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Who Will Make Philosophy in Russia?

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WHO WILL MAKE PHILOSOPHY IN RUSSIA?

Review of the book

A. Nilogov (ed.). *Who Makes Philosophy in Russia Today?* [Кто сегодня делает философию в России?] Vol. II. Moscow: Agraf, 2011, 528 pp.
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The philosophical project “Who Makes Philosophy in Russia Today?” whose second volume was published by the end of 2010 at the publishing house Agraf (Moscow, Russia), may be compared with Diogenes Laertius famous book *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by its invention. I believe that if the majority of philosophical works were deleted from the memory of mankind by a pandemia of computer viruses or by an attack of the Chinese hackers, these two volumes would be saved for mankind as well as the book of Diogenes Laertius was saved. The two-volume book covers all spectrums of trends of Russian philosophy in the early 21st century.

The project “Who Makes Philosophy in Russia Today?” represents the new, long-awaited, step towards developing *philosophy of philosophy* in Russia: obviously, it is not an historical-philosophical book or chrestomathy of philosophical works. The main feature of the two-volume book “Who Makes Philosophy in Russia Today?” is a prospectiveness of format: the majority of philosophical interviews concerns recent problems and have a “primary” footing in the journalistic meaning of word.

In my opinion, the project is unique not only for Russian philosophy. Whether it is possible to imagine the book in which interviews of all leading American philosophers, including Hilary Whitehall Putnam, Daniel Clement Dennett and Alvin Carl Plantinga, are collected? If we answer this question, it will approach us to the answer of the second question: whether it is possible to make in Russia in philosophy something, what is impossible to make in the USA?

In order to explain a difference between a usual chrestomathy of philosophical texts and the given project, we should compare both formats with methods of empirical science: the first is a passive retrospective survey, and the second is a prospective study. In science there is a consensus that a retrospective survey can never reach contingency and cogency of results received by experimental prospective methods. After all only in the latter case the experimenter is capable to act as the high-grade “demiurge,” completely excluding any methodological bias. Reading the two-volume book, we also get to a situation of the intellectual experiment carried out by the author.

In this case the role of shock electrodes have been played by (brilliant) Nilogovian excellent tricky questions from which it is impossible to hide in high ranks and former merits. Using irony, Nilogov’s interviews would be compared with the interrogations in KGB torture chambers.

Actually, Nilogovian inquirer is focused on two questions: “What is philosophy in general?” and “What is Russian philosophy in particular?” (As it turned out) Different authors answer this question absolutely differently. Philosophy, as Vladimir Krasikov, one of the authors of the second volume claims, is “*the most extremist kind of spiritual creativity.*” Among all sciences philosophy plays the role of absolute sovereign. After all someone should give an initial intellectual marking and conduct borders between (the) sciences. However it is impossible to consider this question definitively solved, because it is waiting for its Carl Schmitt. The opposite version of answering

could be reduced to Vasily Vanchugov's remark: philosophy should become a part of "*Bologna Process of educational service.*"

Anyway, philosophy always acts as the "tool of finishing" of human thinking. Depending on the degree of radicalism of the project it can be both small repair, and total transformation. Nevertheless, the reason movement forward is impossible without exemption from surpluses of memoirs: the philosopher as to the cosmetic surgeon always must "cut on live," deleting excesses of intellectual fabrics (and sometimes cleansing their pollutions). It is certainly not a way of "intellectual terrorism", (but rather a "humanitarian intervention"). Implementing a tolerance in society is another, not less important purpose of Russian philosophy. Therefore it was pleasant to see that in the Nilogov project there has been a place for both Orthodox, and atheists, and even for the so-called neo-pagans. People of absolutely different points of view are capable to get on peacefully on collection pages, communicating among themselves in a universal language of philosophy. To sum up, the philosophical language became original glue, fastening the new identity of Russia. (Then,) The identity catastrophe there would be a transition of the majority of philosophers of Russia towards working English, but it will never occur for the trivial (,but salutary,) reason: the knowledge of English in Russia is traditionally lowest.