Ethics and ideology in Russian culture during the 18th and 19th centuries

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Abstract
This article sets out an analysis of the issue of the interrelationship between ethics and ideology in Russian culture in the 18th and 19th centuries, using historical materials to explore the fate of theoretical ethics in Russia, the diversity of the theoretical forms of the study of ethics in the culture of this period, the formation of an objective originality in ethical thinking, and the principal issues defining the distinctive pattern of moral introspection in Russian culture.

1. Introduction
A tendency towards moral issues and problems, along with an acute degree of moral introspection, are characteristic attributes and distinctive markers in Russian culture and writing. And yet, the moral and moralistic content of Russian culture came about as a result of everyday cultural practice that was driven by the influence of Orthodox pious tradition, and did not become a subject for analysis until as late as the 17th century. During the early stages of the development of Old Russian culture, ethics was presented in didactic texts that were themselves syncretic in nature and defined by the character of Eastern Christian tradition. The earliest notions of ethics as a defined area of knowledge, as the scholarly discipline of «iika», were associated in ancient Rus’ with the name of Aristotle, a man perceived above all else as a «didactic philosopher». His name crops up in various Izborniks, in the «Pchela», and any number of didactic statements, aphorisms and moralistic proverbs and sayings that have

1 The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project n. 16-03-00442 at St. Petersburg State University. Special thanks to our English-language editor, Chris Gilbert.
gone into popular usage and consciousness are attributed to him. In the 16th century, we find mention of Aristotle in the works of Andrey Kurbsky, who writes about his first encounter with Aristotle's texts: «I have read them, I have examined them physically and studied about ethical skills»; Fyodor Karpov mentions Aristotle in his famous Epistle to Metropolitan Daniel, and quotes from the tenth book of the Nichomachean Ethics, calling Aristotle a «didactic philosopher», whose treatise is «Moral». Nonetheless, the emergence of the disciplinary area of ethics dates back only as far as the second half of the 17th century, connected on the one hand with the assimilation of Latin heritage and the influence of European thought, and on the other with socio-political policies of the state aimed at Europeanising Russia. The process of the establishment of ethics as a scholarly and educational discipline is shaped in the history of Russian culture not so much by the logic of the development of the science itself as by socio-political demands and cultural or ideological vectors. In many ways the product of the synthesis of Old Russian spiritual heritage and that of western Russian and European traditions, ethics as a scholarly discipline began to figure in professorial lectures at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, although on the whole it would be wrong to say that ethics was widely represented in Russian culture in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Terminologically speaking, ethical thought is codified in the Russian language only towards the end of the 18th century, with the term «мравь тьве́о ть» («morals») entering the «Dictionary of the Russian Academy» in 1789, while the term «мораль» («morality» – from the Latin «mos», «moralis») although to be found in Latin texts from the 17th century, enters the Russian language only in the 18th century (one just has to remember A.P. Sumarokov’s short work On the word ‘Morality’ from 1787).

We can therefore see that, in spite of the fact that morality was so deeply ingrained in both culture and everyday life, its institutionalisation and concomitant rationalisation took place relatively late. However, what is of interest to us in this article is that latter aspect of ethics – the scientific discipline – as well as the changes that its absorption into Russian culture in this new form brought to the cultural environment. We see in actual fact a doubling up of subjects, with one of them taking on a new quality. The cultural introspection borne

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2 Semenov (1893).
3 Kurbsky (1888).
4 Karpov (1909).
5 The professors at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy did not consider ethics to be a scholarly discipline in the strict sense of the term, but as a discipline that was on the one hand «discursive», and on the other «active». In its capacity as an «active» discipline, ethics sets out not merely to understand the rules and laws of morality, but above all to direct free will towards moral virtue, to «teach» virtue and nurture good morals.
of elements of Russian everyday life described above led to the emergence of a new ethics, separate from unconscious cultural practice, which itself remained in place after the appearance of ethics as science. This separation, or rather – to use Marx’s term «estrangement» – of content led to the estranged element of the culture becoming an object of manipulation by both the state and by those intellectuals who were developing ethics as a science. These transformations of ethics clearly illustrate the processes of the actualization and deactualization of elements of a culture. It is important to emphasise that, in order to fully convey the peculiarities of the discourse during the period in question, observations and interpretations of contemporaries are used intentionally throughout this article.

2. The demarcation of morals and ethics: the emergence of ethics as a scholarly discipline

In the history of Russia, the beginning of the 18th century was characterised by the reforms and reorganisations of Peter the Great, changes which impacted every aspect of culture and public life. During this period, a profoundly utilitarian view of science and education prevailed in Russia – education was seen in the sense of training for a specific occupation, an occupation which would be useful in a very narrow, practical, pragmatic and utilitarian sense. Among the principal aims and objectives of education was the acquisition of professional skills and preparation for specific occupations, in particular government service (be it military or civil). The kind of general education necessary for the moral development of society – and one that would include ethics as a science and discipline – was not a priority for the state. In the course of their reforms, the authorities concerned themselves principally with the founding and nurturing of specialized, vocational schools, and school education was regarded as training for a particular occupation, the mastery of a skill or profession, even to the extent that general education became largely neglected.

Peter the Great wanted to see the fruits of education instantly and only in the form of a profession or skill. Indeed, one of Mikhail Vladimirsky-Budanov’s comprehensive studies conveys the general character of how the objectives of education were understood during the time of Peter the Great:

The glimmer of understanding that the state should concern itself with educating the people regardless of the application of that education to the service of the state, a

7 See: Znamensky (1881); Vladimirsky-Budanov (1874); Arhangel’sky (1883). These works give an idea of the particular ways that the works of Peter the Great were perceived during the time of the «new reforms» of Alexander II and therefore about attitudes to ethics and to schools as channels for the conduct and manifestation of ethical discourse.
glimmer that we saw at the end of the 17th century, was extinguished. The extreme development of a police state that characterized the new century, whereby the state makes itself the be-all and end-all of any and all human activity, was by no means conducive to the development of this principle. It is not the state’s mission to serve the interests of the individual, who remains, for all his agglomeration of moral strength, the state’s obedient servant. From the very first year of the 18th century, Russian legislation begins to make clear that it accepts no other objective for education than the value of its suitability for one profession or other... The concern of the state is that military, civil and religious service are discharged in the best way possible. Everything that we refer to as the legalization of education was in actual fact the legalization of state service. The concepts of service and education become intertwined». It is not education in the strict sense of the word that comes to the forefront, but rather a kind of «training», the aim of education is perceived as something entirely external - «to earn a crust and get a steady career». «It is not professional education, but general education that shows someone the ultimate humanist objective of their chosen career and takes them beyond simply earning a living.»

In this way, the ideology of the Russian state with its utilitarian and pragmatic approach did not incorporate moral disciplines into the educational curriculum. Nevertheless, the Petrine reforms did leave their mark in the demarcation of the academic spheres of ethics and moral theology. This demarcation was precipitated by Peter the Great’s close associate, the church reformer Theophan Prokopovich. Prokopovich «made the distinction between dogmatic and moral theology, was a specialist in both and defined their objectives more precisely», and therefore «cleared up the confusion associated with their teaching». According to Theophan Prokopovich, the subject of moral theology is «good deeds, denoted in the Scripture by the name Love. Love is twofold: it is towards God and towards one’s neighbour, therefore moral theology discusses 1) religion as the expression of love towards God and 2) righteousness, which resides in love for one’s neighbour». Prokopovich interprets ethics as an independent discipline, separating and demarcating it from moral theology, and defining the subjects of ethical science and moral theology. The substantive separation of moral theology, and the distinction between ethics and moral theology allowed both branches of ethical introspection to establish themselves as disciplines, and defined two scenarios for the development of ethical thought in Russia: as part of religious consciousness and education in the form of moral theology (the theoretical dawn of this discipline occurs at the end of the 19th century), and in the academic, university tradition – ethics as a subject in the sphere of scientific scholarship.

8 Vladimirsky-Budanov (1874:155, 157-158).
9 Bronzov (1901: 26); see also: Tikhomirov (1884); Smirnov (1855); Arhangel’sky (1883).
3. The process of the actualization of ethics. The formation of academic ethics in Russia

The solely utilitarian approach to education and science begins to give way to a more enlightened attitude as early as the second half of the 18th century. Ideological constructs change, as do individual ideals. Ethics finds itself in demand because it fits into the enlightened ideology of social awareness, and satisfies the needs and demands of society in terms of the enlightenment and education of the citizenry and the development of civic virtues. The course of education alters towards the sphere of the Humanities, shaping the enlightenment of the individual, and education itself comes to be interpreted as moral betterment. Russian thinkers infer from the term «enlightenment» a certain degree of education and moral development both in the individual and in society, and also use it as an indicator of moral virtues. Within the paradigm of enlightenment, ethics – or as it was more commonly referred to by 18th century thinkers, didactic philosophy – occupies a central position. Ethical thinking, freed from the influence of theology, applies itself to the study of humans as natural and historical beings. Ethics enters political and juridical thinking, as can be clearly observed in the ideology of the first generation of Russian Enlighteners – Yakov Kozel’sky, Semen Desnitsky, Dmitry Anichkov, Denis Fonvizin and Nikolay Novikov. The foundation of didactic philosophy figured large in their writings, and in accordance with the tradition of enlightened rationalism, they divided philosophy into theoretical, i.e. «philosophy in the narrowest sense», and didactic or practical. Theoretical («conceptual») philosophy included logic and metaphysics; didactic – jurisprudence, or the philosophy of law, and politics. In their concepts and notions, the Russian Enlighteners strove towards a philosophical and rational foundation for morality. As these thinkers saw it, principal moral concepts had to satisfy the demands of both «human nature» and «the reasoning of truth». In consequence, in the ideology of the Enlightenment, morality was considered in constant connection with politics and jurisprudence. Morality was interpreted as «private, domestic politics» (to quote Gabriel Bonnot de Mably), while politics was in turn seen as public morality, leading on the one hand to the politicization of moral theory, and on the other to the moralization of politics.

The basis for the formation of ethical concepts of the Russian Enlighteners was the notion of natural law and the social contract. In accordance with this theory, the Enlighteners took as the basis of morality the inherent impulses of «human nature». A human being is part of the natural world, possessing the natural rights of freedom, natural equality and so on. However, according to the Enlighteners’ way of thinking, it is only the social environment that grants humanity the highest laws and principles that stand in harmony with his nature, so long as the development of true morality is preceded and stimulated by a
fair, rationally founded legislature, and a fair and impartial government. The deep conviction that man exists in harmony with society and the natural world was the foundation for the Enlightenment’s unity of understanding on matters of morality and politics, morality and science, truth and virtue. Where there is truth, so there will be virtue. Religion must also be founded on the principles of reason, else it becomes a source of evil and delusion.

Thus didactic philosophy becomes incorporated into the rationalistic project of the Enlightenment, if not even its central core. In this period, ethical thought was promulgated on the one hand in philosophical and journalistic articles in the pages of the intellectual periodicals which shaped public opinion, in short stories and essays on history and law, and on the other, it evolved into a university discipline as part of a scholastic tradition. This scholastic tradition for Russia in the 18th century was German philosophical thought: as far back as the beginning of that century, during the epoch of the Petrine reforms, scientific thinking and projects aimed at institutionalizing science and education were predominantly aligned to the German model. As part of this cultural tradition, in the second half of the 18th century and first decades of the 19th ethics evolved as an academic discipline principally under the influence of German philosophical thinking, something that was manifest in the character of both the syllabuses themselves and the publication of translated textbooks for universities and gymnasia. Ethics was incorporated into the wider philosophical system, which itself was aligned with the Wolffian vision.

In the Wolffian system, philosophy was separated into «rational philosophy, whose objective was to teach control over the workings of the mind; moral philosophy, with the aim of defining the actions of will or morals, and natural philosophy, which sets out to study all that there is in nature». Natural philosophy was in turn divided further into physics, mathematics and metaphysics (also known as natural theology), and rational philosophy incorporated dialectics and logic. Moral philosophy studied the principals and properties of human behaviour with the objective of defining the concept of the greater good as the ultimate aim of human existence, along with the fundamental virtues necessary for the attainment of good.

Wolff’s influence, indeed his entire philosophical system, meets a far from uniform assessment in Russian thought. Archimandrite Gabriel describes the German philosopher’s system thus in his work on the history of philosophy:

The morality which he taught was based on the following main rule: do whatever makes you and your situation more perfect. Inasmuch as everything that makes either ourselves and our situation more perfect is called good, and everything that makes us and our situation less perfect is bad, so some of Wolff’s followers express his principle

11 Nikolsky (1907).
thus: do good, and shun evil. But this rule of Wolff’s has an air of vanity, and so runs contrary to the nature of a creature endowed with reason, reason which obliges us to strive for the improvement of others, sometimes even to the detriment of our own welfare.\(^\text{12}\)

Archimandrite Gabriel’s conclusion was fairly emphatic: «It might be said that, with his sloth and his pointless analysis of logical concepts, he [Wolff, \textit{N.d.A.}] contributed to the rejection of theoretical work in general and metaphysical exploration in particular»\(^\text{13}\).

In her work «A brief overview of significant moments in the history of philosophy», Maria Bezobrazova considers the philosophy of Wolff as a «true scholastic philosophy». «Wolff’s philosophy was very much to everyone’s taste and caught on in all Germany’s universities. All Wolff’s pupils had to do was learn it, there was no room for further development»\(^\text{14}\). Wolff, writes Bezobrazova, divides «theoretical philosophy into ontology, or the science of being, cosmology – the science of the world, rational psychology, taking as its subject the human soul, and natural theology – on the subject of God. Practical philosophy is divided in the Aristotelian manner into ethics, economics and politics»\(^\text{15}\). Nonetheless, Maria Bezobrazova does see particular merit in the fact that Wolff at least began to write in German and worked on the elaboration of philosophical terminology. The 18\textsuperscript{th} century was characterized by the close attention paid to the national language and to the development of the conceptual and terminological tools of philosophical scholarship. Russian thought, having undergone its training at the German school of philosophizing, strove to create a terminological framework for philosophical thought, a structuring and a logical architecture of knowledge, indeed the formation of the Russian philosophical language.

Wolff’s philosophical system was to influence the systematization of philosophical knowledge, the incorporation of ethics into a metaphysical context, and also to enable the structuring and formation of ethics as an academic discipline, as well as nurturing the interest of Russian 18\textsuperscript{th} century philosophers in the terminological apparatus of philosophy. However, by the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Wolfianism no longer satisfied the spiritual needs and demands of society, as noted by Alexander Nikitenko, then a student and in time a professor at St. Petersburg University:

From the 1820s onwards there suddenly arose a desire for philosophical thinking, both in our literature and among the new generation of students… this new way of thinking could not be attributed merely to some new ideas that just happened to enter

\(^{12}\) Arch. Gabriel (1839-1840: 189).

\(^{13}\) Ivi: 190.

\(^{14}\) Bezobrazova (1894: 203).

\(^{15}\) \textit{Ibidem}.
our society: it was principally a consequence of a new spirit that had emerged in the teaching of philosophy in our schools… People started to appear at the philosophy department who could no longer be satisfied with a systematic approach and Wolffian formalism alone, people who were not only familiar with the new movement and demands of science in Germany, but were capable of discussing it for themselves.¹⁶

One can assume that the transition from the Wolffian system to the philosophy of Kant spoke to the growing philosophical demands in Russian society, whereby Wolffianism begins to be perceived as a passé scholastic tradition. The moral philosophy of Kant in many ways contributed to the objective formation of theoretical ethics in Russia, and to the analysis and critical examination of the notion of the morality’s autonomy.

Since the end of the 18th century, German professors had been invited to Russia to lecture on philosophy. From 1795-97, Professor Johannes-Matthias Schaden, an alumnus of Tübingen University, taught Kantian moral philosophy at Moscow University. As Stepan Shevyrev noted, Shaden brought to Russia the Wolffian philosophy that was prevalent at the time, but «having grown up on the philosophy of Wolff, Shaden did not stop there, and pursued its development right up as far as Kant».¹⁷ From 1803 the Göttingen professors Johann Gottlieb Buhle and Filipp-Christian Reinhard taught at Moscow University, the latter publishing several works based in Kantian ideas. (The system of practical philosophy, Moscow, 1807; Natural law, Kazan’, 1816).

4. The deconstruction of philosophical education and the de-actualization of ethics

At the beginning of the 19th century, Professors Johann Baptist Schad and Ludwig Heinrich von Jakob introduced the idea of Kant to Kharkiv University. Both Schad and Jakob had written and published textbooks on philosophy. Jakob’s study manuals on logic, metaphysics, natural law and practical philosophy had been well received not only in Germany but in other countries as well, and so he wrote a special textbook for Russian gymnasia, which was translated into Russian by Nikita Butyrsky.¹⁸

At the same time, at the beginning of the 19th century the moral philosophy of Kant had engendered wide discussion in Russian universities. Professors at Kazan’ University dedicated lectures to the analysis of the issues related to the foundation of morality. In 1817, Professor Josif Sreznevsky gave a lecture

¹⁶ Nikitenko (1869: 72-73).
¹⁸ Jakob (1813). The textbook had originally been printed in German in Riga and consisted of eight volumes. The Russian translation was published by the Main Schools Directorate as a basic manual on philosophy.
entitled «A discussion on different moral teaching systems compared by their origins». In his «discussion» on «Kant's critique of practical reason», Sreznensky identified seven systems of «moral teaching», including the «doctrine of a system based on the notion of a moral code». Whilst he agreed with that system «And so, the idea of a moral code is contemporaneous with reason, and the more it develops within it, the better it will grow and flourish», Sreznevsky nevertheless criticizes the Kantian system for the fact that Kant «puts too great a distinction between theoretical and practical reason, which in actual fact are one and the same thing».

The problem of the autonomy of morality is taken up for discussion by Alexander Lubkin, professor of theoretical and practical philosophy at Kazan' University. In his «Discourse on whether moral teaching can be given a firm grounding independent of religion» (Kazan' University, 1815), Lubkin puts forward a range of arguments against the notion of the autonomy of morality, affirming the necessity of basing morality on religion, and not removing religion from morality.

So Kant's practical philosophy had become the centre of attention and discussion in Russian universities as far back as the first decades of the 19th century. However, the philosophy of Kant provoked a great deal more than just theoretical discussions between university professors on issues of theoretical ethics – to a great extent it led to the closure of philosophy departments and the dismissal of their professors.

The close interest paid by the state to the content of teaching syllabuses in philosophy – and above all moral philosophy – was triggered by the increase in ideological pressure on academic institutions and the rolling back of liberal reforms in the early years of the reign of Alexander I. The stated objective of education was to achieve «consensus between faith, knowledge and authority, or in other words between Christian devotion, the enlightenment of the mind and civic existence». Any and all reforms had a single goal – to exorcise the dangerous spirit of philosophical freethinking, and to establish harmony between «faith, knowledge and authority». German professors were compelled to return to their homeland, as their lectures were deemed to be imbued with free thought.

Mikhail Magnitsky, trustee of the Kazan' educational district, wrote with some indignation against the Kantian views of Professor Jakob: «The students don't even know the Commandments, but having learned in their philosophy class that there is some moral law according to Jakob's system, and they live by this law with no supervision whatsoever...». In accordance with the Charter that Magnitsky had drawn up for Kazan’ University, the university administration was obliged to oversee the «moral education of the students», and the stated

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19 Sreznevsky (1817: 25-26).
20 Quotation from Feoktistov (1865: 492).
The aim of education was to raise «sons faithful to the Orthodox church, to the Tsar, good and valuable citizens for the motherland».21

The Göttingen University alumni and St Petersburg University lecturers Alexander Galich and Alexander Kunitsyn were disbarred from teaching natural law and any philosophical disciplines. By order of the trustee of the St Petersburg educational district, Dmitry Runich, lecture notes from the «departments of philosophical and historical sciences» were confiscated from students. These notes were seen as constituting a crime against religion, authority and society. Runich noted in his journal:

> The Russian people have not yet emerged from childhood. It is too early to talk to them of freedom. Perhaps they were pushed too roughly onto the path to civilisation. People aren’t asparagus, and social enlightenment isn’t a greenhouse, although it can sometimes be a dangerous mine that can blow a whole building sky high. In Russian universities, lycées, higher education institutions and private schools, all the deleterious theories of modern philosophy have been taught. The German systems of natural law that were adopted by Russian and foreign professors represented something monstrous and declared open war on all the principles of morality. The teaching of Schelling along with all the German philosophy and history that was preached from the pulpit… insolently undermined the foundations of the Holy Scripture itself..., Divine right and the principle of monarchy alike were rejected and refuted. It couldn’t have done greater damage if they had preached the moral teachings of Marat himself.22

On the strength of such arguments, the teaching of natural law and a whole range of philosophical disciplines, including ethics and didactic philosophy, was brought to a halt. The administrations of educational institutions and the trustees of educational districts took it upon themselves to provide moral guidance. The theoretical study of ethics, along with its development as a science and academic discipline, was put on hold for several decades.

It can therefore be argued that the fate of theoretical ethics in Russia was inseparable not only from philosophy’s status and institutional character, but was dependent above all on the socio-cultural factors, ideological attitudes and moral inclinations of Russian culture. Russian ethical thought in its theoretical aspects followed in the footsteps of European philosophy, and underwent the necessary stages of adopting the heritage of Aristotle, Wolffism, Kantism, and the later influences of Hegel and other 19th century thinkers for ethics to be established as a discipline, but at the same time it went through difficult and dramatic periods of abolition and prohibition, of recovery and «restoration of rights». The most tumultuous relations between ethics and state ideology were seen during the 19th century. Having completed the initial stage of becoming

21 Instrukciya rektoru universiteta 1821: 30.

22 Runich (1901: 626-627).
established as a scientific discipline in the 1820s, by the middle of the 1850s ethics found itself banned from all Russian universities (apart from the University of Tartu) along with the teaching of any philosophical disciplines.

The revolutionary mood in Europe and the events of 1848-1849 went a long way towards sealing the fate of philosophy in Russia, as political movements and revolutionary ideas were at times wholly dependent upon philosophical doctrines. The restrictions on the teaching of philosophical disciplines were dictated by a desire to maintain the inviolability of political institutions. In November 1849, the teaching of public law was brought to a halt, with Emperor Nicholas I placing the following resolution on the report submitted: «A sensible move, this is not to be restored, it is utterly unnecessary». In 1850, the minister for education, Prince Platon Shirinsky-Shikhmatov submitted a paper to the emperor with an analysis of the character of teaching methods in higher education, in which he proposed to prohibit the teaching of the philosophical disciplines of cognitive theory, metaphysics and ethics. It was suggested that ethics be abolished, since in the opinion of the minister, everything that was included in the subject of didactic philosophy was already covered by moral theology. In the thinking of Shirinsky-Shikhmatov, only logic should remain within university walls, on the sole basis that the study of logic enabled students to correctly organize their thoughts, something that would be necessary for the understanding of other scientific disciplines. The teaching of psychology was also maintained, and assigned to professors of theology. The following observation can be found in the diary of Alexander Nikitenko from 1850:

Yet again we see the persecution of philosophy. It is proposed to restrict its teaching in universities to logic and empirical psychology, and to entrust both disciplines to our spiritual colleagues… I was with Fisher, nowadays a professor of philosophy, and I recounted to him my conversation with the minister. The latter in the main relied on the notion that «the usefulness of philosophy is unproven, but harm from it is always possible».

And so, in 1850 courses in philosophy were restricted by Supreme Order to logic and empirical psychology, and were incorporated into the theology faculty, with the programmes for these disciplines being drawn up together with the religious authorities, and the university philosophy chairs were abolished. The Ministry of Education’s annual report for 1852 proclaimed the termination of the «promulgation in university departments of vague theories under the label of philosophy, with the study of logic and psychology entrusted to professors of theology», which «equated» these disciplines to «the truths of revelation».

23 Rozhdestvensky (1902: 265).
Additionally, the teaching of the constitutional law of European states was also prohibited. The St. Petersburg University’s philosophy chair was abolished on 26th January 1850 and a little later, in November the same year, the universities’ pedagogical institutes were abolished and departments of pedagogics established in their place. As for ethics as a philosophical discipline, its teaching was brought to an end, as noted above, even earlier than the teaching of philosophy. Thus ethics was expunged from the academic environment for decades on end. In the history of university scholarship, for practically the whole of the 19th century (and indeed for the first quarter of the 20th) the fate of ethics as a science and academic discipline was sealed by the influence of ideology.

This process of the «expulsion» of ethics from academic life had many unforeseen repercussions for Russian culture. By the middle of the 19th century, ethical thought, deprived of its means of expression in an academic or university context, begins to appear in literary philosophical writing and in Russian journalism, lending it a socio-political focus and, in the purview of natural scientists, a positivistic orientation. Since ethical introspection is an integral part of culture, deprived of the academic rostrum it will find other means to express and establish itself. Outside the bounds of the academic, university environment, Russian thought forms a unique ethical cultural space in literature, criticism and journalism, and also in the ideological discourse of natural scientists. One result of the «expulsion» of academic ethics was the creation of a particular «disciplinary space» for the ethical in Russian culture and for the ethical lexicon in literature. This allows us to talk of the unique forms of ethical reflection in 19th century Russian literature. The exclusion of ethics from academic tradition had a dual consequence for culture: on the one hand, we can observe the phenomenon of moralism and a toughening of moral normality encompassing all spheres of activity of society and the individual, and on the other, the exclusion of ethical introspection from academic life transforms into the aetisation of artistic culture (something that correlates to similar processes in 19th century Russian culture). The «expulsion» of ethics from academic scholarship enabled the creation of the unique «pan-moralism» in Russian thought and in Russian culture as a whole. But as a result of the «expulsion» of ethics from the university environment, indeed its actual abolition, an original «disciplinary space» of the ethical in Russian culture was created, and whereas in the first half of the 19th century university ethics never left the bounds of the academic space, by the end of the century it is incorporated directly into the shaping of the ethical discourse and moral ideology. Consequently, it is appropriate that we examine how this ethical «disciplinary space» evolves towards the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th, and look at the principal characteristics and trends in ethical thought over this period. It was this very time at the turn of the centuries that has gone into the history of Russian philosophy as a special period of the Spiritual Renaissance. Without wanting to reconstruct the entire picture of such a complex epoch in terms of the spiritual, the intellectual and the socio-political,
I would like to analyze the diversity of theoretical forms that the study of ethics took in the culture of this period, the formation of an objective originality in ethical thinking, and the principal issues that defined the distinctive pattern of moral reflection in Russian culture.

5. The return of ethics to university life.

From the 1870s onwards, a new stage in the development of ethical thought in Russia begins – the dawn of theoretical ethics both as a university discipline and in terms of the moral identity of society as a whole, having found its expression in the philosophical character of literary fiction and wide-ranging journalistic discussions.

The return of ethics, along with other philosophical disciplines, to university life was a result of the reforms of Alexander II, and the adoption of the University Charter in 1863. Many university district trustees requested the return of philosophy to the university curriculum, lamenting that in philosophy's absence the overall intellectual level of the students was falling. University syllabuses saw the return of general philosophy, the history of philosophy, and such areas of philosophical study as ethics and aesthetics, although the actual teaching of philosophy began slightly later, in the 1870s. The gradual renaissance of university philosophy in Russia begins at this time, with its spiritual aspect once again defined by German philosophy, in particular the Kantian tradition. It was a curious return to Kant, as noted by Vladimir Solovyev. Kant, according to Solovyev, lifted the overall level of philosophical thought, while in the sphere of ethics the German thinker «gave immaculate and definitive formulas for the moralistic principal, and created a pure or formal ethics, in the form of a science that was just as accurate as pure mathematics». However, whereas at the beginning of the 19th century the accent in courses on ethics focusing on Kant's moral philosophy was placed chiefly on the idea of the autonomy of morality, the foundation of ethics as a subject, and the dissection of its category structure, in the later stages of the development of Russian ethical thought it was the problem of Kant's method, the metaphysical foundation of morality, and the imperative-ness of theoretical ethics which occupied the centre of attention in philosophers' minds. University professors developed the ideas of the German thinker as they applied to a new historical reality, and to the demands that accompanied it. Theoretical ethics begins to be considered not in isolation from moral life, but is instead invited to respond to the burning issues of human existence, while the philosopher is exhorted to morally nurture his pupils. And so, following the critical philosophy of Kant, Alexander Vvedensky (professor at St Petersburg

University, Philosophy Chair from 1888) placed above all else the problem of formulating a scientific world-view, the essence of which was the question of the meaning of life («The sum total of answers to all questions given rise to by the question of the meaning of human existence is called the world-view»). Vvedensky was profoundly convinced that the mission of university science was to nurture future generations: «...Russian philosophy nurtures people who bear just as much significance for Russia as do slavophiles and westernizers, and just as much significance for world philosophy as Lobachevsky».26 It was at the turn of the century that the concept of «the meaning of life» arose and became conceptualised in Russian thought, and the problems of the basis of good, moral freedom and free will became current. Kantian tradition in moral philosophy led to the comprehension of the moral entity, of individual or subjective morality. The very image of the philosophy professor becomes an object of debate and discussion within the university environment, and the subject of introspection for the philosophical community. Increased demands, professional but above all moral in nature, are placed on those who teach philosophy. A contemporary and scholar of the Russian philosophical tradition, Evgeny Bobrov, paints a curious picture of the professor of philosophy:

Only someone who loves this work, that is, someone for whom the very process of imparting his own knowledge to others brings pleasure and joy, only someone who teaches with joy, and for whom to be deprived of this his educational duty and work would mean heartfelt loss and misery – only he can be a real professor. A real professor of philosophy is someone to whom the very opportunity to teach philosophy brings joy, for whom the study of philosophy itself is agreeable, and in whom is born a feeling of pleasure when he imparts philosophy to his listeners. Where that is lacking, where philosophy is imparted without joy, indifferently, or even with a feeling of vexation and discontent – there the joyful Eros of philosophy will never land.27

Such attention to the image of a «real» professor of philosophy is particularly noteworthy given the challenges that ethics faced. Excluded from university lecture halls, it takes on the character of a strategy for the shaping of culture, occupying an important place in journalism and literature. Only after the return of ethics to the roster of educational and scientific disciplines in the 1870s does its academic form come into a surprising coexistence in culture with ethics-as-strategy, the latter of course having a much wider audience and influence. Moreover, in some cases these two forms even stand in contradiction to one another. It is no surprise that «pan-moralism», as a result of «literary» ethics (ethics as strategy), leads to particular attention being paid to an actual entity, while social reality is subject to moral appraisal – from this stems the attention

on the part of ethics to politics, law, economics etc. Of particular significance in the context of shaping culture is the formulation of criteria of a moral entity, and interest in the issue of the interaction of «word and deed». It is interesting to note that the more superficial (when compared to the content of academic ethics) but ambitious «ethics-as-strategy-for-shaping-culture» dictates its own criteria, including even the kind of representatives it will have in the academic environment. The passage from Evgeny Bobrov above is a case in point, considering as it does the philosopher from the public/journalistic point of view.

In this regard, all moral demands placed on an entity become the basis for the formation of the ethos of the intellectual. The issues raised by «ethics-as-strategy» convert in the space of two decades a social group, more or less statistically defined as relating to a particular class, into a group with its own ideology, objectives, espousing its own views and, most importantly, possessing its own model for self-identification. In the event, this development meant that ethics had become self-sufficient in terms of defining the image of an entity and the models for that entity's behaviour. It is in this very period that not only the «ethics of conviction» but also the «ethics of responsibility» (to use Max Weber’s terms) are formulated and set out, and the battleground and specifics of moral responsibility are defined and delineated.

The philosophical thinking of Hegel had significant influence on the shaping of not only theoretical knowledge but also society’s moral conscience. In the context of the issue under consideration, I would draw attention to a kind of «ideological» influence that Hegel exerted on Russian thought and Russian society. The influence of Hegel’s ideas on the objective originality of Russian ethical thought in this period manifested itself mainly in the preoccupation of thinkers with the objective aspects of moral existence, the demarcation of the subjective and the objective in ethics’ categorical structure, the analysis of objectified situations in morals and morality, and the differences therein. In his «Philosophy of Right», Hegel sets out in detail the substantive aspects of the concepts of morals and morality, conferring upon them the status of categories. The concept of morals denotes the sphere of consciousness for an individual or collective entity. It is the sphere of the freedom of the spirit, conditioned by human free will, and defined by the individual’s motivation and system of values, convictions and ideals. Together with morals, Hegel also isolates morality as a specific aspect of social relationships, whose existence is underpinned by such societal institutions as family, civil society and the state. Morals came to be interpreted as a kind of ideal mentality which materializes and reveals itself in the system of moral relationships. It is important to note that in this way the conceptually «trapped» phenomena of moral conscience and moral relations

28 Speaking of Hegel’s influence on Russian thinking, it is apt to mention Dmitry Chizhevsky’s comprehensive study, Gegel’ v Rossii, Paris, 1939.
began to establish and fix themselves, to proliferate and be studied in ethics as everyday reality. Russian ethical thought embraced the vital tenet of Hegelian ethics of the interpenetration of ideas and reality, and the removal of barriers between the two, which led to the formation of an ideological benchmark in moral consciousness.

The creation of the Russian school of the philosophy of law (associated with such thinkers as Konstantin Kavelin, Boris Chicherin, Pavel Novgorodtsev and a host of other philosophers) towards the end of the 19th century was also influenced by Hegelian tradition, as ethical thinking emerges into the space of social, juridical and political analysis, discussions revolve around the interrelations of law and morality, individual morality and institutional morals, the «moral existence of society» and «moral life», theoretical models of the «ethics of virtue» and the «ethics of equity», and the ideals of the individual perfection of self against the ideals of society.

The challenges that confront philosophy, and above all ethics, are not merely theoretical but also ideological and «enlightenment-esque» in character. Konstantin Kavelin’s work «On the aims of ethics» from the 1880s sounds like a kind of ethical manifesto. Analysing the state of ethics and moral issues in Russia and Europe, Kavelin wrote:

A growing interest in ethics is discernible not only in Europe, but also here in recent years, and this has happened with an additional nuance which shows that the inclination towards questions of ethics is not just a question of fashion, mimicry or passing entertainment, but the expression of real need. In European literature, the question of morality has been raised again, it is back on the table and being thoroughly worked through as an object of theoretical research and scientific interest, while for us the question arises out of practical considerations, as the topic of the day and, one can say without fear of exaggeration, it affects each and every one of us…

Later on, Kavelin compares the state of the institutional spheres of public life in Europe and Russian and draws the following conclusion:

In Europe, if some public or political organization collapses, it does not occur to anyone to seek out the cause in the weakening or absence of moral sense or ethical ideals; everyone attributes it to something being damaged in the mechanism that controls public and political life, and argues that all that needs to be done is to mend, renew or improve the weak parts, and the machine will work just as reliably as before. With us, things are different. We cannot boast of the development and perfection of public forms. People who cannot find firm foundations in the objective conditions of social existence naturally seek it out in individual moral qualities. […] We are not, of course, going to

30 Kavelin (1899: 902).
deny that legislative and administrative reforms are necessary for Russia: but to expect from reforms alone the resolution of all the problems posed by the passage of world history is to drastically reduce the significance of that movement of minds that is now occurring everywhere... In Europe, this movement is only obscured by the proficiency and sophistication of public and political forms, thus the need for moral renewal is expressed in a more theoretical manner, not so directly and clearly as it is here.31

Therefore in Russia the principal task of ethics was «to show to the individual the path to normal spiritual development and improvement», to create a «morally developed person» as the best of citizens, who is a «member of an organised communal dwelling, because he fulfills his responsibilities and makes sacrifices by his own conviction for the proper cohabitation of people». In this way, the objectives of ethics include the shaping of the moralistic persona, because «to build a strong and solid building of society» would be possible only on condition that «the community is supported by inner conviction, and without that support society becomes flimsy, faltering and illusory».32

6. Moral ideology and the «ethics of conviction»

Towards the end of the 19th century, ethics emerges to address social and practical problems, as demands are placed on it to produce not just armchair theories, but answers to the social and political demands of society and individual participation in moral historical choice. Theoretical discussions escaped the bounds of university lecture halls and academic departments, and became a factor shaping both public moral awareness (at the level of social morals) and individual moral awareness and personal moral introspection.

If in the middle of the 19th century the «exclusion» of ethics from the university environment facilitated the creation of the «pan-moralism» of Russian thought, then towards the end of the century the process of «aetisation» of Russian culture leads to the creation of a unique personality type – that of the Russian intellectual. The high level of theoretical ethical introspection that had developed in the intellectual milieu of the period allowed the formation and establishment of a system of moral ideas that shaped moral convictions and constituted a unique ideological standard for the moral awareness of the individual and society.

By the end of the 19th century, ethics had emerged in Russian culture as a philosophical science and educational discipline on the one hand, and a unique theoretical-ideological standard for moral awareness and reflection on the other. The establishment of theoretical ethics was defined in the history of Russian

31 Ivi: 903.
32 Ivi: 1002-1003.
culture not so much by the logic of the development of the discipline itself as by socio-political demands, and cultural and ideological vectors, which necessitated and determined that ethics focus on practical problems, and created the objective field of social ethics, the ethics of law, and the ethics of education.

At the turn of the century, Russian ethical thought was represented both in university tradition and in other forms of philosophical-theoretical reflection. Ethics crossed the boundaries of the university environment into the space of Russian culture, and onto the pages of magazines, journals and memoirs, literary and journalistic texts, and political discussions. This was a unique period in the history of Russian ethical thought, a few decades across two centuries that created a new and original field of ethical introspection, and an intellectual community that included professors of philosophy, writers, publicists, critics, journalists, natural scientists and theologians. It was during these very years that a moral and intellectual persona unique to Russian culture was formed – the Russian intellectual (we recall that the Russian term «intelligent» entered circulation in the 1870s), whose principal character trait is above all intense moral introspection. It is possible to conclude that ethics in Russia was presented not only as a defined system of theoretical constructs and metaphysical concepts, but above all as a moral ideology, as the «ethics of conviction» – a system of views that defined a way of thinking and a way of life, and also created a moral persona and unique social layer – the intelligentsia, with its inherent task, in the words of Pavel Novgorodtsev, «to consciously construct life».

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