

been less paternalistic. Had Bolshevik nationalization and sequestration not ruined imperial pharma, Civil War mortality would have been lower. With brilliant scientists throughout Russian history, had the Soviet experiment not intervened, Russian pharma might be world-class today.

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The Palgrave Handbook of Russian Thought. Ed. Marina F. Bykova, Michael N. Forster, and Lina Steiner. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. xxviii, 814 pp. Notes. Index. \$155.99, hard bound.
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There have been countless attempts to organize and summarize the history of Russian thought. Metaphilosophy has become an entire subgenre of Russian thought in itself, whereby philosophers have attempted to highlight the distinguishing features of their national tradition, be it religiosity, the anthropological impulse, or dialogue with literary and artistic traditions. Vasilii Zen'kovskii has identified this as Russia's historiosophical preoccupation, since Russian thought "is constantly addressing the question of the meaning of history" (*Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, 1991, 22). At present, this practice takes the form of a near fixation with the idea of "originality," whereby the adjective "original" sits among the highest terms of praise for describing a thinker or idea. Perhaps there is something about Russian thought, as Mikhail Epstein has argued, that keeps it returning to the site of its own origin story, rebuilding itself from the ashes of its past. At the same time, when considering metaphilosophy in the context of Russian thought, we must also be wary of this originality reflex, which risks the automatic "othering" of its subject and often ignores the ways thinkers from Russia have freely and productively participated in the philosophical process more broadly.

The present handbook, edited by an international trio of eminent specialists in the field of Russian thought, does not position itself as a history of Russian philosophy; nor does it claim to offer a complete picture, or any single overarching narrative, about Russian thought. A history is monologic (at least, where histories of Russian philosophy are concerned); this project is dialogic. Specifically, in the sense that it highlights the multiplicity of genres of philosophical thinking in Russia. Already in the introduction, we find references to the various understandings of philosophy that readers may encounter on the pages ahead: these include "pure philosophy" and "academic philosophy," but also "philosophically minded," "philosophical writers," "religious philosophy," "philosophical life," "philosophical culture," and "the love of wisdom." In their selection of topics, the editors foreground the complexity and multiplicity of the philosophical experience in Russia, without fixating on questions of "Russianness" or "originality."

The characteristics of complexity and multiplicity are also signaled in the volume's hefty form: 36 chapters and over 800 pages, with about half of chapters authored by scholars who were educated and/or employed in Russia. The volume is organized in two main parts: Part I, "Russian Philosophical Thought" (Ch. 2–20), comprises articles on political thought, religious philosophy, the reception of western thinkers in Russia, Vladimir Lenin and philosophy, profiles of leading thinkers (Nikolai Berdiaev, Lev Shestov, Gustav Shpet), and four chapters on the late-Soviet and contemporary period. Part II, "Philosophy in Dialogue with Literature and Art" (Ch. 21–35), includes investigations of the Russian novel, aesthetics and philosophy of art, and individual

writers and critics (Nikolai Gogol', Lev Tolstoi, Osip Mandel'shtam). The eighteenth century and the contemporary period are comparatively underrepresented, but this is typical of similar works in the field, which tend to privilege the nineteenth century and non-conformist thought during the Soviet period.

As with any collected volume, the critic can always pose questions as to why certain things were included and others missing. The decision to split the handbook into two thematic sections, for instance, raises the question of how one can really separate “philosophical thought” from “dialogue with literature and art,” given the inextricable links between the two. Thus, several chapters that appear in Part II—specifically, those on Nikolai Grot, Aleksei Losev, and Iurii Lotman, but also the chapters on Vissarion Belinskii, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Marxist aesthetics—could just as easily be envisioned in the first. This question of organization is not a flaw so much as it highlights the potential for synergetic readings and re-readings of the *Handbook* over time. It equally highlights the very interconnectedness of Russian philosophical thought with other areas of culture. As the editors themselves note in their introduction, Russian thinkers rarely theorized ideas in an abstract form, but instead applied them to “the substance of everyday life” (3).

It is nearly impossible to adequately summarize a survey of Russian thought, in the same way it is nearly impossible to write one. In closing, this is an invaluable volume for non-experts and experts alike, who are sure to appreciate, in their own ways, the diversity of authors and topics, the fact that each chapter can be read by itself or in dialogue with others, and the sheer enormity of knowledge contained within, featuring contributions by leading scholars across Europe, Russia, and the US.

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Lev Shestov: The Philosophy and Works of a Tragic Thinker. By Andrea Oppo.

Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020. xvi, 329 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$129.00, hard bound.

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Lev Shestov (Lev Isaakevich Shvartsman, 1866–1938), like other philosophers of the pre-revolutionary Russian Silver Age and the post-revolutionary Russian emigration, has attracted an ever-increasing amount of critical attention, in Russia and beyond, since the end of the Soviet era. There now exists a substantial body of scholarship on him, including around twenty-five monographs in Russian, French, and English. Andrea Oppo's recent book represents a significant and distinguished contribution to this field.

Oppo's study is impressively comprehensive. Styled as an intellectual biography, it adopts a chronological approach. It is divided into two parts—“Shestov in Russia” and “Shestov in France,” to reflect the significance for Shestov's work and legacy of his exile from Russia in 1920, when he was already 54 years old, yet only halfway through his career as a published author. Four substantial chapters—two in each part—address loose phases in Shestov's intellectual development: the emergence of his “philosophy of tragedy” at the turn of the twentieth century; his work as a peculiar kind of literary critic and his evolving philosophical assessment of art (up to 1910); his philosophical engagement with key philosophers and theologians of the European intellectual tradition (1914–29, actually bridging the moment of emigration); and the mature works of the 1930s that most comprehensively reflect Shestov's later “religious turn.” Oppo claims to analyze each and every one of Shestov's works.