

lifetime. Hopp presents an overview of the translated material together with a detailed review of *Mulatságos napok*, as Mme de Gomez is titled in Hungarian.

The final two essays look at the Hungarian literary scene after Mikes's death. The manuscript of the *Letters* was found among his effects and in 1789 came into the hands of István Kulcsár of Szombathely. The criminality (in Habsburg eyes) of its author, its association with Ferenc Rákóczi and the *kuruc* tone of numerous passages might have prevented publication in the Habsburg Empire, but in the reign of the enlightened Joseph II (1765–90) censorship eased. Kulcsár, in association with Sándor Kisfaludy and others, took advantage of this, and the *Letters* received the *imprimatur* in July 1792, early in the reign of Franz II and I (Hopp deals with the complexities of all this in some detail, but in one point is in slight error: there was no interregnum between Joseph and Franz, but the brief reign of Leopold II from December 1790 until March 1792). Had Kulcsár not been fortunate in this respect the *Letters* would, at best, not have been published for a long time, as repression was resumed under Franz. (The *Letters* were first published in 1794 and the manuscript itself is now in the library of the Esterházy Károly Főiskola in Eger.)

Lastly, there comes a short piece on the concept of the 'Early Enlightenment'. It is generally agreed that in Hungary the Enlightenment came into effect in the second half of the eighteenth century, rather later than in the West, and some scholars have used the term *Frühaufklärung* to denote a quasi-preliminary period preceding this. Hopp rejects this imprecise usage, but finds in Mikes's 'Letter 51' of 1723 a foreshadowing of the thinking of the Enlightenment, half-way between past and future, but promising a social philosophy.

This small anthology is, therefore, a vastly informative and thoroughly scholarly addition to the study of both the period as a whole and the work of Kelemen Mikes in particular. Hopp spoke French but did not publish in that language, so much credit is due to his anonymous translators and to the editors for establishing an eminently readable text. The editors should, however, have seen that footnote 14 on p. 174 might be more helpfully worded.

Zánka

BERNARD ADAMS

DeBlasio, Alyssa. *The End of Russian Philosophy: Tradition and Transition at the Turn of the 21st Century*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York, 2014. xi + 216 pp. Tables. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £60.00.

IN 1922, Lenin expelled about sixty-nine presumed anti-Soviet intellectuals and their families from Russia. The intellectuals were placed on two steamships, the first of which left on 28 September, the second on 16 November, that is, a few weeks before the official creation of the Soviet Union in late

December. Although there were in fact two steamers, and even though not all of the intellectuals on board were philosophers, the whole thing is conjointly remembered as 'the Philosophy Steamer'. The two ships carried away, amongst others, the philosophers Iulii Aikhental'd (translator of Schopenhauer), Nikolai Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Semen Frank, Ivan Il'in, Lev Karsavin, Ivan Lapshin, Nikolai Losskii and Boris Vysheslavtsev. This event, which has been compared to the medieval inquisition, marked the end of an era for Russian philosophy — the end of what is sometimes called 'prerevolutionary Russian Philosophy', 'Russian religious philosophy', or 'Russian idealism'.

Prerevolutionary Russian Philosophy is a tradition that more or less began with the philosophy of Vladimir Solov'ev — who is often regarded as the first great Russian philosopher — and that was developed further by his followers, such as the brothers Trubetskoi, Ernest Radlov, Sergei Bulgakov, Semen Frank, Nikolai Losskii and others. This tradition is characterized as a Christian Neo-Platonism and is said to reach back to Plato and Plotinus through the Byzantium Eastern Fathers (Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Maximus the Confessor). The religiosity, mysticism, idealism (i.e., Platonism), bourgeois preoccupation with speculative metaphysical issues and sentimentalism of this tradition was perceived as reactionary to the anti-metaphysical, atheist, materialist, rational, scientifically inclined and utilitarian world-view of Marxism-Leninism — hence Lenin's decision to purge Russia from its dissenting intelligentsia.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the perestroika — which was meant to be a restructuration of the Soviet political and economic system and which is associated with the dissolution of the Soviet Union — the metaphorical Philosophy Steamer came back to Russia's shore. Previously banned books resurfaced. The prerevolutionary philosophers were rediscovered with an outburst of optimism and their thought revived as a way of counterbalancing the Soviet ideology in place. This period came to be characterized as a 'philosophical boom'. Three quarters of a century of coerced suppression and repression of man's natural tendency for metaphysical and religious speculation seems to have had a rebounding collective psychological effect. *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, the optimism of the 1990s slowed down and the phoenix that had risen from its own ashes proved to be short-lived. The post-Soviet revival of prerevolutionary religious philosophy was questioned anew and criticized from different directions. Many felt that the prerevolutionary religious philosophers had been misappropriated to promote a mystical conception of Russianness and a messianic idea of Russia's destiny. A collective reassessment of the essence of Russian philosophy ensued and the discipline got busy at the task of redefining Russian philosophy.

The order of the day was then to answer questions such as: what is Russian philosophy? Is it philosophy that is ethnically Russian, or is it philosophy done

on the Russian territory? Is it essentially religious (thus essentially irrational), as opposed to secular and rational? What is the chronological beginning of Russian philosophy? Does it really hark all the way back to Byzantium? Is it essentially literary (thus methodologically sloppy) — as in the works of Tolstoi and Dostoevskii — or can it be analytic? And how should Russian philosophy reorient itself? Ought it to return to pre-Soviet philosophy, or should it forget about the idea of a distinctly Russian philosophy and open to the West? And was Soviet philosophy a complete blackout, or could something be salvaged from it?

In this book, the author presents the current situation of Russian philosophy. On her account, the debate over the definition of Russian philosophy is regularly expressed in terms of the distinction between the adjectives *ruskii* and *rossiiskii*. *Ruskii* is often associated with the ethnic and religious sense of Russianness, whereas *rossiiskii* — a term that was introduced in the language by the order of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century — is rather used to characterize Russia in a strictly geographical, non-ethnic and not necessarily religious, sense. So, although *rusaskaia filosofia* is generally used as the cover-all expression to refer indiscriminately to both *rusaskaia* and *rossiiskaia filosofia*, in their specific senses *rusaskaia filosofia* is conceived as turning towards the Russian heritage and as typically Christian Neo-Platonist, whereas *rossiiskaia filosofia* is simply whatever philosophy is done within the confines of the Russian Federation and is more open to a dialogue with Western philosophy than the former. The *ruskii-rossiiskii* distinction is similar to the nineteenth century debate between the Slavophiles and the Westernizers, if not simply a sheer continuation of it.

On the issue of the beginning of the history of Russian philosophy, the author finds herself agreeing with Sergey Horujy, who argues that any attempt to pinpoint the chronological limits of Russian philosophy is doomed to fail: ‘Among various authors and presentations the initial date for the history of Russian philosophy varies across a fantastic range. Some take the border to be the philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev; for others, it is situated in the thought of the Slavophiles or freemasons; while for a third (and rather numerous) group it lies squarely within the activity of the Slavonic enlighteners, Methodius and Cyril, all the more so given that the latter was nicknamed the Philosopher. The phenomenon designated Russian Philosophy clearly does not belong to the depths of prehistory, but its datings diverge by exactly a millennium — from the ninth to the nineteenth century. The question about the beginnings of Russian philosophy turns out to be unanswerable’ (Sergey Horujy, ‘Breaks and Links: Prospects for Russian Religious Philosophy Today’, *Studies in East European Thought*, 53, 2001, 4, p. 271). According to the author, Horujy’s assessment ‘hits the nail on the head’ (p. 133).

The author presents examples of prominent figures in contemporary Russian philosophy amongst those who are proposing an alternative to the return to prerevolutionary religious philosophy. She selects Horujy and Valery

Podoroga. Horujy developed a philosophy called 'synergic anthropology', which is said to combine theoretical physics with Hesychasm. Hesychasm is an Eastern-Orthodox ascetic tradition that Horujy discovered through the writings of the fourteenth-century Byzantine Church Father Gregory Palamas, who gives central focus to the concept of ἐνέργεια (*energeia*). From Palamas's concept of *energeia* (energy), Horujy formed the adjective *sinergiinyi* (synergic). The key idea of synergic anthropology is that the individual is 'a formation of energy' (p. 108). The goal of life is here conceived as theosis, understood as the union (or *synergy*) — through a series of ascending steps — of human energies with divine energies. Horujy thinks of his philosophy as being in line with that of Pavel Florenskii.

Although the latter philosophical project may at first sight seem to be in continuation with the prerevolutionary Christian Neo-Platonist heritage, Horujy rejects the latter tradition in favour of the 'Neo-Patristic' one. What he rejects from the Platonic tradition is its essentialism, i.e., its emphasis on substance and essence. For him, the ontological emphasis should be on energy. He sees his own energism as descending, not from the Greeks, but in straight line from Byzantine mysticism. Whereas Solov'ev's philosophy would have been an attempt to move beyond the Eastern Church Fathers back to Plato, Horujy's thought would be an attempt to go back to the Church Fathers *simpliciter*, hence bypassing prerevolutionary religious philosophy. According to the author, 'Horujy treats Hesychasm as a lost tradition that he is rediscovering, in the same way that scholars in the late 1980s and early 1990s saw themselves as rediscovering Russian religious philosophy after the collapse of the Soviet Union' (p. 134). The author adds that synergic anthropology has been criticized as an artificial attempt to support theology through the technical scientific language of theoretical physics.

The author further gives a brief presentation of Valery Podoroga's 'analytic anthropology', also called 'visual anthropology', which is principally a phenomenological reflection on embodied subjects, bodies, bodily perception and corporeal experience. There is an emphasis in analytic anthropology on the sense of touch and on skin as the limit of the body. The theory is applied to literary theory and art criticism in general, and has been applied to the analysis of Dostoevskii's novels in particular. Although to a great extent literary, and thus conforming to one of the stereotypes about typical domestic Russian philosophy, Podoroga's philosophical project is more rooted in French philosophy in general, and in particular in French phenomenology (especially Maurice Merleau-Ponty), French post-structuralism and postmodernism, than in any of the historical Russian movements.

According to the author, after the decline of the enthusiasm for the return to prerevolutionary religious philosophy, philosophy in Russia has been undergoing a paradigm shift consisting in abandoning the conception of

Russian philosophy as a special national ‘path’, ‘destiny’, or ‘mission’ unique to Russia as the ‘new Jerusalem’. The new wave tends to perceive the monomania on theology as a hindrance to the development of philosophy in Russia. The current tendency rather consists in moving towards a more international conception of the discipline, increasingly opening up to the contemporary global philosophical scene. On this view, there is no contemporary prototypical national philosophy, but rather a plurality of philosophical trends. And that is partly what the title of the book — *The End of Russian Philosophy* — aims at suggesting, namely that Russian philosophy in the *russskii* sense of ‘Russian’ may have now come to an end.

This informative book is recommendable to anyone seeking a window, however small, into the contemporary situation of philosophy in Russia.

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Tassie, Gregor. *Nikolay Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music*. Rowan and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, Toronto, ON and Plymouth, 2014. xviii + 395 pp. Illustrations. Chronology. Notes. Bibliography. Discography. Catalog of works. Index. \$84.00: £51.95.

THE career of Nikolai Miaskovskii is simultaneously a gift and a curse for biographers and critics. It represents a gift precisely because a detailed study of his life and works remains to be written in English, despite the availability of a wide array of sources, whether published and archival. It is equally a gift because over the course of nearly seventy years, Miaskovskii lived through some of the most gripping historical and cultural developments his country had ever witnessed. Yet his life might be felt to be a curse for very similar reasons. Unlike, say, the diaries of Sergei Prokof'ev, the documents pertaining to Miaskovskii's life do not really illuminate his coy personality to anything like the same extent. And making sense of his involvement in such distinct and complex artistic phenomena as pre-war Russian modernism, the 1920s avant-garde, Socialist Realism and the machinations of Soviet arts institutions means that the biographer must range far beyond the narrow confines of the life itself. To be sure, Miaskovskii does not seem to present the critic with the kind of dilemmas or difficulties that beset scholars of Prokof'ev (his return to the Soviet Union, his treatment of his first wife, the nature of his Christian Science beliefs), Shostakovich (his joining of the party under Khrushchev, his willingness to write ideological works to order, his tendency to sign — usually unread — letters and articles dictated by apparatchiks) or Stravinskii (his moral tractability and constant self-mythologization), and in *Nikolay Myaskovsky: The Conscience of Russian Music*, Gregor Tassie charts his way through his subject's