

*Kalinnikov L. A. Immanuel Kant in Russian poetry
(philosophical-aesthetic sketches). Moscow, 2008*

*Калинников Л. А. Иммануил Кант в русской поэзии
(Философско-эстетические этюды).
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Kant in Russian poetry was also discussed by Prof. Kalinnikov with the example of Pushkin, Vladimir Solvyov, and Vyacheslav Ivanov in the monograph *Kant in Russian philosophical culture*. The focus of the work was the polemics between Russian religious philosophy and Kant's philosophy. In the new book, the author aspires to show that poetry, as the quintessence of art, could not stay aside; however, it is a unique phenomenon in the world artistic culture. The opposite phenomenon is also evident: deep interest in Kant was demonstrated by artistic circles, which could not but arouse the interest of professional philosophers in the receptions of his ideas. The mentioning of somebody's name in poetry is never arbitrary; it indicates that the person mentioned occupies a prominent position in the consciousness of the generation.

Prof. Kalinnikov aims to prove that one of the sources of grandeur and international recognition of Russian poetry is its constant dialogue with one of the geniuses who constitute the core of *world* culture. He also aspires to show the opportunities of poetry when addressing Kant's personality and discovering the unity of logic and poetics in his style of thinking, the unity of his ideas and biography. He attempts to prove that a poet's perspective on Kant is special, more flexible and multilateral than that of a philosopher.

Four hundred pages cover the whole post-Kantina era – from the early 19th to the early 21st century. The analysis of previously considered point is expanded, new names are introduced. However, the area of research is not exhausted by these names and works; the author calls his steps first, preparatory and is certain of the promising future of this research. The book could be called *The history of Russian poetry in its relation to Kant*. It consists of three parts corresponding to the three stages of its history: the beginning of the golden age (the first third of the 19th century), the silver age, and some episodes of the iron 20th century. The genre of the work is philosophical-aesthetical sketches, independent but permeated with the unity of the author's understanding of Kant and the features of Russian spiritual culture. Sometimes, they contain a new, original perspective on the ideas of the great philosopher, the author argues with previous interpretations of poets' philosophical ideas.

The four decades at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries were "the first Kantian age" in Europe. Kantianism was one of the cornerstones of the Decembrists' ideas. But the author's thesis that the call for vigorous actions was extracted from Kant's works should be handled with care. The analysis of the poems and letters of V.F. Rayevsky – the "first Decembrist", who was arrested in 1822 – shows that this impulse was very abstract (especially, if we keep in mind Kant's negative attitude to revolutions). Kant *could* contribute to the development of a reform programme, but the way to deep and correct understanding of his practical philosophy was still long.

Rayevsky's friend A.S. Pushkin had a better command of "Kantianisms" and used them more frequently. The author proves conclusively that the great poet, when constructing his plots, studied Kant's perspective and, relying on it, excelled in his spiritual development both the Enlightenment and romanticism. The central topic of the novel *Eugene Onegin* and the narrative poem *The gypsies* is the relation between love (happiness) and duty. The plot poses the problem differently, the solution, however is based on the same, Kantian, principles: duty is above love-like but is compatible with love-respect. Tatyana Larina and Lensky, who live in respect of duty are spiritually complete characters, while their antipodes are defective. In this chapter's interlude, Prof. Kalinnikov answers unambiguously the disputable question regarding the role of love and matrimony in the life and opinions of the Königsberg philosopher himself. Kant's theory of genius corresponds to Pushkin's image of Mozart, at the same time, the poet does not insist on the historical truth of his version of Mozart's relationship with Salieri.

The second part of the book begins with an analysis of Vladimir Solovyov's works. The defence of his doctoral thesis sparked unprecedented interest in philosophy in Russian society. However, he was also the person who ridiculed the Kant fad that emerged in the second half of the 19th century in Russian university circles in the play *Alsim*. Another Solovyov's work parodies the superficial interpretation of transcendental philosophy. In this chapter's interlude, Prof. Kalinnikov employs Kantian devices in order to rationalise the category of *Sophia*. It denotes the common to the cognised and the cognising centre providing for the truth of cognition and representing in both of them the truly existing principle, i.e. God. Solovyov did not manage to find such link in Kant's philosophy and reproached him for the lack of a clear position on this issue, which is partially true. However, such link can be represented by the property of the world of things-in-themselves to be an aggregate of all possible experience (the property of the process of cognition to be potentially infinite), and the property of the natural world to be a systemic whole. It seems that a Kantian analogue of *Sophia* has been found, but, judging by the section's conclusion, the author is not completely satisfied with it and believes that he has only outlined the conditions for future research.

The next chapter focuses on the philosophical worldview of Valery Bryusov — pragmatism approaching positivism, prone to solve the final philosophical problems sceptically. Surprisingly, this world view originates partially from Kant's ideas: with their help, the poet was fighting against the dogmas of religious world view. Among symbolists, such attitude to Kant is unique. The analysis of the poem *Ballad* shows that is addressed to Andrey Bely, whose world view embraced the incompatible ideas of Kant and Solovyov. This conflict led Bely to the love tragedy, a part of which was Bryusov.

The third chapter is dedicated to Merezhkovsky, whose poem *Protopope Avvakum* features an argument with Kant about the problem of a lie for the greater good. It drew V.I. Solovyov's attention, who expressed his point of view on the subject. Kalinnikov shows that the argument developed as a result of insufficient understanding of Kant's position, which, if one sets aside all the nuances, is as follows: all means should be used for saving a human life. Merezhkovsky's dramatic tale *The return to nature* is considered as a philosophical piece about the relationship between a human being and nature and their influence on relations between people. Agnostically understood, Kant is opposed to Tolstoyan-

Russianist utopia and Nietzschean antiutopia. The argument is settled with the help of Vladimir Solovyov's ideas.

Further, the author discusses the works of Andrey Bely and his complex autobiographical poem *The tempter*. This poet resisted the influence of neo-Kantians — the Germans and the Russians — and, in his criticism, aspired to overcome Kant himself, which made him even more of a Kantian. The theoretical framework of Kant's symbolism is the *Critique of Judgement*. Kant's connection with symbolism is scrutinised in the third interlude.

The author moves from the Kantian Bely to the subtleties of the perception of Kant by Solovyov's followers, the adherents of religious philosophy, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Alexander Blok. Prof. Kalinnikov reveals the foundations of Ivanov's ideas — it is not only Platonism and neo-Platonism, but also Aristotelianism. Ivanov called Kantian symbolism "idealistic" and his, Aristotelian, symbolism "realistic". However, the gnoseology of such symbolism is a synthesis of Aristotelianism and Kantianism that supplement each other. Here, Ivanov follows his teacher, Vl. Solovyov. In Kant's philosophy, Vyacheslav Ivanov saw antichristian call for vain individualism. At the same time, their teachings are brought together by anthropologism. The poet made a contribution to the understanding of Kant's system: it is not dualistic, but rather triadic. Alongside the realms of things-in-themselves and nature, there is a third realm — that of the human being, a subjective consciousness.

The one but last chapter of the second part is dedicated to the connection between the image of the starry heavens with the moral law in Kant's world view and Russian poetry and the "poetised" prose of the 19th-early 21st century. The review of silver age is concluded with the analysis of Ellis's (L. L. Kobylinsky's) translation of two Schopenhauer's poems, one of which was dedicated to Kant. As we know, Schopenhauer owes his philosophy to Kant to the same extent as neo-Kantianism does. Russian poetry had great interest in him.

The review of the 20th century begins with Marina Tsvetayeva. She is a representative of the Silver age, thus, it is only natural that she addresses Kant. She is not a "metaphysical" poet; Tsvetayeva did everything to belittle her understanding of Kant's philosophy. However, he meant a lot for her as a major figure in the spiritual culture of her second motherland, Germany, and as a source of general world view and, in particular, the theory of genius (poet). Socialist ideology is animus against Kant's philosophy; however, it was supported by the Soviet poet, Ye. M. Vinokurov, in terms of meditation on the history of the 20th century and the role of philosophy in it. Fazil Iskander's poem *Body and thought* came out at the beginning of new millennium, on the days of the 200th anniversary of the death of Kant. The poet addresses the problem of correlations between body and spirit. The problem solved by Kant is posed on the basis of the poet's life experience.

The book ends with reflections on two Kaliningrad poets, contemporary townsmen of the great philosopher. S. A. Snegov seems to be Kant's adherent in terms of theory of knowledge but, unconsciously, he was influenced by agnostic misinterpretations of the philosopher, thus, the writer argued with Kant. S. Kh. Simkin translated Kant's poems (only two of which survived). As a response to Simkin's poem *When translating Kant*, Prof. Kalinnikov expounds Kant's philosophy of the poetic art.

The new book by Leonard A. Kalinnikov is a work not only on history of philosophy and poetry (literature) proper, but culture in general. Looking for the

philosophical origins of Russian poetry, the author does not stop at Kant, showing the interweaving of this and other philosophical sources. The same relates to the search for poetical responses to philosophy. At the same time, the reader is offered detailed information and an integral conception of the lives and personalities of poets and philosophers. The author traces the dynamics of the poets' personal perception of Kant revealed not only in poems, but also letters, memoirs, treatises (in case of the poets of the silver age). The dialogue of personalities is separated, when possible, from the dialogue of ideas. The presence of the German philosopher is detected even in the "unseen" – in the discussion of topics closely related to his name within history of science and philosophy. The philosophical interpretation of poetry is a complicated task. While solving this problem, the author displays ingenuity, deep knowledge of literature and exact sciences – it is their language the ciphered letters of poets are written in; Prof. Kalinnkov attempts to decipher the letters. It is the language, in which the author's literature images are expressed at times. The language of the book is lively and appropriate to the subject. The book should become a significant phenomenon in the literature on Kant's influence on Russian culture, as well as an impetus for further research.

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