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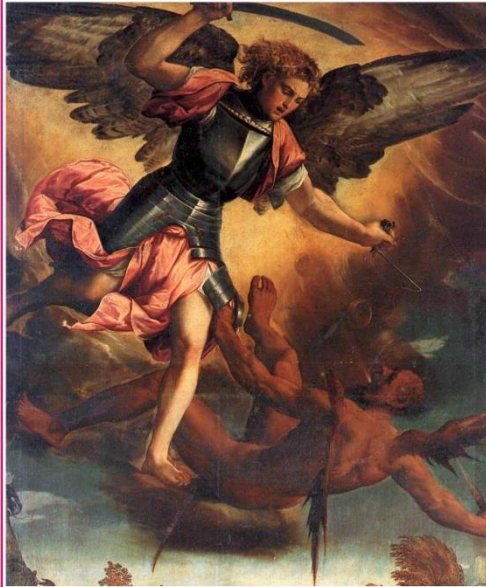
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On the Issue of “White Spots” in the History of Russian Philosophy (on the Example of the Philosophical Creativity by K.N. Leontiev)

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Abstract

This article analyses two critical phenomena in the history of Russian philosophical thought of the 19th century: Slavophilism and the concept of soil to identify the possibility or impossibility of their identification. Through contextual and historical-philosophical analysis as a method, the author demonstrates that the tradition of Slavophilism continued to exist in the second half of the 19th century. In conclusion, Russian philosophy has deep-seated internal patterns that manifest themselves throughout its development, organically going back to the peculiarities of the national spiritual and material culture, mentality, geographical and climatic conditions of existence.

Keyword: Russian, Spiritual, Culture; Philosophy, Slavophilism.

Sobre el tema de "Puntos blancos" en la historia de la filosofía rusa (en el ejemplo de la creatividad filosófica de K.N. Leontiev)

Resumen

Este artículo analiza dos fenómenos críticos en la historia del pensamiento filosófico ruso del siglo XIX: el eslavofilismo y el concepto de suelo para identificar la posibilidad o imposibilidad de su identificación. A través del análisis contextual e histórico-filosófico como método, el autor demuestra que la tradición del eslavofismo continuó existiendo en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. En conclusión, la filosofía rusa tiene patrones internos profundamente arraigados que se manifiestan a lo largo de su desarrollo, y se remonta orgánicamente a las peculiaridades de la cultura espiritual y material nacional, a la mentalidad, a las condiciones geográficas y climáticas de existencia.

Palabra clave: ruso, espiritual, cultura; Filosofía, eslavofismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, humanitarians have no shortage of studies that reveal the peculiarities of Russian spiritual culture, in general, and Russian philosophy, in particular. The need to study Russian culture not from the standpoint of the Marxist methodology, but from other conceptual approaches, which manifested itself clearly in the 1990s, gave rise to the consequences of a dual nature. First, the results of research by contemporary historians of philosophy were published, in which the

specific features of the domestic type of philosophizing were analyzed. As a result, the Russian religious philosophy was reopened to the scientific community. Secondly, pre-revolutionary studies in the field of the history of Russian philosophy, which in Soviet times due to their bourgeois orientation, were not in demand, were actualized.

However, a detailed study of research material reveals many discussion questions. For example, there is no consensus on the issue of the ideological affiliation of Leontiev: some researchers attributed him to Slavophilism, others to the concept of soil; others believed that he could not be associated with any of the trends (Lossky, 2007; Carreto et al., 2018).

In many general publications, Leontiev is also identified with the Slavophil line in Russian philosophy of the 19th century. In the publication of the World Encyclopedia: Philosophy, and along with Danilevsky and Strakhov, Leontiev is defined as the “late Slavophil” (Gritsanov, 2001, 944). Vasilenko (2006) in Introduction to Russian religious philosophy defines Leontiev as the younger Slavophil. Also, the research literature may classify the philosopher as a neo-Slavophil, which is regarded as a consequence of classical Slavophilism. In turn, neo-Slavophilism and The concept of soil are correlated here based on the fact that they come from the same Slavophil root. On the other hand, one of the most renowned researchers in the field of the history of Russian philosophy, Zenkovsky categorically rejected in his works the Slavophil identity of the thinker.

Rozanov also denied the ideological relationship of Leontiev with the Slavophiles. Despite the fact that the key ideas of Leontiev

were close to Slavophilism, these authors, obviously, did not consider it possible to associate him with the mentioned tradition as there is a sustainable stereotype on limiting the chronological frames of Slavophilism by the first half of the XIX century. Berdyaev (1929) is the most radical in the question of determining the ideological affiliation of Leontiev. He did not relate the thinker to any of the existing philosophical trends, insisting on the fundamental originality of his views. This position is, most likely, explained by the fact that analyzing Leontiev's philosophical creativity, Berdyaev (1929) emphasizes those unpopular ideas, which are not extrinsic to Slavophilism.

In the English studies of the last two decades, the problem of the evolution of the socio-political views of Leontiev is considered mainly in the geopolitical aspect. Thus, represented in the articles by S. Khatuntsev (2008) and Kurfürst (2017), philosophical views of the thinker are presented as an essential link in the geopolitical tradition of Russia. Indeed, the concept of the three-phase development system, applied, among others, at the social and political level for the analysis of state formation developments, original views on the process of states' interaction, which are set forth in Byzantism and Slavdom, became a sort of trademark of Leontiev and allowed him to be associated with the originators of the Russian geopolitical tradition. However, in the geopolitical studies mentioned above, the issue of associating Leontiev's ideas with the concept of soil and Slavophilism was not discussed.

Moreover, atypically, Leontiev's ideological correlation with any ideological direction is determined by (Soloviev, 2017; Emelyanovlukyanichikov, 2004; Fakhr Ale Ali, 2018). The first author considers it appropriate to classify the philosopher as a cultural-critical trend of the traditionalist type based on Leontiev's criticism of Western European progress; the second relates Leontiev to tribalism. The fact that modern research literature has such renderings, which contain certain extremes, can be explained, in the author's opinion, by the fact that any manifestation of a national idea in the modern social and political environment triggers, first of all, a political relationship and, only after, a culturological relationship. Below, Figure 1 summarizes the main approaches to understanding the philosophical creativity by (Leontiev, 1995):

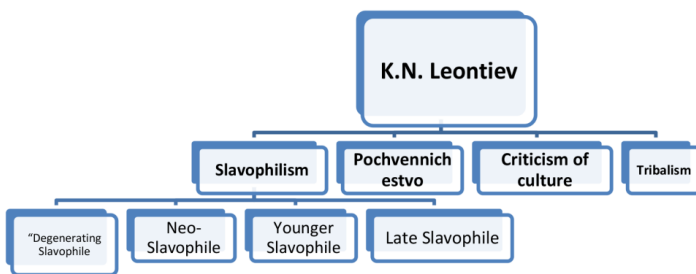


Figure 1: Discussion about the ideological affiliation of Leontiev

In the course of the analysis of the research literature, a circle of problems that had not yet been determined was identified, without consideration of which it is unlikely to develop a full-fledged understanding of the philosophical heritage of Leontiev. These determinations include: clarification of the chronological boundaries of Slavophilism; the discovery of his ideological dominants;

determination of the appropriateness (objectivity) of the division of the process of evolution of Slavophilism at the stage of the younger Slavophilism, late Slavophilism, non-Slavophilism, and degenerating Slavophilism; the characteristic of the chronological and ideological correlation of Slavophilism, the concept of soil from the angle to the identity; revealing the degree of correlation of the philosophical ideas of Slavophiles, and the concept of soil followers with the worldview of Leontiev; and the definition of his ideological affiliation. As a research hypothesis, let us assume that Leontiev in his views did not belong to any of the philosophical trends of the XIX century.

2. METHODOLOGY

The specifics of the philosophical paradigm of Leontiev as a subject of study determined the choice of the methodology of this study. Thus, a specific, comparative and system analysis was carried out using a historical approach to the study of the stated problems, to solve the cognitive task of detecting Slavophile and the concept of soil motives in his ideological work. This allowed for the discovery of the conceptual closeness and distinctive features of Slavophilism, The concept of soil, pan-Slavism, cultural criticism, and tribalism as types of philosophizing and their ideological correlation with the works by Leontiev. The use of methods of cultural and historical-philosophical analysis helped to reveal the facts of the mutual influence of these philosophical systems, as well as to determine the sociocultural

determinism of Russian philosophy. The essential principle applied in the process of studying philosophy by Leontiev, was the principle of contextual analysis, the principle of the withdrawal of certain provisions of the holistic conceptual framework of his philosophical system.

3. PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY

Today, there are many studies in the field of studying the peculiarities of Russian philosophy, as well as in the field of revealing the specifics of the philosophy of Slavophilism and the concept of soil. Certain researchers focused their attention on studying the attributive properties of the domestic type of philosophizing, pointing out the predominance of such qualities as anthropologism, aestheticism, moralism, and attention to historiosophical themes. A group of researchers are dedicated to the study of the specifics of the worldview of Slavophiles and the concept of soil followers. It is of interest that to this day Slavophilism is associated exclusively with the first half of the XIX century.

Moreover, the creative work by Leontiev at different times attracted the attention of various scientists. Uniformity in understanding the basic foundations of Leontiev's worldview was not found among these authors, which, in turn, gives rise to the need for the study of the philosophical works by Leontiev, specifically regarding the correlation with Slavophile and the concept of soil. Thus,

for example, certain authors emphasize the religiousness of Leontiev when studying his works, while some emphasize the aestheticism, and others point to the absence of the ideological integrity of his system of views.

This is the crucial quote by I.V. Kireevsky, in which emotionally there is not that poisonous grin directed to Europe, which, for example, runs through P. Chaadaev in reflections on Russia. As for the other two senior Slavophiles Yu. Samarin and K. Aksakov, they do not show such a problematic coincidence both among themselves and to A. Khomyakov and I. Kireevsky. However, classic Slavophil themes are present in Aksakov's creative work, for example, the personality doctrine, built in the light of Orthodox values, as well as the Russian community doctrine, and the criticism of the West. However, he focuses on the political rather than the spiritual sphere on the issue of the political development of the institution of the state. Samarin, to a greater extent, succeeded in questions of philosophical anthropology and philosophy of religion, which only have the attitude of the general Slavophil line. Although, fairly speaking, one cannot but note the dedication that Yu. Samarin demonstrated by joining the controversy with Soloviev (2017) about the essence of Slavophilism.

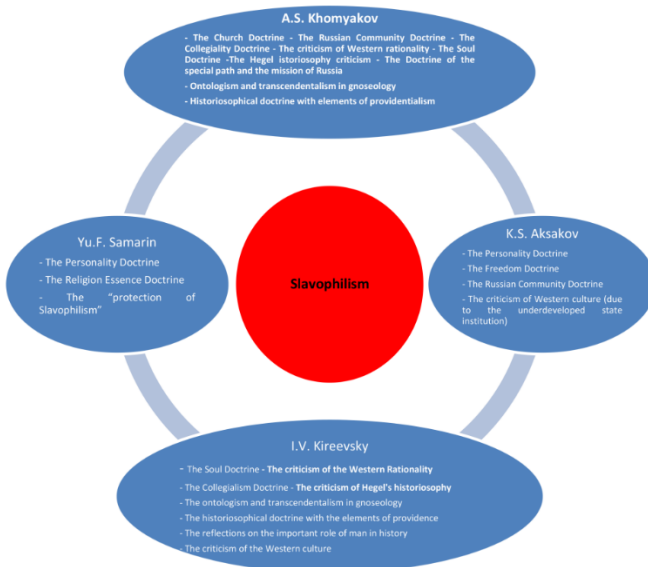


Figure 2: The spectrum of philosophical interests of senior Slavophiles

Defining the chronological framework of Slavophilism is as ambiguous as the meaning of the term itself. In the narrowest sense, this framework is limited to the 1840s. Some researchers extend them to the limits of the late 1830s to the early 1860s. In the broadest sense, it is limited to the XVI-XXI centuries. One of the encyclopedic dictionaries offers the point of view that Slavophilism flourished in the 1840s and 1850s (Ivin, 2004). Sukhov notes that the controversy between the Slavophiles and the Westernizers began in the 1930s and lasted for 20 years (Sukhov, 1995). The absence of consensus on the chronology of Slavophilism also indirectly indicates the possibility and necessity of expanding the boundaries of Slavophilism in at least the second half of the XIX century.

The flowering of the concept of soil came in the 1860s. Representatives of the concept of soil include A. Grigoriev, N. Strakhov, F. Dostoevsky, and M. Dostoevsky. A set of topics that make up the essence of the concept of soil was presented: the doctrine of Christian ideals as the basis of Russian life, the doctrine of Russian identity, the idea of bringing the intelligentsia closer to the people (soil), the doctrine of personal freedom, the doctrine of the unique mission of Russia, and the ideas of opposition between Russia and the West (Moskovtseva, 2005; Ospovat, 1978; Dowler, 1982; Qazvini, 2018). Based on these ideas, it is quite possible to associate the concept of soil with nationalism. If one compares this thematic set with the Slavophil worldview, then in the formulations of the problems and the main approaches to their consideration we will see unanimity. A typical set of ideas that make up the essence of the concept of soil is shown in Figure 3.

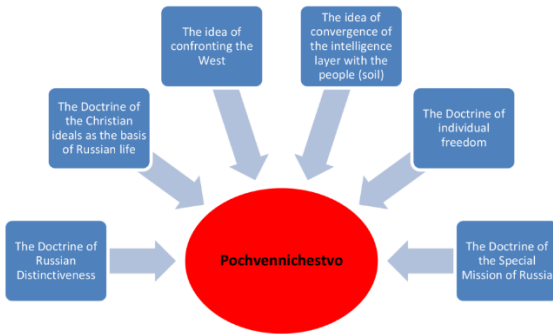


Figure 3: The range of philosophical interests of the concept of soil followers

Ospovat argues that the concept of soil cannot be correlated directly with Slavophilism, since both Dostoevsky and Grigoriev

equally rejected Slavophilism and Westernism as closed ideological systems that assumed a clear separation of people into ours and not ours "and canonized their basic postulates" (Ospovat, 1978; 146). Let us disagree with this point of view because the above has already drawn attention to the fact that the intransigence of the senior Slavophiles towards the West is very relative. The Slavophile leitmotif sounded wholly dialectical. After a cursory conceptual review of the Slavophile and the concept of soil paradigms, let us turn to the works by Leontiev.

The aestheticism of Leontiev is not just sensitivity to the beautiful. It is not a glorification of the significance of art. The aesthetics of life is, first of all, life diversity. It is the harmony of opposites, "diversity in unity" (Leontiev, 1993; 393). The thinker is attracted to the extremes and encourages any manifestation of strength and power, since it is these factors that ensure the vital diversity and the struggle of opposites (the aesthetics of life). Based on this, it is entirely appropriate to conclude that the content of Leontiev's aestheticism is much wider than the term itself. The philosopher's aestheticism is filled with ontological meaning. Of course, the senior Slavophiles do not encounter such an understanding of ontological themes. Another topic associated with Leontiev is the development of a universal development scheme.

Regardless of the sphere, the development process is a movement in a circle: from simple to complex, from colorlessness and simplicity to originality and diversity, and from diversity to simplification (Leontiev, 1995). The development process thus

involves three phases: initial simplicity, flourishing complexity, and secondary mixing simplification. The doctrine of the triune process is usually interpreted as Leontiev's innovative development. This is so because it is only he who demonstrates the universalism that was embedded in the basis of this doctrine. However, I. Kireevsky wrote a very historiosophical thought, which was very consistent with Leontiev (Indriastuti, 2019):

Every nation in its time comes to the forefront of history. Moreover, although progress is obtained only by the cumulative efforts of humanity, peoples have their phase of historical flowering, adopting on the move the results of the life of other nations (Zenkovsky, 1999). In his critical attitude to the West, Leontiev focuses on scientific (by his doctrine of the triune process), rather than emotional arguments. In his opinion, Europe has entered the stage of secondary simplification and is actively degrading in this regard. The ideals of universal equality, democracy, scientific and technological progress stimulate this simplification in every way. The emerging culture of the middle class is opposed to the aesthetics of life.

At the time, the Slavophiles defended the idea of a particular historical and spiritual mission of Russia to Western Europe. Leontiev accepts this idea, complementing it with a call to counteract the European universal equation (Leontiev, 1993). The philosopher develops a kind of plan for confronting Russian culture to European culture: to recognize the decline of Europe, to realize the dead end of human development, to find a source of inspiration in our own Russian and Eastern culture, to preserve and spread the Orthodox system of

values outside of it. Orthodoxy is the nervous system of our Slavic organism, he says in the spirit of Slavophilism (Leontiev, 1993). These ideas by Leontiev, surely, strengthen the concept of nationalism, which was presented earlier among the Slavophilism adepts (Yang et al., 2019; Soo et al., 2019).

Here again, there is no chance, all three thinkers can be attributed to the camp of Christian philosophers, that is, they all proceeded from the Christian understanding of human nature. Leontiev denied secular morality as a form of rationality, arguing that moral work can be carried out only in the bosom of religious consciousness. Leontiev considered the feeling of faith to be the spiritual dominance of the personality: can a person consider himself as a Russian if he does not honor the Orthodox religion in his mind, if not by his faith? (Leontiev, 1993). According to Leontiev, faith gives meaning to human existence. Epistemologically, if a person has a problem of choosing between reason and faith, then, according to the thinker, it is necessary to choose faith (Leontiev, 1993). The fundamental ideas of the philosophical worldview of Leontiev are shown in Figure 4.

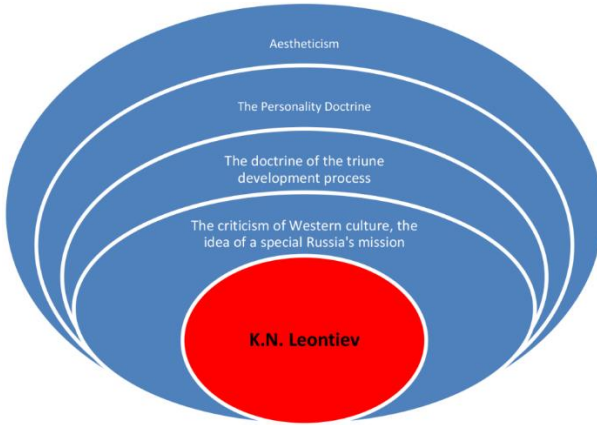


Figure 4: Spectrum of philosophical interests of Leontiev

Thus, the author believes that aestheticism is the only difference in the philosophies of Leontiev from the paradigm of Slavophilism and the concept of soil. The underlying philosophical issues (criticism of Western culture, historiosophical views, cultural ideas, and the religious perception of the individual) show a clear correlation in this regard. On this basis, it is entirely appropriate to attribute Leontiev to the Slavophil camp, which does not confirm the initial hypothesis of this study.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Any correlation of a world-view with one or another philosophical trend is conditional. The same applies to the existence of any philosophical trend. It is easy to get convinced of this on the example of Slavophilism and the concept of soil. In the history of

philosophy, it is not possible to find a single reflection that would be identical to another. Plato is my friend, but the truth is a better friend. This is the aphorism, which received universal fame not only in the circles of researchers in the field of history of philosophy but also among ordinary people, as no other illustrates this opinion. It is possible to discuss the relative coincidence on some issues or topics, and in this case, one always abstracts away from the particulars that are the essence of the differences between these views.

The arguments are given earlier prove once again that Russian philosophy has deep-seated internal patterns that manifest themselves throughout its development, organically going back to the peculiarities of the national spiritual and material culture, mentality, geographical and climatic conditions of existence. Of course, the manifestation of these laws does not detract from the influence of European philosophy, the influence from the outside, carried out in the framework of the dialogue of cultures. However, in the space of Russian philosophical culture, this influence most often had an artificial nature.

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