

## Metaphysics of Russian Criticism

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**Abstract:** A main line is traced in the study with regard to criticism problem. Researcher gives consideration to different types of criticism, its status and purposes. The revolutionary criticism which has built its own regime of “truth” in Russia for ripping away masks and disguising the class enemies continues to reign, though in the other forms. The thinking has already lost the spirit of generosity and thanksgiving. The present day decline of spiritual culture in Russia expresses the absence of “cold-water” criticism. All these factors increase the probability of programming the state of awareness for revenge and exasperation under globalization conditions.

**Key words:** Criticism, metaphysics, history of philosophy, religion, subjectivism, spirit of revenge

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### INTRODUCTION

The role of criticism in the present day cultural environment is being actively discussed both by Foreign researchers of different generations (Arnold, 2011; Crane and Keast, 1979; Coombes, 2001; Culler, 2014; Frye, 2006; Lewis, 2012; Norrie, 2014; Poulet, 1998) and by Russian authors too (Bogomolov, 2002; Dobrenko, 2003; Gromova, 2009; Mezhuev, 2012; Senchin, 2009). It has a strong reason thereto indeed, a critic (*kriticos*) is an individual who is capable of holding a court investigate and decide what meaning is comprised by our intellectual works.

**On origin of word “critic”:** The word “critic” has been borrowed from ancient Greek and descends from the verb *krino* which means literally “to select and collect something of good quality discarding all that is unsuitable”. The word *krino* implied an aspiration to determine the “field” of understanding, impart a kind of thoroughness to one’s discourse and show by the same, similarly to Socrates, how an apprehensive attitude gets implemented to what surrounds the people. Such words as “crisis”, “crisis-related”, “criterion” associated with the capabilities of our language to judge in a well-thought-out way descend from the same verb *krino*. The critic demonstrates a definite method of knowing something not for the sake of further self-esteem but aspires to explain a difference between an appearance proper (what should be) and what appears in fact (Crane and Keast, 1975). *Kriticos* holds a court and announces a sentence not as a “casual observer” but as an attending steward supervising a due exhibition of the meaning what is and what shall be available.

**Immanuel Kant on status of criticism:** Previously Kant has paid attention to the importance of criticism using it against dogmatization of “pure” reason principles, since the “pure” reason behaving itself dogmatically disfigures and entangles itself. Critic Kant (1995) calls to proceed from your own reason as a general principle as a matter of fact without free application of your own mental abilities no “smart” criticism is possible. In this case, the indication of its boundaries to the “pure” reason contributes to the personal and scientific perception of the outside world. So, the criticism of Kant has been aimed against all those who day-dreamt of “pure reason” as well as against all those who take off hat to the “pure sensuality” which led to an obsession and insanity. Kant has intentionally excluded intolerance and exasperation from the criticism.

**Problem of criticism intended purpose in 20th century:** However, we have a right to ask why, the critics become extinct and any hope to encounter justified judgements disappears in tandem with them. Not infrequently the critics, the same as the judges are referred to as the “unhappy people” involved in discussing the imaginary worlds and addle brained and false disputes. Some people think that the faculty of prudent evaluation of day-to-day life realities is not any more appropriate of the critics: their reason is in the service of post-modern ideals and illusions, everything is allowed to them, to be everybody and nobody (DeMan, 2013).

It is advisable to analyze the achievements of European criticism in terms of the crisis. What does this crisis mean? It is expressed in the transition of criticism from the categories of sensation, state of awareness and

temporality to discourse of social sciences (especially in the second half of 20th century). The critics have been influenced first by sociology, then by anthropology and finally by neofreudism in sequence and they were considered concordant with their own convictions (Boltanski, 2011).

The disadvantage of criticism (American in particular) consists in the fact that the texts are being reviewed by it as if they were natural objects. This type of criticism forgets that observation and interpretation of the other are always the tools of observing its own self.

According to Foucault (2012) the criticism shall concentrate on the task of “re-actualization” of the previous discourses into new problematic field with the aim of transforming and understanding the modern day-to-day realities.

According to Heidegger (2001), we can understand only that is given to us already to some extent, even though in a fragmentary and unauthentic way. This is a pre-understanding (Forhabe) preceding any understanding, an existential pre-structure of our presence. A hermeneutic circle takes place here. Give it in other words, the implicit pre-knowledge always precedes the explicit interpretative affirmation. In this regard, the critic’s task consists in highlighting the text meaning adding nothing to it by means of critical interpretation, the possibility of which is originally present here.

**Types of criticism:** Thus, the analysis of criticism helps distinguish its following types:

- Criticism reviewing texts on analogy with the natural processes at that the role of the researcher’s productive force of imagination is not taken into account and the authentic criteria of work assessment are absent (it all depends on the observer’s point of view) (Abrams, 2000; Crane and Keast, 1979; Richards, 2014)
- Criticism receiving the acts of criticism based on discourses of sociology (Goldmann, 1980, Lukacs, 1971), anthropology (Strauss, 2010), neofreudism (Lacan, 2013), etc
- Criticism entering a dialog with a work without changing and destroying it, a critic just discloses the implication as it is striving to come away from the point of view of the “sideliner” to a maximum extent (Heidegger, 2009)

This study is devoted to defining a possible circle of value-conscious bases of the Russian criticism, methods of its institutional execution. In this connection, its specific features are being considered especially, the reasons that have entailed the occurrence and development of the revelatory and revengeful position.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subject of this work implies the actual changes in the sphere of criticism reflecting the process of becoming of new and economic reality in Russia. Researcher’s concept contemplates the inclusion of criticism into a wide communication context understood as the relation between an individual and the society. In other words, the field of this investigation is not only power but the social and cultural situation with changes inside which directly influence the institutional practices as well as the social dynamics proper of an individual.

As for the methodology, from researcher’s point of view in order to investigate the subject of the study, it is equally possible to use two principally opposite approaches to studying the essence of criticism.

A metaphysical “superphysical” Heidegger’s approach consists in the fact that our civilization can feature a metaphysical image only. Its dasien-analytics says about the process of annihilation of any possibility to learn the genuine beyng (Seyns) since, everything is immersed into the world of fudged things existent (machenschaft) and is participial to domination of the things being (des seienden). The main disadvantage of our time expressed in the widespread revolutionary enlightenment, despotism, unbounded endarkenment is the deprivation of root in beyng (Seyn), substitution of origins with power deployment. In the time of information technologies, the control of real and unreal things and events depends only on the will to power to the extent that truth is commensurate with the extent of vigor. The sliness of the mind consists in tendency to create a new ruling subjectivism, tactics and strategy to seize power and justify it by any means whatsoever (Heidegger, 2001; Krell, 2015).

The hypophysical “subphysical” Foucault approach (Foucault, 2012) consists in investigation of implicit practices related to a change of social and economic conditions, i.e., analysis of relations of power is implied. On the one hand, this methodology contemplates a sharp criticism of cultivated public discourses on the other hand, it contemplates reconstruction of concealed (from the viewpoint since, they are too apparently on the surface of things) conditions for implementing power policies. Thus, foucault position helps connect the dots of both epistemological (discourse of knowledge) and descriptive (discourse of rules) aspects of the problem as well as analysis of different social practices and aspects of power relations.

The exhaustiveness of categorical meanings is an obvious symptom of the present-day cultural crisis in the field of criticism. In practice, it denotes that the scientific

humanitarian consciousness hardly opens and formulates anything principally new. Many Russian researchers appeal to the past experience until now using stereotypes of the Soviet objectivistic and speculative criticism based on marxism or on the Western subjective and instrumentalist criticism based predominantly on structural and functional interpretation. Researcher's position consists in analyzing the features of Russian criticism on the basis of synthetic grasping of Heidegger's and Foucault's positions backed by value-conscious thinking by calculation of exclusively rational and inhuman objectifying all things existent in prospect.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The main part: revolutionary criticism in Russia**

**“Red” and “white” criticism in Russia:** As for Russia, the criticism had been formed here under unique conditions of class confrontation which gave birth to a revengeful and revelatory thinking. This, actually, implied its path to the spirit of revenge predetermined by Friedrich Nietzsche. The criticism based on political and class hatred and antagonism has attained a strongly pronounced revelatory trend after 1917. The marxist sociology, hegelian dialectic are those few from the complex of elements which have stimulated criticism to radical negation of the entire radical experience. If Karl Marx has criticized the previous political economy in order to discover a phenomenon of surplus exchange value, Vladimir Lenin was interested in the criticism of Marx with an exclusive perspective of power for power's sake, a social experiment not restricted by anything.

However, is it possible that the death of some people and even of the entire classes can predetermine the life of happiness and prosperity for the other? The answer suggests itself. The radical critics infected with the spirit of revenge failed to arouse a spirit of thanks giving and forgiveness with their opponents after seizing power. A wheel of repressions accelerated by the “red” power has provoked a reciprocal criticism the same uncompromising and revengeful. A representative of “white” criticism Arkadii Averchenko castigates with full determination the degeneration features fundamental for revolutionary times: widespread skinchanging, loss of public face. He depicts like Nikolai Gogol in his book the whole gallery of demoniacal characters. The red terror organizer Iakov Peters expressed a superordinary cynicism when he offered to the starving workers to look for food in the cesspits. The famous proletarian word servants Vladimir Maiakovskii and Maxim Gorkii unsheathe a mindbending freedom from conscience in their slavish commendation of

totalitarianism. We become numb from a spiritual decline of the famous Russian singer Fedor Shaliapin ready to drop to knees for the Soviet power just to keep on the safe side. He undercut the White Guard's shoulder straps at the uniform in advance in order to spectacularly tear them off in front of the public after performance on the stage just to keep on the safe side and to please the proletarian dictatorship functionaries. “This insanity features something methodical!”, exclaims Averchenko wrathfully recalling the well-known Shakespeare's expression.

It is unlikely that anyone will undertake now to answer the question: who is right, whether the “red” criticism screaming that Averchenko has dished dirt on the spirit-stirring characters of the Russian leaders (Kerenskii, Lenin, Trotskii, Peters, Shaliapin, Gorkii, etc.) or the “white” criticism stabbing these 12 short stories like 12 knives into an imaginary body of proletarian revolution. One thing is clear: a revengeful criticism has divided Russians like a toy, thrown them into the hands of rulers who have turned the country into “Junkie's heap”. Let us recollect, the words of Gogol: “what precisely the heap contained was difficult to determine, for dust lay on it so thick that the hands of anyone touching, it would come to resemble gloves. Protruding from the pile, more conspicuously than anything else were the broken-off piece of a wooden shovel and the old sole of a boot” (Gogol, 2004).

**Criticism as ripping away masks:** Presently, the genre of revelatory “black portrait” has completely overwhelmed Russia of Vladimir Putin. The spirit of hatred and revelatory criticism in the 21st century the same as in 20th century throws the critics again and again into the squeeze of discord. An study of the well-known critic Vladimir Bushin can be used as an example. It is devoted to the criticism of Mstislav Rostropovich and Galina Vishnevskiaia. What do we come to know about them? A famous musician (the very same Philemon) comes across as a universal magpie, a tongue-tied and hypocritical representative of the “fifth column” endeavoring to invalidate everything previous Soviet, while his wife singer (the very same Baucis) appears as a feeble-minded woman. Philemon releases unflattering remarks about “Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District” opera of Shostakovich qualifying it as an anti-Soviet expression of ideology of Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin. It is known that Shostakovich (1932) himself proclaimed the following: “I strived to create opera, a revelatory satire ripping away the masks and making hate the whole of terrible despotism and scorn of merchants' way of life”. When, it becomes clear that Philemon is mistaken

suspecting Stalinist Shostakovich in anti-Soviet attitudes of mind, researcher critic wrangles: "Hey, you, ugly mug, you are one of the first Trotskyites and counter revolutionaries of Boris Eltsin epoch Jewish whorson". But, what about Baucis? She has a weird genetic background. She hates his father communist with cruel-hearted loathing and is absolutely indifferent to her mother. The superstar is strangled with fury all throughout her life. She is a greedy consumer of imported odds and ends. Researcher presents eloquent quotations from her reminiscences as a proof: "all the furniture in the weekend house and in Moscow (in a 3 bedroom apartment, 100<sup>2</sup> m), dishware, linen, refrigerators, cars, grand pianos all this was brought from abroad, even the roof for the weekend house was bought in Holland. I have brought all the clothes for us and for our children from abroad including threads for dresses. I have brought instant coffee, sausages, cooking pots and detergent powder" (Vishnevskaja, 1998). An act of jealousy is shown in a revelatory way, during this act the "exquisite intellectual" Philemon, nearly naked, wearing underpants only climbs a window sill: "I will throw myself down now!" "Stop, where are you going! I am pregnant!" shouts the scared Baucis. She embodies the multifaced grovelling of post-perestroika time, this is one of the main conclusions of researcher.

It may seem that the given example is just a regrettable exclusion from the general rule of critical attitude to reality. The everyday life accustoms to other things. Perhaps, a modern critic can not be referred to as individuality at all inasmuch he lost measure in his evaluations and judgments. One thing is clear, the criticism is stricken with the spirit of nihilism in its homelessness as if it returns again and again to exasperation and hatred in order to shape its understanding of the sense of human existence.

**Friedrich Nietzsche: criticism in the context of consciousness ontology:** An issue on revelatory criticism on ripping away masks on the revenge is not at all particularly psychological or moral. It belongs to the ontology of consciousness to the dominating method of forming ideas, destined to express the so-called vital interests of not only global and geopolitical thinking but of everyday reason associated with it which is always ready to become unreasonable in the everyday elements of life. The criticism becomes suspicious but all-knowing at the same time. Given below is what Nietzsche says about criticism generating a revengeful thinking.

**The spirit of revenge:** My friends, that hath hitherto been man's best contemplation and where there was suffering,

it was claimed there was always penalty. "Penalty", so calleth itself revenge. With a lying word it feigneth a good conscience. Revenge became a way of criticism and the production of "original ideas" in proletarian Russia.

**Nietzsche exclaims:** No shepherd and one herd! Every one wanteth the same; every one is equal: he who hath other sentiments goeth voluntarily into the madhouse. "Formerly all the world was insane", say the subtlest of them and blink thereby. And further Nietzsche continues: "We have discovered happiness" say the last men and blink thereby. Earlier Nietzsche spoke about the last man on his way to the superman: Lo! I show you the last man. "What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?" so asketh the last man and blinketh.

Nietzsche says that in his time the rule of "the last man" began. It is important to note that it does not mean the end of the modern era in which vengeful thinking dominated. In the face of "the last man" it is expressed in constant blinking, winking and squinting. "The last men" with a "winking" thinking will still rule for a long time.

The earth hath then become small and on it there hoppeth the last man who maketh everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the ground-flea; the last man liveth longest.

It is important to note that the revengeful thinking is expressed in the person of the "last man" in never-ceasing blinking, squinting and winking. When knowledge has the character of force, when information attains significance of one of the most important values through winking and squinting the revengeful and envious thought perceives everything ontologically existing so that necessarily objectify it in an aspiration to subdue and dominate. In this situation the truth is produced, proliferated and kept under control of political and economical institutions. In this case, the critical thinking came forward as an effective tool of changing the world, but at that, it has lost its capability of critical understanding and form a sober estimate of no matter what.

**Criticism in the context of techno structure:** Lukas (1971) determines the messianic will of proletariat in the present and future events: it is the only class in the history capable of attaining the truth for it is the only class able to think over and wish its own annihilation, since, this action is targeted at the society without classes. A correct cognition of the society becomes the direct condition for its self-cognition for the proletariat and finally, this is the class, destined by its position to a revolutionary renovation of society, victory over the elements of objectivation and alienation.

According to Heidegger (2009) a concept of truth as confidence incredible as it may seem, became the result of metaphysical perception of a sense of genesis and truth in terms of light, brightness and transparency.

The metaphysics of light makes, it possible for the criticism to settle itself in the genesis as an instance of substantiation of cognition and acquire the clear-eyed subject consciousness. The logic implies that it is necessary to be supported by a convincing method which could substantiate a unique role of subjectivity in establishing "by the force of its own power which should be referred to as correct and incorrect". The truth of such kind guarantees command and ruling to a subject over everything that is considered objective.

No wonder that subjectiveness commands now any kind of limitation and delimitation take possession of everything which an individual can be sure of. As a matter of fact, not without a reason, pre-settling means settling anything in front of you in order to settle, what is present with respect to yourself.

The present-day network system transforms the human practice radically. The society is being filled with informational elements and gets transformed into a new technocratic system. The machinery now is not just the technical activity of a man as the subject, but an extreme expression of European metaphysics including criticism. All this testifies to a fact that thinking in Russia has lost a spirit of generosity and thanksgiving. Marx proclaimed: "Philosophers have just differently explained the world, but the purpose is to change it. Though, is it not that interpretation, if it is a deed of a genuine criticism, is already the change of world? Is it not that the world change contemplates in advance a theoretical insight as a tool?"

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the following conclusions can be done: Kant declared himself in history as a philosopher of cold-water thought intentionally excluding impatience and exasperation. It had a great world-outlook value since beginning from the French revolution in 1789, the fanatical cult of Reason obsessed with insanity has established itself in Europe. The aspirations of criticism to give a program of a new vision of the world, radical structural adjustments of society and values contribute to an emergence of the most recessionary tendencies only threatening people.

Criticism as the subject due to the fact that the basis of all outdoor consists in the subjectivity turns out into a center of omnipresent command of all true and false.

Social and cultural transformations aimed at the expanding and increasing a spiritual level of a person, encounter more and more frequently the cultural desperation. It is a paradox, but any more or less effective delusion elevates the contemporary media critics and is evaluated in social medium as the truth.

Comprehensive computerization and internet communication contributes to technical enslavement of the people. Since, the revengeful thinking appears to be originally criminal in its essence, the computerization contributes to an unexpected and instantaneous "brittleness" (collapse) of spiritual culture.

Spirit of revenge pierces the innermost people's thoughts which are considered deep ingenious and righteous in the Russian society. Suspicious and revengeful criticism hoping for cynic scientific reason makes it impossible to arrive to something fundamentally new in Russia.

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