slavic masses: their being – “down there,” in the “darkness” of ignorance and lack of enlightenment, in an environment of relics, prejudices and dark legends – is perceived as something “base,” “material,” and “bodily,” which one should be ashamed of, but which is at the same time fatally and irresistibly attractive, like passion, sex or food.

Ivan Ilyin: Russian patriotism in the Prussian manner

In the philosopher Ivan Ilyin, we encounter almost a caricatural attempt to create a bravura version of Russian nationalism, successfully circumventing any important and

essential topics crucial to elucidating the possibility of Russian philosophy, and replacing questioning and the identification of pain points with a stream of right-conservative consciousness that copies the cliché of European nationalism applied to Russian society. The society Ilyin writes about, while in exile, never existed, does not exist and cannot exist: we are talking about a normative *Prussian dream* that wants to imagine Russia as a clearly functioning social mechanism of the German type, with a well-established morality, resounding officious patriotism, conventional religiosity and mental orderliness. As a result of such a framework, all content that is of any significance to Russia drops out of Ilyin's field of vision: nothing is said about the Westernizer pole, focus B (which is marked as non-existent from the outset), nor the specifics of the archaic pole, nor about focus A (which generally disregarded), nor about the hermeneutic ellipse, which should have caused any normal Russian person at least oppressive anxiety (for some reason it doesn't cause anything for Ilyin). Perhaps Ilyin owes his ignorant aplomb and official "nationalism" to his German mother Carolina Luisa Schweikert von Stadion.

Ilyin builds his philosophical texts in the spirit of the character from the novel "Iron Will" by Leskov named Hugo Karlovich Pektoralis, "discharged to Russia with his cars."⁵⁰ They have the "iron will" of the struggle against communism until the last breath, without any *understanding* of the nature of the Soviet regime or the reasons that led to the fall of the monarchy and the October Revolution, and with no understanding of the structure of Russian society. "Accurately and medically" (in Leskov's words about Hugo Pektoralis), Ilyin mechanically reproduces Russian nationalism, patriotism and gallant monarchism, managing to *pass by* all the substantive aspects of Russian history, playing

itself out before his eyes, with his participation and help. Since there is nothing Russian in such purely German bureaucratic thinking, we leave his texts and theories aside without much harm.

The review of Russian thinkers is summarized in Figure 5.

HOW TO PHILOSOPHIZE WITH A HAMMER AND SICKLE

Three features of Marxism: Europeanism, universalism, revolutionism (criticism)

We turn to the topic of Soviet-Marxist philosophy.

Before correlating Marxism with its history in Russian-Soviet society, some preliminary considerations must be made.

I. Historically and geographically, *Marxism is an organic part of Western European philosophy*, is based on its premises and develops its fundamental foundations and methods. Marx and Engels lived and thought in 19th century Western Europe, understanding themselves as the legitimate heirs of European intellectual and socio-political history. Marx was a student of Hegel, whose philosophy fundamentally influenced his worldview and the structure of his thoughts. Marx and Engels created their political and philosophical doctrine *with reference to Western Europe* and considered it to be the historical arena in which their revolutionary prophecies were destined to be realized, including socialist revolutions that were supposed to spread from Western Europe to

the rest of the world according to its natural social and political development.

2. Being an organic part of Western European philosophy, Marxism fully absorbed its inherent *eurocentrism*, which considers European history and the main stages of its economic, political and social development as a universal path that *all other* peoples and cultures are destined to follow. The Europeans themselves traditionally regarded the Western European cultural circle as something universal and common and considered the difference between other non-Western cultures and the West not only as a different and distinctive feature, but as a historical *lag*, underdevelopment, and a delay on a *previous stage* of historical development. Western philosophy considers European fate as *the fate of humanity as such*, as a universal *world* fate. These properties of Western European mentality are *fully* inherent in Marxism, and it was in the spirit of such philosophical hermeneutics that Marx and Engels identified the development scheme described by them, approximately corresponding to the stages of Western European history, with the unidirectional and universal logic of the socio-economic, political and cultural development of *all humanity*. Strictly in the spirit of eurocentrism, Marx considered it impossible to carry out socialist revolutions *anywhere except Europe*, since it was precisely in Europe that capitalism and its characteristic processes reached their *peak*, and socialist revolutions could only take place in highly developed capitalist countries with a powerful urban proletariat. For this reason, Marx *denied the very possibility* of a proletarian socialist revolution in Russia, which was an agrarian semi-capitalist country in the 19th century: at least it was impossible until the corresponding revolutions would take place in more developed European countries: Germany,

England, France, etc. At the same time, Marx believed that all societies outside of Europe would sooner or later follow the European path. Consequently, Marx linked the implementation of communist projects exclusively with the European future, arising from the European past. And in all this, he, following Hegel, saw a *universal* character, to the extent that *European humanity was the historical expression of all humanity*. Just as Europe brought capitalism to the whole world (including through colonization), so it was called to bring communism in the future (through social progress and world revolution).

3. Marxism was a *critical* philosophical theory, subjecting the social, economic, political structure of the capitalist West European world to merciless denunciation. Recognizing the fatefulness of Western history and philosophy, Marx called for a coup, for *the overturning* of their basic laws and internal meanings. But this inverted picture nevertheless retained, although with the opposite sign, *the structure* of the Western European hermeneutic circle. Marxism opposed the West in its *present* state (capitalism, bourgeois relations) to the West of *the future*, which had to be built on the basis of *alternative* principles — the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialization of the means of production and, finally, classless society, etc. If the whole history of the West, according to Marx, was a process of the growing exacerbation of class contradictions and a way to exaltation of the class struggle up to its culmination in capitalism, then the future was associated with *a revolution of all proportions* and the “end of history.” Moreover, *the fate* of the West (and, accordingly, the fate of humanity), according to Marx, consisted in *the movement of society towards the final ideal* of communism through strictly necessary phases of development, the “economic formations” (primitive communism,

slave society, feudal and capitalist systems). In the Communist Manifesto,¹ Marx and Engels emphasize that their anti-capitalism is *to the left of capitalism*, from the future, and *not from the right*, from the feudal and reactionary past. And the authors of the Manifesto carefully list the forms of socialism they reject: reactionary socialism (including its feudal, petty-bourgeois and German forms), bourgeois socialism, and utopian socialism.

These features of Marxism also explain the fact that Marxism, being an organic part of Western philosophy and a product of Western European social history, can be correctly interpreted *only and exclusively in the context of the corresponding hermeneutical circle*. And that Marxism was very popular *outside* this circle is explained by the fact that it was based on *criticism* of this circle itself, a criticism that was fundamental and sometimes extremely deep, right down to its foundations. Marxism was a form of Western philosophy, oriented *against* the main tendencies of this philosophy. Marxism thought of itself as the ultimate form of Western European history and at the same time as its overcoming, as “*the end of history*.” Hegel’s idea of “the end of history” as its completion and overcoming was expressed *differently*: namely, in the ideal of the Prussian monarchy, where the proportions of the complete restoration of the Absolute Idea should be realized in the form of the *subjective spirit* recreated in culture and politics. The non-Marxist version of Hegelianism in the 20th century inspired the Italian fascists to build their own version of the “ideal state” (Gentile). But in any case, Marx’s “end of history” (communism) was conceived in the context of the Western European capitalist model as its overcoming, possible *only* where and when the capitalist system is fully implemented, established, developed, consolidated; all the contradictions in it will come to

the surface and the European industrial proletariat will unite into a powerful workers' communist party. Marx did not consider other versions of possible socialist revolutions, since, within the framework of his theory, a socialist revolution could not occur in non-capitalist and non-European societies. Such confidence was not just a secondary detail of the Marxist worldview, but flowed from the very structure of Marxist thought.

Russian Marxism as a Radical Westernism

The Russian Marxists of the 19th century, in particular, the Plekhanov "Union for the Liberation of Labor," were forced from the very beginning to conform to this point of Marxist teaching. They represented the extreme *Westernist* flank (Figure 4) of the revolutionary democratic movement. The Narodniks, later the Socialist-Revolutionaries, tried to place Westernized socialist ideas in the *Russian context*, adapting socialism to the Russian people and, as a result, obtaining a rather original set of ideas, theories and intuitions, somewhat consonant with some Slavophile concepts. Such populism was generally archeomodern, but increased attention to the archaic pole A (Figure 1) and opposition to the existing Romanov "status quo" (Figure 4) often led them to attempts to *rethink* the entire Russian hermeneutic ellipse and to going deeper into the "people." At the same time, the orientation toward Western models of the socialist idea *deflected* a sequence of actually populist undertakings — routes directed deeper into the Russian popular [*narodnoy*] masses, not to instil in it European civil and democratic cliches, but to study the deep foundations of popular [*narodnoy*] life.

In any case, compared to the Narodniks, the Russian

Marxists were *radical* Westerners, since they deliberately denied all originality to Russian social history and considered Russia a peripheral European country, extremely remnant and archaic, but moving, like all other countries, along *one* path and in *one* direction (see Figure 7).

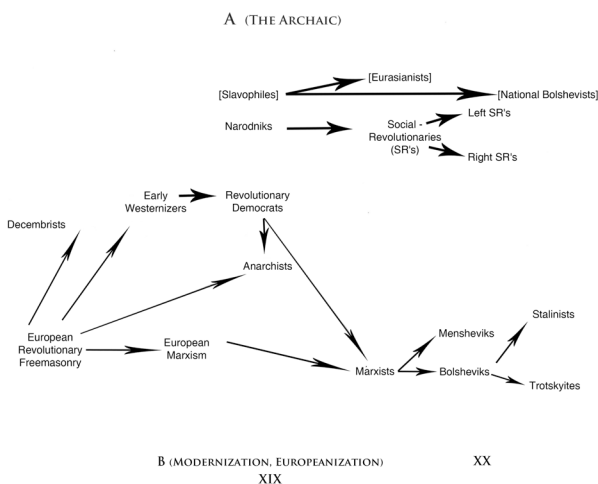


Figure 7. Leftism in Russia and the Archeomodern Poles. *Non-leftist ideational tendencies are shown in square brackets

The only thing needed as justification for the Russian Marxists to engage in active revolutionary struggle, and not sit idly by, waiting for the socialist revolutions to sweep across the countries of Western Europe, was *the possibility of Russia's accelerated capitalist development* and the earliest possible establishment in it of a *bourgeois system*.

. . .

The paradox of the Bolshevik victory: something happened that should not have happened

Vladimir Lenin, a second-generation Russian Marxist, was particularly enthusiastic about proving that Russia at the beginning of the 20th century was *already* a sufficiently developed European capitalist country and could participate on an equal footing in the pan-European revolutionary movement. So, in his work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*,² polemicizing with the Narodniks, he argues that capitalist relations also developed to a significant extent in the countryside, and that the only revolutionary class is the industrial urban proletariat, which is already large and socially active enough to be the mass basis of the revolutionary movement. This thesis of Lenin was at variance with Marx's views on the possibility of revolution in Russia, but it could be substantiated in the spirit of general Russian Westernism. If the ruling Romanov elite considered Russia a European country and stubbornly examined Russian culture through the optics of the West European hermeneutic circle, then why could representatives of the revolutionary *raznochintsy* intelligentsia not do the same, borrowing from the West not the apologetic and *evolutionary-reformist* liberal model of modernization, but the *revolutionary-democratic* socialist and communist one?!

Thus, Russian Marxism was an organic complement to the *whole picture of the Russian Westernism* of the governmental (monarchist) and liberal-capitalist (reformist, bourgeois) trends. Monarchism and the liberal bourgeoisie were the periphery of the West European ideological and political mainstream, and Russian Marxists reproduced on the Russian soil the marginal proletarian movements and revolutionary ideas of *the same European* society. But unlike other Russian Westernizers, Russian Marxists set themselves a

radical task: they had to solve *two* problems at once: not only to *catch up* with the West in terms of capitalist development, but also to *smash* the newly established and not well-firmly capitalist system. At the same time, the Blanquist temperament of many Marxists - first of all, of Lenin himself, as well as of Leon Trotsky and other radicals - suggested that all this must be done "*here and now*," immediately and without delay.

A paradoxical situation developed: a few and scattered Marxists in a country with a poorly developed urban proletariat and unstable capitalist relations, with the dominance of the agrarian sector, an extremely archaic, rural, psychologically "medieval" population, and a weak proletarian party torn apart by internal squabbles, proved more fanatical, organized and, ultimately, *successful* in the realization of the Marxist socio-political scenario than the much more structured, orthodox, consistent, influential and numerous revolutionary parties in Western Europe.

If at first Lenin argued that Russia is a European power in which pan-European processes take place and that it has a chance to participate in the approach of the European proletarian revolution on a full-fledged basis, then by 1917, adapting to the difficult circumstances of the political crisis provoked in many respects by the First World War and the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II, Lenin was now arguing (with stretched references to Marx) for the possibility of carrying out a revolution primarily in one country, Russia.³ *The Bolsheviks successfully seize power in October 1917*. Even more incredible is the fact that they are able to maintain this power and achieve victory in the civil war.

Anti-Western Westernism

In 1924, the leaders of the Soviet state, including Stalin himself, were still fully convinced that the success of the USSR was only the first step of a *pan-European* revolutionary process. Already in May 1924, Stalin wrote in the pamphlet “The Foundations of Leninism”:

To overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and establish the power of the proletariat in one country, does not mean to guarantee the complete victory of socialism. The chief task of socialism, the organization of socialist production – lies still ahead. Can this task be accomplished? Is it possible to attain the final victory of socialism in one country, without the combined efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries? No, it is not. The efforts of one country are enough for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie – this is what the history of our revolution tells us. For the final victory of socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, especially a peasant country like Russia, are not enough – for this we must have the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries.⁴

A few months later, in December 1924, he changed this wording to the *exact opposite*. And since then, the idea of building socialism in one country, specifically in Russia, *without its victory* in the other, primarily industrialized capitalist countries of Europe in the near future, became official dogma, including *philosophical* dogma, of the Soviet system.

Leaving aside the reasons for how events so strange from a theoretical point of view (at least from the point of view of Marxism) could happen, let us pay attention to how this fits into the general picture of the Russian hermeneutic ellipse.

Here we are facing a discrepancy. Marxism as a philosophy belonged to the European *hermeneutical* circle, but represented its *critical* dimension. Being a *part* of European culture and history, it spoke in radical opposition to this culture and this history in their concrete expression. Being placed on Russian soil, on one hand, it found itself at the pole of the most extreme Westernizers, at pole B (see Figure 7). In this sense, Marxism continued the line of Russian Westernism from the Freemasons to the Decembrists and revolutionary democrats. Related to this is Lenin's positive assessment of the capitalist transformations in Russia, that is, its Europeanization and industrial modernization. In this sense, his polemic with the Narodniks was conducted from the position of a representative of focus B against representatives of focus A (see Figure 7), who tended toward apologia for the identity of the Russian peasantry and abandoning the idea of the need to build capitalism in Russia (the idea of "Russian socialism" is already found in Herzen, and later more clearly in Mikhailovsky, Tkachev, etc.).⁵

But at the same time, Marxism (including Western) is a *radical criticism of the West, capitalism, the bourgeois system*, which means that it contains (albeit in special, paradoxical, dialectical form) a *rejection* of the political, social, cultural and economic content of focus B (actually Westernism). It turns out that from a philosophical point of view in the Russian context we are dealing with "*anti-Western Westernism*," with an ideology that simultaneously claims the West as something universal and with the same gesture overcomes this Western universality, removes it, declaring that "*tomorrow has already arrived*," that "*the West in Russia is over*" (not having had time to really begin).

In this context, Russian Marxism, at least after the October Revolution becomes a *fait accompli*, seems to be the

definite revenge of pole A (the archaic popular [*narodogo*] principle) in the face of pole B (pure Westernism, embodied historically in the political elite of the Russian Empire and the bourgeois class that was growing until 1917). This paradox was hardly adequately comprehended by the masses, but it seems to be the key to understanding the true place of Marxism in the history of Russia.

This predetermined the *duality* in Russia of both Marxism and the entire Soviet period. As part of Western European philosophy, that is, the Western hermeneutic circle, Marxism was an instrument of the *radical and unprecedented modernization* of the country (focus B). This is precisely what Marxism was from many points of view:

- It ridiculed folk traditions as remnants of ancient times,
- destroyed religion and religious foundations,
- eradicated archaic forms of culture and introduced new, “progressive” ones,
- conducted consistent industrialization and urbanization, destroying rural infrastructure,
- developed atheistic and materialistic science ,
- instilled in the people the way of life and thinking inherent in the standards of European Enlightenment, and
- forcibly imposed a rationalistic and mechanistic worldview.

In this sense, it was *Westernism* to a great extent.

But, on the other hand, Marxism:

- unblocked the broad masses of the people, opening the way for them to the upper strata of society, and destroyed the Europeanized and Westernized Romanov political and economic elites;
- abolished bourgeois relations expressing the quintessence of the Western model of socio-political development;
- strengthened and preserved the political independence of Russia from European countries;
- expanded the influence of Russians in nearby regions; and
- became in fact the universal avant-garde in confronting Europe and its colonial-universalist aspirations.

In this sense, Marxism in the USSR not only continued the main line of the Russian Empire, but could be perceived as the revenge of the Russian popular [*nadornogo*] spirit against the alienated political elites of the St. Petersburg monarchy, that is, as an expression of focus A (Figure 1).

Trotskyism and National Bolshevism

In Soviet society in the 1920s one could easily find extreme expressions of both poles under consideration. During this period, Lenin's revolutionary brother-in-arms and one of the most passionate Bolsheviks, Leo Trotsky,

clearly articulated the *Westernizer* pole of Soviet Bolshevism, insisting that socialism cannot be built in the USSR without the implementation of proletarian revolutions in developed European countries, and if it will be built, it will soon degenerate. This position, which expresses the classical pole B in our hermeneutic ellipse, is a logical and philosophically consistent construction: if the socialist revolution was able to win by some miracle in a peripheral European country (not without the super-efforts of Trotsky himself), then it can integrate into a real post-capitalist world only *together* with other European societies. This circumstance could be argued both by references to practical and economic moments from the life of young Soviet Russia, and to the classical texts of orthodox Marxists. But the most important thing is that this was absolutely justified from the point of view of Pole B: in a “left-wing project,” Russia could get rid of the burden of archeomodernity only through *integration with the West*, becoming an organic part of it, even if in a difficult way, through the proletarian revolution. This revolution was the leap of Russian society into the Western hermeneutic circle and, therefore, had to share its fate with Europe (to build socialism and carry out a world revolution together).

At the opposite pole, during the same period, *National Bolshevik* ideas crystallized in the USSR.⁶ They come from different sources: from the nobles who joined the Red Army; tsarist “specialists”; white immigrants nostalgic for Russia and realizing that they lose it forever after losing in the civil war; from the creative intelligentsia, who recognized in the Bolsheviks the bearers of the “new Holy Russia” (Bryusov, Khlebnikov, Pilnyak, Platonov, Blok’s “Scythians,” Klyuyev, Yesenin, Remizov, Zamyatin, Forsh, Chapygin, Erberg, Bely, Lundberg, Ivanov-Razumnik, Mstislavsky, etc.); from the

thousands of Social Revolutionaries who went over to the Bolsheviks; from pragmatic communists who understand the importance of patriotic feelings for the construction of a socialist state (Tan-Bogoraz, Lezhnev). The ideological foundations of National Bolshevism are most clearly formulated by the *smenovekhovtsy* Ustryalov,⁷ Kirdetsov, Lukyanov, and Klyuchnikov and the Eurasianists Savitsky, Suvchinsky, Ilyin, and Vernadsky in exile.⁸ Their thesis boils down to the following: Marxists won the Revolution but after the victory under the pressure of the popular [*narodnoy*] element (focus A) they will certainly transform into something *new* and build a *Russian* and *popular* [*narodnoe*] society, *beyond* Europeanism, capitalism and the West (both external and internal, as embodied earlier in the Romanov elite).

But again, as in tsarist Russia, society developed a dualism of the *modernist elite* (this time in this role was played by the Communist Party, the bearer of the ruling discourse) and the *archaic masses*, who tried to interpret everything that happened in their own way. In the 1920s, this was reflected in the revealing sociological difference between the "Bolsheviks" and the "Communists." In the novel *Naked Year* by Pilnyak, the Russian peasant grandfather-healer Yegorka says:

"There is no International, there is the popular [*narodnaya*] Russian revolution, a rebellion, and nothing more. In the image of Stepan Timofeevich." - "And Karl Marx?" (he is asked - AD) "A German, I say, and therefore, a fool." - "And Lenin?" - "Lenin, I say, is a *muzhik*, a Bolshevik, and you must be Communists... The Communists should get the hell out! The Bolsheviks, I say, will manage themselves."⁹

. . .

A similar distinction between the Russian *Bolsheviks* (focus A) and the *communists* (focus B) is made in the National Bolshevik (*smenovekhovtsy*) newspaper “*Nakanune*” by the former Chief Prosecutor of the Synod Lukyanov, ranking Lenin among the “Bolsheviks” and “Russian opportunists,” and Trotsky and Zinoviev with the Communists. Trotskyism in the Soviet situation occupied Focus B; National Bolshevism, Focus A (Figure 7). These ideological positions corresponded to the structure of archeomodernity in both its manifestations, and, therefore, expressed very deep philosophical laws. In the culture and philosophical discussions of that period (including the Russian émigrés), two distinct tendencies are distinguishable through which one could count on overcoming the hermeneutic ellipse and entering a model of the philosophical circle (Russian or Western). In the event of the victory of Trotskyism and, consequently, the integration of Russia into the United States of Europe (or because of the possible defeat of the USSR in an adventurous attempt to carry out the “world revolution” alone and logically following its occupation), this would mean *final integration into the Western hermeneutic circle*. If National Bolshevism prevailed, Marxism itself would soon transform into something else, into an independent socio-political discourse that resembles left Narodnichestvo, Eurasianism, or the alliance of *Empire with socialism* that Konstantin Leontiev dreamed of.

In the 1920s National Bolshevism and Eurasianism offered a *new justification for the possibility of Russian philosophy*, while touching on the sociological, external side of the problem, as Danilevsky and Leontiev did half a century before. In this sense, one should also consider the period of the philosopher and theologian Pavel Florensky’s cooperation with the Bolsheviks. That is how Bolshevism was

understood in the early stages by Nikolai Klyuyev and Alexander Blok. In the event of such a historical turn, Marxist dogma would be *reinterpreted*, and perhaps completely discarded, giving way to a new ideology. It would also mean a rupture of the hermeneutic ellipse and the collapse of the archeomodern, only with a different outcome. Without a doubt, the development of events in the second scenario would make the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy a priority.

Stalin: Soviet Archeomodernity

But, as we know, not the Trotskyists and the National Bolsheviks won in the USSR, but rather the Stalin line, and the supporters of all “deviations” (from both foci) were gradually subjected to repression and nullified. So, from the 20s to the end of the 80s of the 20th century, a new version of the archeomodern - the Marxist - was formed in the USSR. The hermeneutic *ellipse was not divided* into circles, but remained in its structure, acquiring a new - this time Marxist - design. Again, Russian philosophical thought was blocked and put into a deadlock, with a fatal stratification of meanings. This predetermined the general system of Soviet philosophy, which, of course, was not philosophy in the full sense of the word, but a lump of increasingly contradictory absurdities.

Stalin put paramount importance on maintaining the *status quo* that had developed by the 1930s. The Bolsheviks had managed to seize and retain power in the Russian Empire, break the resistance of the Whites, unite the dispersed national suburbs, strengthen the dictatorship of the Communist Party, build the economy on new socialist principles, turn Marxism into a ruling totalitarian ideology,

destroy the bourgeoisie as a class, eradicate private property and, to top it all, preserve the country's independence and sovereignty in the face of the capitalist encirclement of powerful European powers.

All these indicators were so impressive, and the role of socialism and its socio-political transformations in building a new Soviet society was so great, that Stalin, standing on top of a gigantic communist empire, had all subjective reasons to sincerely believe that in the USSR Marxism had won in its orthodox version, passed through the prism of the Blanquist approach of Lenin and the first Bolsheviks.

Soviet archeomodernity, contradictory as a philosophical construction, looked so impressive in the 1930s from the position of political power and the energy of the masses in building a new type of society that it could well be seen as something stable, sufficient and organic, proving its worth by social, political and economic success. The "Right" was shown the achievements of the socialist economy (based on communist and Marxist ideals and values), the "Left" the consistency of the Soviet state, capable of developing independently, remaining independent and combat ready. Stalinist philosophy was a philosophy of concrete deeds, not abstract ideas. Socialism, industrialization and a growing state power served as the best argument in any dispute, and vice versa: any criticism ("from the right" or "from the left", from Trotskyists or the National Bolsheviks) seemed inappropriate, "subjective" or even "subversive."

By the 1930s, Soviet archeomodernity was fully developed, and in 1937, Stalin, without hesitation, dealt with all the former "fellow travellers" on all flanks: during this period anyone who tried to question Soviet archeomodernity (or was accused of the attempt) was repressed, regardless of the content of such questions.

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Soviet philosophy as toxic waste

The Stalinist period forcibly suppressed any intention to try to decompose Soviet archeomodernity into components. The slightest movement in this direction, starting from 1937-1938, was unthinkable. Nevertheless, the most severe repressions could not do anything with the philosophical nature of the problem of archeomodernity. It was set aside, driven deep within, but not removed. It was impossible – not to speak about it out loud, but even to think about it. Nevertheless, the duality of the hermeneutic ellipse is fully apparent at all stages of the USSR.

The Soviet masses interpreted the official ideology more like “Bolsheviks,” the party elites more like “Communists,” although gradually, as the representatives of the masses penetrate the party elite, this distinction begins to fade, and the whole structure shifts towards archeomodernity with the predominance of popular [*narodnykh*], “patriotic” dispositions.

However, attempts to bring this rethinking to the level of consciousness and to interpret communist doctrines in the spirit of Russian *pochvennichestvo* were systematically and severely suppressed by the “internationalist” component until the very last moments of the existence of Soviet power. Right up to Gorbachev’s reforms, which led to the collapse of the entire Soviet system and its complete liquidation together with the Soviet state itself, neither the “Trotskyist” nor the “Marxist” attempts to unblock archeomodernity on behalf of the westernizing pole could prevail. In various proportions, at certain stages of Soviet history, the corresponding foci periodically popped up and dropped, but the structure of the hermeneutic ellipse remained unchanged.

Therefore, if the entire body of texts of the Soviet philosophers conveys anything, it is only this intellectual languishing. Whatever question of philosophy arises in this context - about activity, the person, language, matter, consciousness, history, thinking, body, subject, object, soul, origin - it necessarily slips into an obscure nonsense through which at best it was possible break through either to vague "Trotskyism" (that is, to a minimal correspondence to the Western European — albeit critical and revolutionary — intellectual methodology), or to an even more veiled Russian archaism (for example, in the form of "cosmism"). In the worst case, the mountains of written books did not carry any content whatsoever, being examples of undecipherable mental imitation.

Of course, on the periphery of Soviet society and in Russian emigration, separate individuals tried to think adequately, but they could get rid of archeomodernity only in one case, if they were fully integrated into the Western European hermeneutic circle. This was partly facilitated by emigration or, in rare cases, extreme forms of dissidentism in the USSR itself, although more often this also indicated an intellectual disease, different only from the institutionalized and totalitarian-dogmatic disease of pan-Soviet thinking, which in the general case was accepted as the norm. There was no social "*place*" at all for a correct and intelligible movement towards Russian philosophy proper; everything was occupied by the Soviet-style hermeneutic ellipse that severely blocked any attempt to take a step in any direction. Soviet philosophy could claim to be substantial only if it could be attributed to one or another hermeneutical circle. But it was precisely this gesture that the "status quo" that had developed by the 1930s and retained its significance did not allow it to make. Precisely because from the very

beginning a dogmatic contradiction, an axiomatic lie, a normative disease of consciousness had been carried into it, Soviet philosophy could not formulate anything meaningful or subject to interpretation. Everything was wasted.

As in ancient China in the Qin era, an ambitious dynasty, aiming to change the parameters of ancient culture and religion, tried to impose the principles of the philosophy of legalism instead of the most ancient Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, but after burning many books and brutal repressions, it turned out to be something ephemeral and fell, without leaving a trace, a few years after the death of its founder, so Soviet philosophy lost its relevance in an instant - at the time of the death of the USSR in 1991 - henceforth representing a "toxic waste" dump of captive and humiliated intelligence.

THE HOLY PLACE IS STILL EMPTY

The hermeneutic ellipse in the post-Soviet period

A few words should be said about the socio-cultural situation in Russian society that developed in the 1990s, after the collapse of the USSR, and in our time at the beginning of the 20th century.

Soviet archeomodernity collapsed in 1991. And at that moment the two poles again made themselves felt. One of them was expressed in *liberal reformers*, the other in those whom liberal reformers called “*red-brown*.” The liberals decided to conduct the next round of “modernization” and “westernization,” which included actively acquainting the Soviet public with Western culture, society and, in part, philosophy. The liberals (at least in the first period) almost openly set themselves the task of *unblocking the archeomodern*, which they identified with the Soviet system. This project fit fully into the logic of the Russian Westernism of previous eras, both liberal and “Trotskyist” in Soviet times. From a philosophical point of view, this undertaking boiled down to a new attempt *to lead Russian society into the context of Western philosophy*, through translations of foreign

authors, the introduction of new epistemes, and, ultimately, the inclusion of Russian intellectual discourse in the mainstream of Western discourse.

An alternative project formed at the opposite ideological pole, where communist-conservatives and the re-emerged (in many ways artificially and inorganically) “nationalists” and “traditionalists” united in opposition to liberal Westernizers. Since far from all communists joined this pole (a significant part of them “turned into liberals”), with a certain degree of approximation we can say that after the outflow of opportunists and random people, those who remained among the communists of the 1990s consciously (minority) or intuitively (majority) shared the *National-Bolshevik platform*, in the spirit of Ustryalov and Eurasians. Hence the inclusion in the policy documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of such topics as “Orthodoxy,” “Empire,” “tradition,” “geopolitics,” etc., unthinkable in the orthodox Marxist context. Scattered groups of non-Marxist conservatives who appeared along with the collapse of the totalitarian system (“neo-Eurasians”, “neo-monarchists”, “non-Orthodox”, “Russian nationalists”, etc.,) gravitated to the same pole. In this phenomenon, we see a preliminary grouping of forces around focus B of our hermeneutic ellipse, which became possible after the collapse of the Soviet machine.

Politically, in the 1990s, this orientation represented *opposition to the authorities*, while liberal reformers managed to subordinate the *authorities* to themselves (President Yeltsin and his entourage) and gain control over the dominant public discourse. The “Patriotic Opposition” could become an environment where it was entirely appropriate to raise the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy at a new historical stage (in parallel with the initiatives of

the new Westernizers). However, this *did not happen*, not in the sociological (generalized, descriptive, external) realm nor, all the more so, in the substantial philosophical dimension. This social pole did not make any efforts to think through and assert *its own project to overcome archeomodernity* in the spirit of movement towards the Russian hermeneutic circle and limited itself to passive resistance to Westernist reforms, not paying attention either to the ideational consolidation of its ranks or to the development of a sound *ideological program*, not to mention the formulation of serious philosophical problems. Everything was limited to polemics and publicism.

In the 1990s, at a certain moment, it seemed that the hermeneutic ellipse was undone and Russia, collapsing, was partially integrating into the Western world, which by the end of the twentieth century claimed globality and no alternative on a world scale (in the spirit of the universal colonial claims of Western culture, but only with large scale and more impressive results of the widespread implementation of their codes and paradigms). Except for the short period between the February and October revolutions of 1917, in Russia for the first time political power and control over ideological attitudes fell into the hands of *radical Westernizers*, carriers of Westernist thinking and adherents of Western fate. This was accompanied by the weakening of Russia's sovereignty and the partial introduction of the external governance of the country. In a philosophical sense, these processes were an attempt to exterminate focus A and its influence on society as a whole (See phenomenon that can be called "Yeltsinism" on Figure 8).

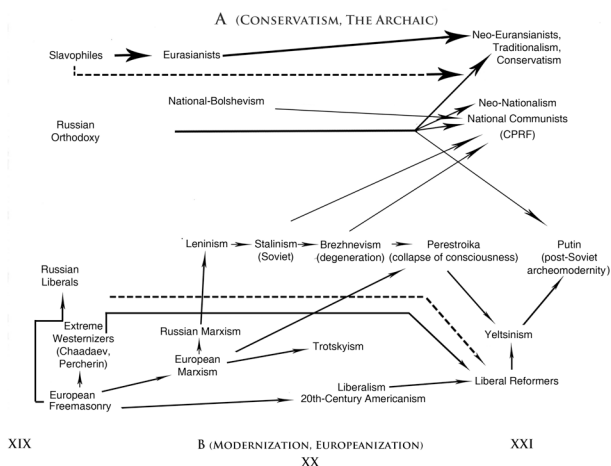


Figure 8. Post-Soviet Russia and the Archeomodern Poles. A dotted line indicates weak influence.

Vladimir Putin's Archeomodernity

However, by the end of the 1990s, the influence of liberal reformers on the general intellectual climate in the country began to decline. If in the early 1990s this orientation had considerable support in those social spheres that had high hopes for the rapprochement between Russia and the West, then by the end of the 20th century, hopes were replaced by disappointment, and the *negative balance of reforms* (economic, social, psychological and cultural) became obvious to many. During this period, Yeltsin was replaced by Putin, which meant a serious *worldview* shift. Putin *restored the parameters of the archeomodern in Russia* by curbing the West-ernizer pole and slightly reducing the pressure on the properly Russian pole (focus A) (see Figure 8). The model of

society in the Putin era was a return to the hermeneutic *ellipse*, familiar to Russia of the last centuries, in which not only is the possibility of one of the two non-contradictory models prevailing closed off, but any intelligible intellectual activity is also deliberately blocked by the mass of archeo-modernity, supported by the power potential of the state machine.

Putin gradually took away from the ruling elite of the liberals their influence, but at the same time did not support the Slavophile pole of the “patriotic opposition,” leaving it the possibility of sterile, marginal, autonomous vegetation. So again, routinely and in new ideological and socio-political conditions, a system was established in Russia that impeded the very formulation of the question of choosing a philosophical hermeneutical priority and deliberately excluded any serious discussion of the topic of the possibility of Russian philosophy.

The difference between the current era and the Stalinist era (in the context of interest to us) is, however, that Stalin gave to any philosophical question a severe response in the form of a demonstration of the achievements of socialism, the political strength of the Soviet state and the work of a powerful repressive apparatus. Therefore, his inertia lasted for several decades. Putin’s regime is incomparably milder and cannot boast of serious achievements. Therefore, its stability and durability are in question, and its intellectual impasse and pathological nature are obvious now. If it has a margin of safety, then that consists only in a potential appeal to the archaic pole (focus A), which Putin and his close circle are carefully avoiding.

THE RUSSIAN ARCHE

Archeomodernity and its truth. From a “dirty” sheet.

This is the historical moment, the moment of Putin’s archeomodernity, in which we find ourselves today, and this determines the context of *our* statement of the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy and the specificity of *our* view of what came before us in the previous stages of Russian history. *Again*, as in the last few centuries, we are dealing with archeomodernity, with the hermeneutic ellipse, which, *by its very structure*, blocks the possibility of intelligently raising the question of how to cure the disease. *Archeomodernity categorically refuses to recognize itself as a disease*, and the question of choosing a treatment is thereby deliberately deprived of sense. Moreover, archeomodernity categorically refuses to *conceptualize itself as what it is*, that is, *as archeomodernity*. In this sense, the very expression “the possibility of Russian philosophy” itself provokes nervous rejection among professionals: in archeomodernity, such a formulation of the question is deliberately excluded or the answer outpaces the question.

“Russian philosophy is an accomplished fact,” shrug

some (the patriots) with bewilderment. "How can it be called into question?" Others (the Westernizers) indignantly ask, "What kind of 'Russian' philosophy are you talking about? Philosophy is one and unified, and Russian authors have made their contribution to it, like everyone else." Everything already is, and at the same time is not": this is the universal thesis of archeomodernity, which divides the meaning of any statement into a series of internally unrelated, scattered and confused pseudo-convictions.

Thus, if, against all odds, we want to approach a place where the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy is posed with all severity and thoroughness, we must fundamentally delve into the situation of archeomodernity, its structure, its composition, its hermeneutic mechanism. It is *archeomodernity that is the main obstacle to not only Russian philosophy, but also its possibility*, and even the possibility of thinking correctly about this possibility. At the same time, archeomodernity is constructed in such a way that it hides itself and the truth about itself, constantly representing itself as *not what it is*, that is, by hiding from the attention directed at it under a dense veil of false statements about itself and its essence. Archeomodernity constantly *lies* about itself, and this *lie* is not in its intention, but *its structure*. As soon as we recognize this structure as a lie (in a technical sense), we can establish the *truth about archeomodernity*, because the fact that a lie is a lie is the *truth*. The lie of archeomodernity itself is that it is supposedly "doesn't exist" or that it is supposedly "not archeomodernity," that is, it is not a hermeneutic ellipse that decomposes the interpretation of any phenomenon taken in its philosophical aspect into *two* mutually exclusive interpretational vectors that automatically and inevitably turn *sense* [*smysl*] into *ambiguity* [*dvu-smyslennost'*] and, therefore, into *nonsense*

[bes-smyslitsu]. At the same time, the vague and poorly understood (peripheral) meaning of focus B (the western hermeneutic circle) is undermined by the completely unformalized energy of the intuitive “half-sense” [*polusmysla*] of focus A (usually directed against the Western one), which gives rise to a *short circuit* of philosophy, in which the whole system of ordered thinking burns out, plunging intellectual discourse into the darkness of incoherent and fragmentary mutterings. These murmurs are given out by archeomodernity as a “norm,” and with that philosophy is successfully adjourned, and the dolt¹, the wit, or the bureaucrat is announced as a “philosopher.”

But the *truth* about archeomodernity and an understanding of its essence, on the contrary, is a positive and creative *philosophical* statement. After all, if anything can be said reliably and with true justification about the philosophical features of Russian culture in recent centuries, then this will be a statement of its *archeomodern nature*. The insightful Rozanov expressed this in aphorism:

“All Russian literature is written not on Russian topics.”²

This basic phenomenological statement about the archeomodern nature of the Russian culture of recent centuries carries a huge positive meaning. The truth of archeomodernity, the truth of about archeomodernity and its structure, is the *starting point* of Russian phenomenology, since in the form of social and cultural givenness (whence also politics, education, aesthetics, ethics, philosophy, and literature) we are dealing with with precisely this. It is impossible to start thinking from a clean sheet. We are

doomed to deal with a *dirty* sheet, a sheet soiled and scribbled over with delusional, meaningless signs, with crumpled, chewed, torn, mutilated edges, which we are passed off to us as a painting by Raphael or the text of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. If we lose sight of this state of affairs even for a moment, then any reflection on the possibility of Russian philosophy will only add to the set of scribbles. Therefore, understanding the hermeneutic ellipse and its structure should be a *fundamental preparatory* stage of adequate thinking in our conditions. Those who do not realize, or at least do not feel intuitively, archeomodernity as *a disease, as a catastrophe, as a spiritual and intellectual blockade*, have no prospects of recovery. In other words, for those who are not able to recognize archeomodernity *as archeomodernity* and break through to the truth about its lies, both Russian philosophy and the path to posing the question about it are impossible.

Subsequent sections of this book can be meaningful *only* if the situation of archeomodernity is realized, understood and taken as something that *must be overcome*. If distrust, misunderstanding or disagreement with this thesis remains, then further reading of the book loses its meaning.

Foolishness as an intellectual strategy

Now that we have isolated the problem of archeomodernity as the main and central one in studying the question of the possibility of Russian philosophy and have shown how this problem gives us a key to the interpretation of the Russian philosophers' structure of thinking, we can mark out the horizon within which we could go one step further in the study of the main topic.

As we have seen, the *structure* of the hermeneutic ellipse

is evidently the fundamental, paradigmatic factor that blocks with its first impulse the very possibility of Russian philosophy. But this same structure is also what allows this possibility to be preliminarily outlined. At issue is the *existence* of focus A (Figure 1), which is not revealed to us directly (otherwise, we would justifiably talk about the *actuality* of Russian philosophy, and not ask ourselves about its possibility), but indirectly through the transformation into an *ellipse* of the potential *circle* of Western European philosophy and the integration of Russian society into its structure. The very distortion of Western philosophy in Russian society, which we discovered as an expression of its ellipsoid structure, is an indirect indication of the presence of focus A. Thus, the malfunctioning of the normative structures of Western thinking and the systematic distortion of its semantic foundations, that is, the philosophical pathology itself, a kind of “stupidity” of Russian society, should not be considered as a destructive and entropic property, but as indirect and devious evidence of the influence and work of focus A, which does not appear directly, but through the consistent and persistent *sabotage* of Western mechanisms of philosophical thinking. The possibility of Russian philosophy is revealed to us through the impossibility of Russians’ adequate participation in the hermeneutical circle of Western European philosophy, in the very phenomenon of archeomodernity as a fundamental and systematic *normative* lie. Archeomodernity, which is a disease and perversion from the perspective of the West, reveals its potential from the point of view of a possible Russian philosophy if we recognize archeomodernity as archeomodernity and, thereby, encounter not its usual lie about itself, but the truth about itself. Then lies, illness and distortion will reveal their *causal* dimension to us, and we will see that this is not just a

“diminution” of the West along the path towards pure entropy, but *the result of the systematic and consistent work* of another autonomous authority [*instantsiya*]. In this case, we find the reason for the “stupidity” of the Russians, which gradually manifests itself as a conscious strategy of “rendering stupid” Western discourse, intentionally undermining its semantic integrity. Along with mental pathology, we can recognize in this a deliberate and precisely calculated *foolishness*, called upon to dismantle Western philosophy step-by-step through a conscious strategy of its decontextualization and sabotage.

Now we can take a fresh look at the words of Chaadayev:

In our best minds there is something even worse than lightness. The best ideas, devoid of connection and consistency, like barren delusions are paralyzed in our brains.³

“Worse than lightness” is the conscious strategy of Russian foolishness to undermine the coherence of the West European ratio. The fact that the “best ideas” are “paralyzed in our brains” is not an accident: we do it intentionally and consciously; we paralyze them, turn them into fruitless delusions, develop an antidote for them, quench them, nullify them, dissolve them.

From this point of view, archeomodernity is no longer just a *disease*, but a *deliberate disease*, a *rejection of the imposed standard of health* and, therefore, not just an incapacity for health in this sense, but a deliberate rejection of it, *the choice of disease as fate*, to the extent that the content and structure of the proposed imperative norms remain externally imposed, specifically by *Western-oriented elites*. This is a

kind of “*shamanistic disease*,” which is the first sign in archaic societies of the future shaman’s chosenness for special service. The shaman’s disease is not just an expression of his psychological, professional and social unsuitability, but the first step to a complex scenario of trials and experiences, as a result of which the shaman not only restores the parameters of his health, but acquires new supernatural healing properties that are considered miraculous and thanks to which he becomes the central figure of the tribe, responsible for solving the most important tasks concerning the functioning of society, nature, rites and social practices.

Archaics and αρχη

Now we can take a closer look at the *archaic* pole, focus A (Figure 1).

The very naming of this pole as “archaic” (hence the “archeo-” in “archeomodern”), corresponds, on one hand, to the phenomenological statement of its main functions (the influence of focus A on the interpretation of concepts and judgments within the framework of the hermeneutic ellipse brings to this interpretation a meaning that does not coincide with the modernist semantics of European philosophical discourse, due to the fact that it is “ancient,” “non-modern,” “backward”). On the other hand, we can take the word “archaic” even more carefully and see in it the concept of “beginning” (in Greek “αρχη”), not only in the historical, but also in the most general sense. Focus A, being the “archaic” pole, is the focus of the Beginning [*nachala*] (or even the First Beginning [*Pervonachala*, Origin]). And if we think through this meaning, we will be able to reconsider our attitude towards archeomodernity altogether. The pathology in this phenomenon is its inseparability, its indi-

visibility, the appearance of its integrity, the claim that it should be so. The lie relating to it is to pass off something artificial, contradictory, compound, painful and ugly as natural, consistent, orderly, integral and aesthetically acceptable. The pathology of archeomodernity consists in its refusal to recognize this pathological nature. As soon as this pathological nature will be recognized and accepted, attention will automatically be attracted to finding out the causes of the disease. And the search for causes, in turn, sooner or later will lead to the discovery of the hermeneutic ellipse and awareness of the composite nature of the archeomodern, as well as to the correct naming of its components. As soon as we recognize archeomodernity as a disease, we recognize it as archeomodernity. And vice versa, as soon as we realize that we are dealing with the archeomodern, we will immediately disclose it as a disease. A careful analysis of the morbidity of archeomodernity and its structure, reflection on its name and the meaning of the concepts included in it, will lead us to a fundamental conclusion: the reason for the emergence of archeomodernity is the collision of two antagonistic (or at least having a different root) principles [*nachal*], which are at different stages of relation with their own proper cores. This is a clash between the Western hermeneutic circle (Western philosophy, culture, history), which is in the phase of comprehensive development and at the peak of modernization, and another, Russian, principle [*nachal*] that is in a different cycle of development, at the initial stage of self-development, that is, in a state of maximum proximity to its core, in a state of “initial beginning [*nachal'nogo nachala*]” and even of “a not-yet-begun beginning.”

Modernity as the final product of the development of the Western principle

Western modernity is the result of the development of the *Western* principle [*nachala*]. And it finds its meaning only in *comparison* with this principle [*nachala*] and with the previous stages of its development, from the *Western* archaic to *Western* modernity.

It is easy to see that the West began to make claims to universality *not only in modernity*, insisting that its path of development is the universal fate of mankind, which Europe simply “lived faster and more fully than others.” Even at the dawn of Western civilization, in the Greek and Roman era, Greeks and Romans dismissively ranked representatives of other, non-Greek and non-Roman, cultures, even the most developed ones, as “barbarians” and considered them less “full-fledged” than they themselves, justifying thereby their “imperial” and “civilizational” ambitions. This is, however, not a property only of the Greeks and Romans, but is characteristic of all empires and even of individual tribes, classifying only their fellow tribesmen or citizens as “persons” or “people.”

Therefore, the claims of Western modernity to universality are not properties of modernity, but properties of *any* culture, in whatever condition and at whatever stage it may be. If in recent centuries the West has imposed itself as the “universality of modernization,” then earlier it imposed itself as the “universality of civilization” (Western Greco-Latin civilization), the “universality of the Christian ecumene,” and in relation to Eastern Christians (equated with “schismatics”), as the universality of the *Western* Christian (Catholic, or Catholic-Protestant) ecumene. No matter how the West justifies and substantiates its claim to universality, in the final analysis, it was and remains its *will to*

power on a planetary scale. Therefore, besides “propagandistic” rhetoric, the meaning of Western culture is given only and exclusively by its correlation with its own roots, origin [*nachala*], and Western *αρχη*. The modernization that the West brings with it today is the fruit of the development of its inner potential, nucleus, germ.

Versions of the merger of two different cultures

Russian archeomodernity cannot be viewed as the overlap of two different historical stages or phases of the same process: an advanced stage on a lagging, slowed down, decelerated stage. At issue is precisely the imposition of a *foreign* (and modernized) principle [*nachalo*] on [Russia’s] *own* principle [*nachalo*] (less modernized and *closer to the origins*), and not about imposing the new on the old. Moreover, this imposition is disharmonious, malformed, ugly, and sickly.

There are many examples of other impositions of cultures on each other, many versions of the acculturation, assimilation, integration and interpenetration of cultures. And we see in history that the conquerors and colonialists who manage to seize power and become the elite in the conquered societies are not always distinguished by a higher level of culture or technology. Examples are the Germanic barbarians who conquered the Western Roman Empire or the Seljuk Turks who conquered Byzantium. The ratio of the level of the differentiation of cultures (the measure of their distance from their own core and the development of the potentialities inherent in it) among ruling and subordinate peoples can be diverse. Therefore, in the case of emerging semantic dualities, *it is far from always the case (although it happens quite often) that the modern is*

dominant and the archaic is subordinate, and it can be vice versa, as in the case of the capture of more developed agrarian societies by nomads and their subordination. Each of the cultural principles [*nachal*] has its own structure, history and internal coherence. At the same time, it is absolutely not necessary that the superposition of these cultures gives rise to something similar to the *pathological ellipse* that we meet in Russian archeomodernity. In some situations, the cultures find a harmonious balance with each other and either distribute legitimate zones of domination (for example: in caste societies, and in societies divided into separate cultural enclaves according to territorial, ethnic or professional characteristics), or they gradually synthesize their semantic circles, creating a new original *circle* that unfolds around a *new* single focus, which can be located at different points in relation to the two previous focuses of the ellipse, closer to the focus of the conquerors or the conquered or between them, or even off to the side. In some situations, the conquered peoples assimilate the culture of the conquerors and begin to identify with it; in others, on the contrary, the conquerors dissolve into the conquered. In each case, it is important to trace the gradual emergence of the harmonious structure of a *new hermeneutic circle*, which predetermines such properties of a culture as its health and harmony or its pathology, artificiality and unnaturalness.

In the case of Russian archeomodernity, we are dealing with the case when there is a *complete discord* between the poles of the hermeneutic ellipse: neither of them can outweigh the other nor, moreover, enter into an intelligible and meaningful dialogue with the other. This is not a synthesis, not a complete displacement, not a transformation, not a fusion or combination. This is an uneasy conflict,

a stalemate where there is no way to compromise, create something new or clearly state the positions of both sides.

In any case, being recognized as sick, this hermeneutic situation opens up a whole spectrum of its possible solutions, since even purely theoretically *we can split this ellipse into two components* and, at first, separate them as far from each other as possible.

COMPREHENDING THE WEST OVERCOMING THE WEST LIBERATION FROM THE WEST

The nullity of pole A for the western hermeneutic circle

One of the poles distinguished in archeomodernity, focus B (Figure 1), represents a fully formed and concrete philosophical, historical and cultural reality with a center *outside* the Russian ellipse, in the history and culture of Western Europe, in the sequence and harmony of its internal development. A careful examination of the areas associated in archeomodernity with modernity allows us to accurately establish their proper semantics, correcting the distortions associated with the influence of the second focus A (Figure 1) and thereby clarifying the meaning or range of meanings of each of the elements considered in the Western European *circle*. Focus B is the *periphery* of the Western hermeneutic circle, and, taken as such, it is easily and consistently interpreted in the general structure of this circle.

Russian Westernism, therefore, can be interpreted as a glance thrown from the center of the Western circle to its periphery, as a border zone where “ours,” “this” (for the West) comes into contact with the “foreign,” “that.” But if we

take into account the universalist pretence of Western philosophy, then this border can be interpreted as the border of "fullness" or "everything" (for the West) with "nothing." This predetermines the "derogatory" nature of the European view of Russia, regardless of whether we are dealing with full-fledged Europeans living in Europe, with Russian Westernizers imitating Europeans or with Russified Europeans who have only partially retained their connection with European culture.

With regard to "*nothing*," Western philosophy can act in two ways: either artificially and mechanically project *its content into this "nothing*," that is, place itself, its projection there (which is the essence of the process of the Europeanization and modernization of Russia), or disdainfully *turn away*, equating it to "nature," the "pure object," the Kantian "noumenon," about the reality of which nothing can be said for sure.

It is easy to imagine a combination of both approaches: *projection mixed with ignorance*.

The problem of the border of the hermeneutic circle and the *problem of "nothing"* directly related to it are of great importance for Western philosophy, and we will return to it more than once. But this problem, posed with all clarity, has nothing to do with Russia; it has to do only and exclusively with Western civilization itself, which in some situations is faced with the problem of its internal borders and therefore with the problem of *nothing*, associated with the final clarification of its own certainty and integrity, since the problem of *nothing* can be posed only in the face of another, no less important problem, the problem of "everything," "wholeness." In addition, in many philosophical contexts the problem of "*nothing*" and "*boundaries*" is correlated with the problem of "*being*," no less important for Western philoso-

phy. But all this is an exclusively internal problem of the West and only the West. With the same success (and even with great success), it can extend not only to Russia, but to anything you like, to any sphere in which Western philosophical thinking fixes its *own* border (cultural, geographical, historical, etc.)

The “hidden harmony” of the West

If we focus on the structure of the Western European hermeneutic circle itself without correlating it with the Russian ellipse, we will find ourselves in a unique situation: a complete and harmonious philosophical, spiritual, cultural space with many floors, halls, rooms and corridors will open before us. We will see a *philosophical country*, with capitals and outskirts, huts of commoners and palaces of prominent noblemen, with mountains and abysses, heights and depths, phases and stages. And all this diversity, including many alternative routes and probabilities, is united by the common majestic structure of Western European *destiny*, its logic, its vector of development, its will and its mission. And everything together, including inherent and not yet realized possibilities, contains contexts and discourses, linguistic rivers and oceans, structures of philosophical meanings, multidimensional and diverse, multidirectional or parallel, dialectically intertwined or in conflict with each other, but following a common course and united by an internal, sometimes subtle, concealing “*harmony*,” the very “hidden harmony” that Heraclitus, one of the founders of Western philosophy, considered “better than the apparent.”

This “hidden harmony” of the West bestows the highest meaning and inner value to all elements of this culture,

from intensive philosophy to the most peripheral cultural, aesthetic, political, social, economic and everyday moments.

Renunciation in favor of the West

This hermeneutic circle may well be comprehended by a non-European if he makes sufficient effort to honestly and fundamentally assimilate Western values, if he gets used to this element, enters it, following one path or another somehow connected with the *whole*. The fate of the West is to a certain extent *open*, and those who decide to make it their own, regardless of their cultural origin, may well make it *their destiny* and enter into the legacy of this cultural tradition. There is nothing deliberately impossible in taking part in Western European philosophy and even under certain circumstances making a contribution to it. This opportunity is open to representatives of all ethnic groups, religions and civilizations.

But if representatives of established civilizations and clearly defined philosophical cultures (such as Islamic, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, etc.), accepting the basic principles of the West, reject one philosophical formalism, from *one hermeneutic circle in favor of another with complete and clear awareness of the change in the hermeneutic paradigm*, both implicit and explicit, then the Russian person, who makes the fate of the West his destiny, is called upon to renounce something exclusively *implicit*, unclear and unformed, which he himself, as a rule, cannot really express – to such an extent is it blurry, vague and indefinite. The Russian is called upon to renounce his perception as “*something*” of what Western philosophy and culture perceive as “*nothing*.” And, at first glance, nothing is simpler, since the Russian “*something*” remains at the level of intuition and vague

sensations, and at the intellectual level, it seems that it is not difficult to disregard this. However, this is where the whole difficulty lies. Acceptance of Western destiny for a Russian at first seems to be something simple due to the fact that he has practically *nothing to give up*. And the more he plunges into the Western hermeneutic circle, the less will remain of what he should have given up. But this process can lead to a paradox: by rejecting what Western philosophy sees as “*nothing*,” taking the side of the hermeneutic circle of the West, the Russian person does not reject *anything*. That is, he does not see the need to cross a border, leaving anything *on the other side*. But without giving up anything, the Russian *does not give up his Russianness*, which in such a situation seems “like nothing” [*nichtozhnoy*]. Without abandoning this “like nothing” [*nichtozhnoy*, insignificant] detail, the Russian carries out an *approximation*, equating “an insignificant [*nichtozhnoye*] something” (unformalized and indistinct) with pure “nothing.” Thus, he gets rid of the need to go through the procedure of inversion (conversion), from the rite of adaptation, from the most important moment of the paradigm shift. That means that he enters the Western European hermeneutic circle *as if nothing had happened*, finding himself from the first steps, as it were, inside this circle, already *on this side* of the border.

Not giving anything up, the Russian person does not give up his Russianness. It is too insignificant [*nichtozhna*] to give up. And Western culture itself only strengthens the Russian in this confidence. Therefore, the Russian moves into Western philosophy freely and uninhibitedly. At first, this does not affect him in any way. Therein lies the *catch*: since the Russian has not given up anything in his integration into the Western European circle, he arrives there basically the same as he was, that is, as a *Russian*. And it is here that the

Russian focus A (close to zero, but not zero; insignificant [*nichtozhnyy*] but still existing) makes itself felt. And precisely it at some stage begins to act as a “strange attractor,” gradually distorting the western circle and *turning it into an ellipse*. And so sooner or later we come to where we started, to a thrown off, distorted and pathological model of a blurring hermeneutics, to the archeomodern. In it, the structure of the Western European circle, its meanings and destinies, will elude us, gradually turn into grotesque indistinct images, and the contextual places will depart from their semantic orbits, intermingling in a bizarre construction of *intellectual hallucination*.

Of course, if the Russian leaves for the West and integrates into European life completely and irrevocably, after a certain time the Russian principle [*nachalo*] may disappear by itself, finding no intellectual support in Western culture, having no place, name or meaning. This principle [*nachalo*] can disappear, and the Russian can become a complete *European*, a full-fledged bearer of Western destiny. But if the Russian remains in Russia, where *archeomodernity is the dominant intellectual environment*, where all hermeneutical proportions are monstrously distorted and focus A (Figure 1) is constantly fueled by inexpressible, inarticulate but extremely *effective* and *influential* energies, then he has practically no chances of real Europeanization. Only a parody is possible. Russian archeomodernity is able to stomach not only the intention to become a European, but also the *Europeans themselves*, who may well at some stage fully Russify themselves in the cultural sense, that is, become stupid and extravagant self-parodies. And even those Russians who find themselves in the West due to circumstances, without knowingly having anything against Western culture, as numerous examples show, at some point begin to feel their

fundamental difference from this society with a different semantic structure and a different destiny. Sometimes it is they, the Russian emigrants in the West, who make the most impressive attempts to formalize and constitute the *Russian principle* [*nachalo*], indistinct and unformed, but clearly outside the cultural meanings of the West, into something more independent and separate. In other words, in emigration, Russians often begin to understand that this “almost nothing,” which was too insignificant [*nichtozhno*] to pay attention to, turned out to be far from so insignificant [*nichtozhno*], and moreover, its significance, neglected upon entering the European circle, is very great in the intellectual and cultural constitution of the Russian person. That is why we most often owe the most intelligible considerations regarding the peculiarities of the Russian soul, Russian culture, and even the possibility of Russian philosophy to Russians, who for one reason or another find themselves *outside* Russia and are able to look at the West, other countries and ourselves somewhat from the outside. It was those who did not dissolve in the West who made the greatest contribution to the positive rethinking of Russian originality [*samobytnosti*] (such, in particular, is the case of the Russian Eurasians, who formalized their intuitions precisely in the conditions of forced emigration to Europe).

Philosophy and the horizons of “non-stupidity”

The “insignificance” [*nichtozhnost*] of the Russian in the context of European culture greatly contributes to the *preservation and strengthening* of archeomodernity. It prevents us from formalizing the conflicting semantic coexistence of the two foci of the hermeneutic ellipse, separating their field, clearly understanding the border between the

Western circle and the Russian Beginning proper. It seems to us that we easily understand the West, and that this is natural for us. And while this affects only superficial everyday, technological, stylistic elements, everything goes smoothly. The assimilation of certain rational methods - for example, natural sciences and, in some cases, applied human sciences - is not a problem either. The only area where all internal contradictions are revealed and archeomodernity makes itself fully felt is *philosophy*. It is here that the whole abyss of archeomodern deformity is revealed. After starting to philosophize, thus touching the very nerve of Western culture, the force line of its fate, Russians very soon switch to dissonances, slippages, semantic shifts, confusion in concepts and judgments, generalizations and conclusions, demonstrating more and more clearly with each next step a deep degree of falling out of the very element of philosophizing, creating ridiculous chimeras, showing ardor and inspiration, sometimes even genius (but most often naivety and idiocy), where students of European school philosophy manage without any problems. But, as a rule, Russians themselves do not notice these incongruities when trying to philosophize, and, ecstatic from themselves, they copy the philosophizing Europeans - successfully or not very successfully - by imitating their behavior in the sphere of thought. Secretly, all Russians *surmise* that they are dealing with the "*imitation of thought*." But the specificity of archeomodernity is that it is based on a lie, and therefore this guess, or rather true knowledge, is carefully concealed, suppressed and dispersed, returning in waves of neurosis or sometimes psychosis, so characteristic of Russian philosophers, who often look more stupid than Russian non-philosophers, precisely because in their case, the original cultural distortion inherent in archeomodernity is placed in

the light of *the clear rays of Western philosophy*, in which all the absurdity comes out. But archeomodernity makes an effort and again *hides* the fact, pretending that “nothing is happening,” that “everything is normal” and “as it should be.” Since there are no criteria, a game begins in which a complete idiot can be recognized as a “philosopher,” who, due to many characteristics and reasons, has nothing at all to do with philosophy.

This moment is crucial in approaching a *cure* for archeomodernity. To distinguish the Western European hermeneutic circle, it is necessary to *separate* it, to peel it off from the archeomodern. But for this one must be able to distinguish stupidity from “*non-stupidity*.” To do this, you have to be “*not stupid*.” However, only the bearer of the Western European hermeneutic circle can be “not stupid” in this philosophical context. He, and *only* he, can clearly say: here is philosophy, and here is “non-philosophy.” But the issue is that Western European philosophers are not at all interested in understanding the works of Russian philosophers: what looks like Western philosophy in them, they interpret in a Western way, and what does not – the failures, absurdities, strains, inconsistencies, that is, the entire archeomodern apparatus of “thought imitation” – they do not notice or consider “a translation error.” Since Russia proper as the non-West is for them “nothing,” they are not troubled at all by these “insignificant” [*nichtozhnyye*] manifestations of “nothing,” moreover, someone else’s “nothing.”

So, Western Europeans are *indifferent* to the problem of distinguishing in Russian archeomodernity that which would be properly modern, although theoretically they are capable of it. And the Russians, themselves archeomodernists, are unable to distinguish between their imitation and what they imitate.

This creates the main *obstacle* to the formulation of the problem of the cure for archeomodernity, and, accordingly, the approach to understanding the possibility of Russian philosophy. Only there where it is possible to distinguish, isolate and remove the Western European hermeneutic circle from the archeomodern can one speak of the possibility of Russian philosophy, that is, the deployment of a special hermeneutic circle around the Russian focus A (Figure 1, dotted line). Or vice versa: it is possible to identify the Western European circle in the hermeneutic ellipse only from the standpoint of hypothetical (albeit potential, possible) Russian philosophy, since for this it is necessary to understand not only what Western European philosophy is, but also *where the sphere of its competence ends in the Russian context* and where the *properly Russian* begins. At the same time, the *properly Russian* should be taken here not only as something intuitively grasped, but as the *Beginning*, more precisely, as the *Beginning of philosophy*, capable of unfolding into a full-fledged structure comparable in scope, parameters and horizons to both Western European philosophy, as well as Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Arabic and other philosophies.

The sequence of operations in the construction of Russian philosophy

The isolation of the archeomodern as such, the ability, without closing one's eyes, to face its truth, is in itself a substantiation of the possibility of Russian philosophy, because if this possibility did not exist, there would be no position from which it would be possible to recognize the hermeneutic ellipse as a figure with *two* foci: after all, we saw that the Europeans cannot come to this conclusion for

one reason, and the Russians trying to imitate philosophizing in the Western European spirit cannot do so for another reason. Only where there is the possibility of precisely *Russian* philosophy, that is, only where focus A is perceived as a potential pole of the Russian philosophical circle, as a philosophical ἀρχή, as a Russian *philosophical* Beginning, is it possible:

- to call archeomodernity “archeomodernity,”
- to describe its structure correctly,
- to separate the Western European philosophical circle from the archeomodern ellipse,
- to prepare the space for focusing attention on the construction of Russian philosophy.

And all this is not a sequence of several operations, but *one and the same operation*, since all movements within this topology are possible only during the implementation of a certain *single* generalizing step, which unfolds in all directions at once. Everything comes down to reflecting anew again and again on the figure of the hermeneutic *ellipse*: this is the key. Comprehending this image, we can take the following successive steps:

1) undertake to articulate the structure of Western European philosophy;

2) begin the study of archeomodernity through the correct interpretation of its main methodologies, in each of which at this stage it is possible to single out the properly Western European component, which will henceforth

become meaningful and unambiguous for us (not ambiguous);

3) by the method of *subtraction* from archeomodernity of the European philosophical cosmos proper, obtain a *remainder* that does not lend itself to correct interpretation within these frameworks, and thereby outline the zone of the probable location of properly Russian – archaic – meanings;

4) in the zone of archaic Russian meanings, try to identify the approximate *structure*, preliminary and intuitively outlining the center and periphery;

5) begin to clarify the actual Russian hermeneutic *circle*, proving the possibility of Russian philosophy by the very *construction* of Russian philosophy, that is, by its explicit derivation from the implicit Russian philosophical Beginning (*ἀρχή*)

Along with this basic sequence, we can also focus on other directions, take different paths and different routes. The main thing is to think through archeomodernity as such and to look for opportunities to overcome it.

Heidegger's significance for escaping the hermeneutic ellipse

We have appealed to the name of Martin Heidegger more than once when declaring the initiative to clarify and ground the possibility of Russian philosophy.

Heidegger is important for us already because he is the greatest Western European philosopher who lived close to our time and, therefore, actualized the central themes of this philosophy. In addition, Heidegger himself considered

himself a thinker *completing European philosophy* and composing a detailed *epitaph* of this philosophy. In this sense, he was a *reverse prophet*: he proclaimed *the future meaning of the past*, while ordinary prophets simply describe the future, endowing it as a rule with a meaning borrowed from the past and the present. And, finally, a careful study of the entirety of Heidegger's legacy shows that he created a fully fledged and comprehensive *history of philosophy* based on distinguishing the main points of its logic, its algorithm, which makes it easier to understand the structure of its hermeneutic circle and is fundamental for those seeking and hoping to understand it from its *beginning* and to its *end*.

For the problem of breaking open Russian archeomodernity, Heidegger's philosophy and its correct comprehension can be of *decisive* importance.

The closed cycle of Russian misunderstanding

Having recognized the archeomodern as archeomodern, that is, in its truth, we necessarily came to the conclusion that Russians, being under the pressure of the archeomodern, are unable, by virtue of this very fact, to understand Western European philosophy, and this inability, according to the rules of the archeomodern, is expressed in their confidence that they are all very capable, indeed. This cannot be realized within the framework of the hermeneutic ellipse, but the *recognition of this inability* is in itself a decisive step towards overcoming archeomodernity. And as soon as we admit that *we do not understand* and, while maintaining such conditions, *cannot understand* Western European philosophy, with one gesture we will free the space from pseudo-understanding and, in particular, from the tangled legacy that constitutes garbage, a burden and a trap. Having crossed out

any judgment made by Russian philosophers *about anything* as admittedly *irrelevant* in all senses, we will prepare the space for a new appeal to Western philosophy, which will become a *place* for new clarification: are we unable to do this *in general* or *only* within the framework of archeomodernism (and outside this framework, perhaps we can)? The answer will be determined in the process of how, recognizing the unconditional inability to do this within the framework of archeomodernity and bracketing everything that somehow relates to this (that is, everything in the work of Russian and Soviet philosophers), we will set about comprehending the structure of the Western hermeneutic circle *from scratch*, recognizing that we know neither what is particular nor what is general in it, neither its center, nor its periphery, neither its structure, nor the vectors of the main processes occurring within it. But if so, then we will have to deliberately refuse the opportunity to translate Western European philosophical literature from Parmenides to Deleuze into Russian and doubt the possibility of adequately understanding it with the Russian consciousness in the original language; after all, that language itself is part of the Western European hermeneutic circle, which we agreed to consider unknown. Therefore, we simply must take from somewhere an *initial idea* all at once about the whole, and the particular, and the structure, and processes, and functions, and about a set of arguments, and paradigms, and syntagms, and language, and discourse. In practice, this means that we would have to take as a starting point a philosopher who would compose the most intelligible and convincing, and at the same time compact and near to us in time, history of philosophy, *holographically enclosing the history of the entire West, its culture, society and thinking.*

Believing Heidegger

We cannot understand Western philosophy precisely because we do not have in our own culture a *point* where its meanings intersect – a nucleus, which by the fact of genetic belonging would be something that gives a multitude of philosophical and cultural phenomena integrity, coherence, consistency and harmony. As something taken for granted within European culture, this point, this core, is *rarely* described explicitly by Western philosophers. Only at certain critical periods of Western history do great thinkers take such a clarification seriously.

Martin Heidegger is just such a thinker, and he thought precisely at a *critical* moment in Western European history, when it reached its extreme limit and *faced the fundamental problem of “nothing,”* being called upon in an extreme situation to carry out a *deep revision* of its content, its structure, its core and its history and to describe it in *explicit* terms. All this was done by Heidegger. He gives us, Russians, a unique opportunity to understand what *naturally* we cannot understand. Heidegger in this sense is especially unique precisely for us. He speaks directly about what constitutes the basis of Western philosophy, reflecting on its Beginning and its End, as well as the possibility of its other Beginning¹. For Heidegger, the path of this philosophy is fundamentally completed, and in the nihilism of the twentieth century it found its exhaustion and its limit. Therefore, only now this philosophy is *visible in its entirety* - from its origins to its extreme limits, and, therefore, it lies in front of us entirely as *an unfolded actuality*. Not everyone can realize this in the proper measure and, perhaps, no one can do it *properly*, but Heidegger, just like Nietzsche, addressing “everyone and no one,” does it in a piercing and clear manner.

For the possibility of Russian philosophy, Heidegger's thought

can become a starting point. If we believe Heidegger, if we accept his philosophy not just as a *part* of Western European philosophy, but as its *sum*, telling us about its entire structure as a whole, we, under certain circumstances, will be able to overcome our fatal limitation and step *on the other side of the archeomodern*. This does not mean that we will *project* Heidegger's philosophy onto *our* cultural environment – this is useless and unnecessary and will only exacerbate the pathology. We must consider Heidegger and his ideas *beyond the Russian ellipse*, within the purely European cultural circle.² Moreover, *one should take Heidegger's philosophy for this cultural circle itself*, for its *holographic* expression, with which one can work in such a way that, in a limited time and in a limited space, we will get, albeit schematical and general, still full-fledged ideas about the structure of *all* Western philosophy.

Alternatives to Heidegger

The question is: *can we trust Heidegger?* The answer can be given using proof by contradiction.

In order *not to trust* Heidegger, one must have certain reasons and arguments drawn from a particular source. *Which one?* For example, from the philosophy of some other Western European philosopher. This is logical, but for this, the “other European philosopher” must meet certain conditions. He must:

1) create a complete, comprehensive and convincing picture of the *history of philosophy*, 2) be *great*, brilliant and dazzlingly wise,

3) raise in his philosophy the most *central questions*, about the beginning, being, thinking, etc.

4) try in his philosophy to describe the very *structure* of Western European philosophy *as a whole*, and not only particulars and separate directions,

5) to be *as close to us in time* as possible and to take into account the most important events in the philosophical process, and more broadly, in Western European history itself.

I cannot even remotely think of a single name other than Heidegger that would be appropriate to mention here. Perhaps Wittgenstein and Husserl, but for all their undoubted genius and relevance, they are lost in comparison with Heidegger, and the most valuable moments of their philosophizing are somehow touched upon and developed by Heidegger. The same can be said of Nietzsche, whom Heidegger considered the "last philosopher," but whose reading today is difficult even to imagine *outside* of Heidegger's interpretation. If, nevertheless, someone nominates this or that candidate, a priori this should not be opposed (except for frankly ridiculous proposals), but the general approach should be the same: we need a genius European thinker who is close to us in time and has developed a full-fledged and explicit history of philosophy. In the 19th century, Hegel was such an indisputable figure, and it was through him alone that it was possible to somehow relate to Western philosophy. In the 20th century, in a left-wing political context, Marx, who continued and developed Hegel, performed a similar function in some way. Starting from Hegel and Marx, any non-European culture could rapidly form a certain idea of European

culture in its main historical and socio-political dimensions. But the 21st century dictates different conditions, and I don't see any thinker even remotely comparable to Heidegger.

The second possibility for doubting the adequacy of choosing Heidegger stems from archeomodernity. The hypnosis of this structure, firstly, *removes the idea of the need to comprehend Western European philosophy from scratch* (for which the history of philosophy is necessary), and secondly, developing this first unhealthy opinion, generates a persistent and unfounded confidence that the “modern Russian philosopher” and even simply “someone interested in philosophy” can “freely” make this or that conclusion, that is, question and criticize anyone and anything only on the basis of “personal views, ideas and preferences.” The fact that an individual is not able to create a philosophy relying only on his own individuality and outside of reliance on the cultural context is clear to everyone except complete liberal fanatics, but we will not consider their case in detail. We are looking for ways to overcome the archeomodern, to go beyond its borders. Anyone who disagrees with this initiative simply should not be taken into account.

The Main Moments of Western Philosophy

We presented and analyzed Heidegger's ideas and the main points of his history of philosophy in the book *Martin Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning*.³ What is important for us now is how to *apply* this analysis to another problem: *to go beyond archeomodernity through a clear understanding of the structure of the Western European hermeneutic circle*. Therefore, referring to the previous book for a more meaningful and detailed analysis of Heidegger's ideas, we

will reproduce here only the most general scheme concerning the history of philosophy.

1. *Heidegger identifies the history of Western philosophy with the destiny of the West.*

2. He considers the West itself to be a *universal* phenomenon, and its destiny as universally binding for all mankind.

3. At the same time, this destiny is *unique* and relates only to Europe.

4. Western humanity is a *hologram* of all humanity; this is its universality, its peculiarity and its philosophical *mission*, which coincides with philosophy itself.

5. The philosophy of the West has a strictly fixed *Beginning* (the first Beginning: Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides) and a strictly fixed *End* (Hegel, Nietzsche). The entire structure of Western European metaphysics extends between them.

6. Heidegger reduces the meaning of this metaphysics to the ontological problem, to different versions of the interpretation of the relationship between *being* (Sein) and *beings* (Seiende) and to a choice between two possibilities of understanding being: Sein and Seyn.

7. Having gone through all possible stages of development, Western metaphysics in the twentieth century reached the threshold of the realization that in the course of its history it lost *being*, which was replaced by its opposite, *nothing*.

8. In the final form of the *loss of being* and the placement of *nothing* in the center lies the *meaning of modernity*, the culmination of which was the philosophy of Nietzsche,

clearly marking for the first time the “death of God” and the onset of the era of “European nihilism.”

9. According to Heidegger, such an ending was *laid up in the very beginning of Western philosophy*, which related to *being as a being* and by this move (*only partly true*) predetermined the fate of the West.

10. Western history is the living of the tragic *loss of being*.

11. In the 20th century, this drama reached its denouement. The grand and successive stages of this tragic experience became the meaning of history. It took two and a half thousand years and the highest tension of spiritual forces to embody this tragic state of affairs in culture, philosophy and history.

This is, in general terms, the structure of Western philosophy and its hermeneutic circle as described by Heidegger.

Nothing and Catastrophe

In the center of the circle is the problem of *being*, formulated by the pre-Socratics, and later by Plato and Aristotle. This problem was framed in special terms, in a special context and perspective, which predetermined the destiny of the West. This destiny is directly related to these initial definitions, in the semantic and even linguistic sense, and this *semantic-linguistic connection* played a decisive role at different stages of the development of this history, predetermining the axis of the development of Western philosophy. It is important not only that *being* has become a problem; it is also important in what terms, words, concepts and images, in what etymological and semantic context, this

problem was originally formulated. All subsequent reformulations, translations and paraphrases in one way or another correlated precisely with the primary forms.

Language itself as a phenomenon stands at the center of philosophy; the content of the language expresses the structures of thinking. Hence the conclusion about the *organic unity of Western culture*, which is fastened together by the commonality of semantic groups, logical and linguistic structures, and philosophical attitudes operating in all periods with the preservation of internal *philosophical structures* that hold everything together into something common, a *whole*.

Between the pre-Socratics and Nietzsche, a *rope* is stretched along which, balancing, with pirouettes, jumps, retreats, and complex and risky movements, Western European metaphysics moved. Everything in Western culture - from the most sublime religious contemplations to the simplest technical means, motivations and everyday attitudes - is permeated with the rays of this metaphysics, drawing its sense, content and significance from it. The entire history of the West is a *text* whose sense (intension) and significance (extension) merge in the structure of this metaphysics, centered on the problem of *being*. This centrality is not always explicit, but always dominant. Even the absence of the question of being is interpreted with reference to it, as *the will of being itself, willing its concealment* (*Seinsverlassenheit*).

Even deeper lies the *relationship of being with nothing*. In Western metaphysics, one can rarely find their *genuine* (according to Heidegger) correlation; it either declares, in the spirit of Parmenides, that, "non-being is not" ("and in vain," Heidegger asserts, since "non-being is"), or, in the spirit of Plato, it places being in the realm of the highest idea

(thus eliminating it from *non-being* and equating it with *beings*), or, in the spirit of Plotinus, it reduces non-being to a diminution of the One, or, in the case of Hegel, who is as close as possible to the true proportions, it cloaks the ontological problematic and the problem of *nothing* in a mistaken system of "concepts" ("notions"). *Nothing* lost sight of and *being* incorrectly represented and understood lead Western metaphysics along a path that unfolds an indication of *how and in what* the error occurred. This is expressed in the development of technology and Gestell, which are mechanisms of *effective nihilism*, returning *nothing* in a brutal and destructive form to where it was too hasty and lightly abolished.

Thus, the history of philosophy, according to Heidegger, like Western history as such, is the *history of a catastrophe* - a fundamental universal *metaphysical catastrophe*. It was that which developed from Heraclitus to Nietzsche where it fundamentally ended. The fact that technology has not yet completely destroyed humanity, Heidegger explains by the *delay* necessary for the surrounding world to come into line with the world of ideas, in which everything has already taken place. True, this *delay* may have another meaning.

For Heidegger himself, as a man of the West, the end of Western European philosophy is also *a matter exclusively for the West*. Only the West possesses the key to philosophy itself, and accordingly, only it understands the *meaning of its End*. This is entirely true, since both the End and the Beginning (the first Beginning) *mean* something concrete *only* in the context of the Western European hermeneutic circle itself. The meaning of the End of Philosophy, according to Heidegger, is to comprehend *how wrong initially* the trajectory was along which the development of this philosophy went. And it is the realization of its falsity that should lead

the West to the truth and to a *new Beginning* (another *Beginning*).

The discovery of Dasein and its significance

This is where the most important thing lies. Exploring the structure of the original error and preparing the ground for a *new* (another) *Beginning* and following on this path the line of Husserl, phenomenology in general and the philosophy of life, as well as the structuralist approach, Heidegger, in consonance with the late Wittgenstein, turns to what *remains* from the *genuine* moments of thinking *after* all Western European *metaphysics* has been *subtracted* from it. Its End serves as an impulse pushing Heidegger to clarify that *basic pre-metaphysical and even pre-philosophical certainty* on the basis of which the entire later construction was built. This is how he arrives at the concept of *Dasein* (also related are Husserl's thesis about the "life world" (*Lebenswelt*), Wittgenstein's concept of a "language game" (*Sprachspiel*) and the "structure" of structuralist philosophy).

Dasein is that unconditional [*to bezuslovnoye*] that lies at the basis of philosophy, but that in the process of the formation of Western European thought is consolidated in its inauthentic state: this is how Heidegger interprets "ontology" as a whole. *What in this Dasein is universal and what is properly Western?* This is an extremely important question. *Dasein* is discovered as a fundamental phenomenon in the West and, to a large extent, as a deep critical reflection on the very nature of Western philosophy and metaphysics. In this genetic and historical dimension, *Dasein* is a discovery of the West, intelligible in the context of the Western hermeneutic circle. But at the same time, it itself is the result of subtracting from the general ontic phenomenon of

man properly Western philosophy and metaphysics; that is, it is a *remnant* that has survived after bracketing ontology, in other words, *what remains of the West*, if we subtract it from it - purely *Western* - history (and the history of philosophy).

But can Dasein then belong strictly to the moment of the Western hermeneutic circle, if its meaning consists in *liberation from this very circle*? This is indicated even more clearly by the perspective of *another Beginning* and the associated *Ereignis*, which Heidegger thinks of as a *leap* away from Western metaphysics. According to Heidegger, this *leap* can only be carried out by Western philosophy itself, which is called upon to adequately decipher itself as a two-and-a-half thousand-year *error*. Only then is it possible to turn to a *new Beginning*. But to be pure, this *Beginning* must be completely *different*, that is, in a sense, non-Western, correlated with the West in a radically opposite way, as truth is correlated with falsehood.

If we take Heidegger's proposal for a *new Beginning* with full seriousness and responsibility, then it *will cease to be addressed only to the West*. Being a denial of the West, though not simple, but rooted in a deep rethinking of the entire path of Western history, this *Beginning* can *also* be referred to a *non-Western context*. What is precisely and strictly Western is *philosophy* and the hermeneutic circle corresponding to it; the philosophy, moreover, arising from the *first Beginning* and built on it, originating from it and in accordance with it having come to an end in Nietzsche and European nihilism. Dasein is *Western* to the extent that this philosophy is *built on* it and (in the opposite way, through the mode of inauthentic existence) expressed in it. But in itself *Dasein is quite conceivable outside the West*. Yes, in order to understand it it is useful to look at the whole picture of Western European philosophy; it will become intelligible and solid in this correlation.

But if we manage to do this operation correctly, we will arrive at something that is a *basic phenomenon of human presence, being and thinking* in their pure - pre-philosophical, pre-beginning - form. The fact that Heidegger unearthed this storey in the origins of Western European philosophy and at the same time discovered it under its rubble is an extremely important circumstance, but not decisive for the nature of Dasein. The nature of Dasein is not Western - neither logically, nor historically, nor metaphysically. For the West, Dasein manifests itself in philosophy and history *in a Western way*. But there are cultures and societies, there are spheres of being and human manifestation, where Dasein is present, but manifests itself *differently* than in the West. It is almost impossible for a Westerner to admit this, but for other cultures such “racism” is unnecessary. In a philosophical sense, there is only a Western man, but when we go beyond the horizons of philosophy, we find man, and being, and thinking in other places. It is significant that according to some Japanese intellectuals - for example, Tomonobu Imamichi - Heidegger himself got the idea of Dasein from Japanese sources, specifically from the work of the Japanese commentator Okakuro Kakuzo’s *The Book of Tea*.⁴ In short, if we carefully think through Dasein, we may well find its signs in a wide variety of cultures, both developed and primitive. If there is a person, there must be Dasein.

And here we touch on the most important thing. In relation to Russian archeomodernity and the corresponding hermeneutic ellipse, Heidegger can serve as a double key:

1. He allows us to generalize the Western European hermeneutic circle, to distinguish it within the hermeneutic ellipse and thus make it possible to

correctly and unambiguously interpret any moment, concept or episode of philosophy in the context of structured Western European metaphysics (Heidegger himself calls this operation “phenomenological destruction,” which Derrida later designated as “deconstruction.”) This means that for the first time Russians will actually get the opportunity to *formulate the adequate proportions of philosophy*, regardless of whether they join its current *nihilistic state*, turning it into *their destiny* (this will be a responsible and conscious choice, like voluntary suicide) or *place it at a fair distance*, beyond the limits of Russian being itself, as an extraneous object that does not give rise to any illusions (which will be liberation from a centuries-old intellectual dictatorship and the acquisition of true freedom of thought);

2. By introducing Dasein and the methodology of its existential analytics, Heidegger gives us an initial toolkit that can be used to clarify the nature of the *Russian Beginning* proper. He opens the way to clarifying the prerequisites for the possible explication of Russian philosophy according to the scenario and within the framework of that structure that are laid down as its *own* true destiny in this Beginning; this will then be the Russian *new Beginning*. At the same time, if for the West at issue is *another* Beginning, then for the Russians it is the *first* Beginning, since what was the *first Beginning* for the West has not yet begun for us, and what supposedly

“began” was a misunderstanding, a “false start” and historical anecdote.

Having exerting ourselves and understood Heidegger, we find ourselves in radically new philosophical conditions: the hermeneutic ellipse blocking Russian thought collapses, the wheel of Western European metaphysics rolls away from it to the proper distance, leaving us alone with the Russian pole, with focus A, and nothing else prevents us from focusing all our attention on it. We embark on this task not blindly and not in the negative mode of discarding everything that reminds us of the West but armed with a preliminary apparatus developed in order to describe and study phenomena that lie outside Western metaphysics.

You can call this orientation *Russian phenomenology* or the analytic of *Russian Dasein*. This, of course, is far from the beginning of Russian philosophy, but it is, at least, a step towards grounding its possibility and formalizing those *premises* on which it can be based in the future.

We are coming to the origins of considering *Russian destiny* as that which is hidden in the depths of *Russians* as a phenomenon. The fact that Heidegger's philosophy (more broadly, the phenomenological method) serves us in this matter can be considered a *preliminary* phase, followed by the *Russian* stages proper - both in the linguistic and methodological sense - and as compensation for that “colonial” influence that Western culture had on Russia, blocking the prospects of our free and harmonious development.

NOTES

Introduction: The significance of Heidegger and his history of philosophy for Russia

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1. A People without a Philosophy

1. See Rene Guenon, 1964. *Introduction generale a l'etude des doctrines hindoues*. Paris; and Guenon, 1976. *Orient et Occident*. Paris.
2. Louis Dumont, 1979. *Homo Hierarchicus*. Paris: Gallimard; Dumont, 1991. *Essais sur l'individualisme*. Paris: Seuil. In the second book the famous French sociologist Louis Dumot shows convincingly that Indian culture and philosophy are based on individualism and a negative evaluation of immanent sociality not less, if not more, than modern Western liberal bourgeois culture or Western Christian religion, but it does so in a completely different way and arrives at completely different forms – askesis, detachment, contemplation, submergence into the self, yoga, etc.
3. Here you can pay attention to the following. Arabic and, more broadly, Islamic philosophy is certainly a large-scale phenomenon and is indisputable. There is no doubt about the uniqueness [samobytnost] and originality of Islamic thinking and its theological basics. But one cannot but note the huge role played in the formation of Islamic philosophy by Greek philosophy, widespread throughout Hellenistic world, a significant part of which entered into the composition of the Caliphate, dating back to the era of Islamic conquests.

Another important segment of Islamic philosophy were philosophers of the Central Asian region belonging to the pre-Islamic philosophical tradition of Iranian origin. So cumulatively original Semitic religiosity was superimposed in Islam on very significant blocks of Greek and Iranian thinking. In China, recognizing the uniqueness and originality of the proper Chinese philosophical schools - Taoism and Confucianism - it is worth paying attention to the role of Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy, extremely widespread in China and having Indo-European origin. These considerations require careful research into the question to what extent Islamic and Chinese

philosophy were precisely Arabic and Chinese, and on the other, to what extent they were philosophies at all, that is, clearly structured self-reflective systems of rational and systematized knowledge. In Islam it is quite possible to highlight an original Arab-Semitic religious dogmatism, consonant partly with Judaism, on which philosophy was superimposed (this is argued by representatives of so-called "Pure Islam," Salafis and Wahhabis calling to cleanse Islam of precisely "philosophy"). In China it is worth taking a closer look at the question of what in the Confucian and the Taoist tradition of China is properly philosophical and what can be interpreted as ethical and social teachings that do not put philosophical (epistemological, ontological, etc.) problems in the center of rational consideration with an appropriate level of self-reflection. But these considerations in no way detract from the significance and the identity of either Islamic or Chinese philosophy.

2. The Hermeneutic Ellipse and its Structure

1. Heidegger M. 1943. *Heraklit 1. Die Anfang des abenländischen Denkens*. Heidegger M. 1944. 2. *Logik, Heraklits Lehre vom Logos*. Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Fink E. 1970. *Heraklit: Seminar mit Martin Heidegger*. Frankfurt am Main.
2. Dugin A.G. *Sociology of the Imagination*. Introduction to Structural Sociology. Moscow: Academic Project, 2010; Dugin A.G. *Logos and Mythos. Sociology of the Depths*. Moscow: Academic Project, 2010;
Bachelard G. *Earth and Revelries of Will: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter* (Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 2002; Corbin H. *L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*. R.: Flammarion, 1977, and especially: Durand G. *Les Structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Paris, 1960.
3. Dugin A.G. 2011. *Arheomodern*. Dugin A.G. 2009. *The Radical Subject and its Double*. Moscow: The Eurasian Movement, pp. 285-381. Dugin, 2009. Video lectures on *Arheomodern* from the course "The Sociology of Russian Society," Moscow State University. <http://evrazia.tv/content/sociologiya-russkogo-obshchestva-lekciya-2-arheomodern>
4. Dugin A. 2017. *The Rise of the Fourth Political Theory*. London: Arktos Media.
5. Spengler O. 1963. *Der Untergang des Abendlandes – Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*. München: C.H. Beck
6. Dugin A.G. *The Rise of the Fourth Political Theory*, Chapter 3

7. Dostoyevsky F. 2005. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc. p. 203. Slightly modified from the original [omitting the phrase "father of the present one" after "first emperor of the French."]
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. Translation slightly modified.
10. Ibid., p. 83. Translation slightly modified.
11. Ibid., p. 109.
12. In these plots, Sataniel seeks to compete with God, but he does not succeed in any way, since he tries to create the likeness of God's creations from the wrong material. See Russian Mythology. Encyclopedia. Moscow: Eksmo, 2006.
13. Scheler, M. 1972. *Ressentiment*. New York: Schocken
14. Dugin A.G. 2000. *Russkaya Veshch'*. Moscow: Arktogetya
15. The Werner Hertog film "Aguirre, The Wrath of God" conveys the existential condition of the European romantic type with nuance.
16. The figures of such prominent leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, like Theophan Prokopovich (1681-1736) and Stefan Yavorsky (1658-1722), both Little Russians. Fiercely arguing among themselves, these two church hierarchs essentially transferred to Russian soil European disputes between Protestants and Catholics: Prokopovich defended Protestant positions, and Yavorsky, Catholic-Jesuit ones.

3. The Philosophers of Archeomodernity

1. [Translator's note: This phrase rhymes in Russian.]
2. Vladimir Soloviev, *Russia and the Universal Church* (London: The Centenary Press, 1948).
3. Asmus A.F., Soloviev: An Attempt at a Philosophical Biography // Questions of philosophy. 1992, no. 8.
4. Otto R. The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational. London: Oxford University Press, 1958; Jung K.G. Archetype and symbol. Moscow: Renaissance, 1991.
5. The structure of Solovyov's thinking exactly matches what Gilbert Durand called the functioning imagination in the mode of "mystical nocturne." In psychiatry, this is described as "glischroid" (literally, "glue") syndrome associated with epileptic disorders. See Dugin A.G. Sociology of the Imagination. Introduction to Structural Sociology. Moscow: Academic Project, 2010; Dugin, Logos and Mythos. Sociology of Depths. Moscow: Academic Project, 2010; and Durand G. Les Structures Anthropologiques de l'Imaginaire. Paris, 1960.

6. V.S. Soloviev Three Forces // Soloviev V.S. The Meaning of Love. Selected Works, Moscow, 1991 pp. 28-40.
7. Soloviev V. Works in 2 vols. Vol. 2, Moscow, 1988. p. 227.
8. See the main work of Fyodorov: Fyodorov N. Philosophy of the Common Task: in 2 volumes. Moscow, 2003.
9. P. Florensky, Imaginaries in Geometry. Mimesis International, 2021.
10. You can get an idea of the style of this work based on the following excerpt from it. - "However, considering the interpretation of imaginary numbers that is suggested here, we can visualize how, having been reduced to zero, the body sinks through the surface that bears the corresponding coordinate, turns back on itself, and as a result acquires imaginary characteristics. Figuratively speaking, and if we have a concrete, and not figurative, understanding of the space, one can say that the space *breaks* at velocities that exceed the speed of light, just like air breaks when bodies move at speeds higher than the speed of sound; and this gives rise to qualitatively new conditions of the existence of the space, characterized by imaginary parameters. However, just like the collapse of the geometrical figure does not imply its elimination but only its transition to the other side of the surface, and consequently its accessibility to the beings located *there*, in the same way as the imaginary character of a body's parameters must be understood not as a sign of its unreality but merely as the evidence of its transition to another reality. The imaginary realm is real, comprehensible, and in Dante's language it is called the *Empyrean*. We can picture all space as *double*, made up of real and imaginary Gaussian coordinate surfaces that match the real ones, but the transition from the real surface to the imaginary one, however, is only possible by *fracturing* the space and *turning* the body inside itself. In the meantime, we can only picture this process through the increase in speeds - perhaps the speeds of certain particles of the body - beyond the threshold velocity *c* as the means to bring about such a process, although we have no proof that other means are possible." Florensky, *Imaginaries* pp. 62-63.
11. Ilarion Shimonakh On the Caucasus Mountains. St. Petersburg., 1998.
12. Bulgakov S.N. Philosophy of the Name. Moscow, 1997.
13. Soloviev V.S. Works in Two Volumes. Moscow, 1988. Vol. 2. pp. 704 - 762.
14. Bulgakov S. The Apocalypse of John: An Essay in Dogmatic Interpretation, Paris, 1948.
15. Leontiev's wife, Crimean Greek Elizaveta Politova, suffered from a severe form of schizophrenia that allows one to suspect in Leontiev himself a certain pull toward psychopathology.
16. Leontiev K.N. Byzantism and Slavism. // Leontiev K.N. East, Russia and the Slavs: Philosophical and Political Journalism. Spiritual Prose

- (1872-1891). Moscow, 1996.
17. Danilevsky N.Y. Russia and Europe. A Look at the Cultural and Political Relations of the Slavic World to the Romano-German World. St. Petersburg, 1995. https://slavica.indiana.edu/bookListings/history/Russia_Europe
 18. Danilevsky N.Y. Darwinism. A Critical Study. Vols. 1-2. St. Petersburg, 1885-89.
 19. Spengler O. Decline of the Europe. Moscow, *Mysl'*, 1993.
 20. Toynbee A. A. Study of History. Moscow: Progress, 1990.
 21. Savitsky P.N. Continent Eurasia. Moscow: Agraf, 1997.
 22. Trubetskoy N.S. Genghis Khan's legacy. Moscow: Agraf, 1999.
 23. Savitsky P. N. Continent Eurasia
 24. Trubetskoy N.S. Religions of India and Christianity / Trubetskoy N.S. Genghis Khan's Legacy. pp. 293-328.
 25. Florovsky G. Eurasian temptation / Florovsky G. From the Past of Russian Thought. Moscow: Agraf, 1998. pp. 324-325.
 26. Florovsky G. Ways of Russian Theology. Kiev: Path to Truth, 1991.
 27. Chaadaev P.Ya. Philosophical letters / Chaadaev P.Ya. Complete Works and Selected Letters. Volume 1, Moscow, Publishing House "Science," 1991.
 28. Ibid. pp. 20-21.
 29. Ibid. p. 15 <http://pirate.shu.edu/~knightna/imperialrus/Chaadeav.htm>
 30. Ibid. pp. 17-18.
 31. Ibid. p.19.
 32. Ibid. p.21.
 33. Quoted. in I. Simonova. Correspondence of a Westerner and Slavophile: letters from Vladimir Pecherin to Fedor Chizhov // *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 20.02.2008 (<http://religion.ng.ru/printed/206632>)
 34. See Pecherin - Gershenzon M. The life of V.S. Pecherin. Moscow, 1910; Streikh S. V. S. Pecherin abroad in 1833-1835 / Russian past. Historical collection. Pg., 1923; Pecherin V.S. Burial notes. / Russian society of the 1830s. People and Ideas: Memoirs of Contemporaries. Moscow, 1989.
 35. Herzen, Pisma Filozoficzne [Philosophical Works], 476. Cited in Riasanovsky, Russia and the West, 89.
 36. Rozanov V. Fleeting. M.: Respublika, 1994. p. 14.
 37. Ibid. p. 14.
 38. Ibid., p. 207.
 39. Ibid. pp. 95-96.
 40. Ibid. p. 354
 41. Ibid. p. 172
 42. Rozanov V. Sugarna. Moscow: Respublika, 1998. p. 27.
 43. Rozanov V. Last Leaves. Moscow: Republic, 2000. p. 143.

44. Ibid. p. 143.
45. Rozanov V. Fleeting. Decree. op. p. 193.
46. Ibid. p. 281.
47. Rozanov V.V. Apocalypse of our Time. Moscow: Moskovskaya Pravda, 2001.
48. Gippius Z. Thoughtful Wanderer. About Rozanov / Gippius Z. Living Faces. Memories, Tbilisi, 1991. Vol. 2. pp. 88-125.
49. Merezhkovsky D. The Secret of the Three. Moscow: Republic, 1999; Merezhkovsky D. Messiah. The Birth of the Gods. St. Petersburg: Ivan's Publishing House Limbach, 2000.
50. Leskov N. Stories. Moscow: Artistic Literature, 1973.

4. How to Philosophize with a Hammer and Sickle

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2. Lenin V.I. The Development of Capitalism in Russia / Lenin V.I. Complete Works in 55 Volumes. Volume 3, Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958.
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4. Stalin I. V. Works. Vol. 8, p. 61.
5. Levin Sh.M. Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 60-70-e gody XIX veka. Moscow: 1958. p. 334; Karataev. N. K. Populist economic literature. Moscow: 1958. 125-159; See also: Mikhailovsky N.K. Complete Collection of Essays. St. Petersburg, 1911. Vol. 1. pp. 170-172; Tkachev P.N. Selected Works. Moscow: 1935, vol. 5, p. 73.
6. Agursky M. Ideology of National Bolshevism. Moscow: Algorithm, 2003.
7. Ustryalov N.V. National Bolshevism. Moscow, 2004.
8. Foundations of Eurasianism. Moscow: Arktogea Center, 2002.
9. Pilnyak B.A. Collected works in 6 volumes. Vol. 1. Moscow: Terra, 2003.

6. The Russian Arche

1. The Russian word “ostolop” is derived from the old verb “ostopleti,” literally meaning “to be dumbfounded with surprise, amazement, bewilderment.” But Aristotle argued that the philosopher becomes the one who able to “wonder” (θαυμάζειν). Therefore, the idiot is, exactly the person who was surprised (and thereby became path leading to philosophy), but failed to master it surprise and froze to the spot, turning into a pillar. A similar fate befell Lot's curious wife, deciding (contrary to the prohibition) to see what was behind her, happens to Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. Rozanov V. Fleeting. p. 78
3. Chaadaev P.Ya. Philosophical Letters.

7. Comprehending the West Overcoming the West Liberation from the West

1. See more: Dugin A. Martin Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning. Moscow: Academic Project, 2010.
2. This is precisely the purpose of the first volume on philosophy of Martin Heidegger. See previous note.
3. See footnote 107.
4. Okakuro Kakuzo. The Book of Tea, New York, 1906.