

CHRISTOPH GARSTKA
Ruhr-Universität Bochum

The Enlightened West – or the Light from the East? Dostoevsky’s Construction of the *Other* out of Crisis

In September 2014, the Russian journalist Julia Latynina published a noteworthy article in the *Novaja Gazeta* which was headed “If We Are Not the West, Who Are We?”¹ In her text she intends to point out that Russian culture is no autonomous and independent phenomenon (“что же такое эта особая ‘русская культура?’”) but stems completely from the Western occidental heritage and is therefore part of the Western world. Using pointed polemic, she opposes Western and Eastern traditions. She raises a couple of questions: who is a model founder for Russians: Julius Caesar or Qin Shi Huang, the founder of the Chinese Qin dynasty? Who or what does classical Russian literature refer to more frequently? To Herodotus or Sima Qian, the so-called father of Chinese historiography? To the *Iliad* or the *Ramayana*, the great Sanskrit epic of ancient India? To the Bible or the Koran? Latynina’s provocation reaches a climax when she claims that nearly every culture is, in fact, a blend, with the exception of Jewish, Indian and Chinese culture. According to the journalist, it was Adolf Hitler who promoted the idea of a true-bred culture in his book *Mein Kampf* (“My Battle”). The public outcry was – of course – enormous. A formal warning over alleged ‘extremism’ was issued by the Roskomnadzor against the NG and numerous comments and counter statements could be found in the press and on the Internet.

There is one aspect contained in those replies that I would like to stress: Latynina had started her article with the following sentence: “Уже полгода, как со времени победы Майдана российские официальные власти, депутаты и телекомментаторы открыли существование особой ‘русской культуры’, которая противостоит европейской бездуховности”. Thus, according to the reporter, the conflict in Ukraine is raised to the same level as a European-Russian antagonism. Obviously, the existence of an independent Russian

1 See Юлия ЛАТЫНИНА, “Если мы не Запад, то кто мы?”, *Новая газета*, № 101, 10.09.2014, <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2014/09/09/61065-csli-my-ne-zapad-to-kto-my>.

culture as a counterpart to Western culture has been evoked long before the events on the Maidan. Many commentators identified the ideas expressed in the article as the continuation of a nearly 200-year-old controversy between Westernizers and Slavophiles. A keyword in this controversy is the term enlightenment (*просвещение, Aufklärung*). A reply to Latynina's article reads as follows: "Проблема Латыниной и ее окружения в том, что они слишком привыкли при каждом чихе оглядываться на 'просвещенный запад'. Не имея собственного, независимого от Европы мнения, они отказывают в таком мнении всему русскому народу, искренне считая его неразумным быдлом".² Another one reads: "Что же можно сказать по этому поводу? Да, в общем, лишь то, что миф о 'просвещенном Западе' и 'отсталой России' только мифом и является".³

The replies aim essentially at discrediting enlightened Europe by arguing that this form of enlightenment, one based on reason, has neglected the spiritual education of the individual. This view was shared by Dostoevsky which will be shown later. Latynina quotes the reproach of "европейская бездуховность" (a European spiritlessness), a term which always plays a central role in this debate. The term 'дух' (spirit, German *Geist*) has multiple and contradictory implications when it is combined with the term 'enlightenment'. Of course, one can speak of 'the spirit of enlightenment' or of a person with an 'enlightened spirit'. But when Dostoevsky refers in a controversy with a Russian Westernizer to a specific Russian "просвещение духовное" (spiritual enlightenment, see below), he certainly does not allude to Immanuel Kant's famous motto "Have the courage to use your own understanding". Dostoevsky is more likely to recur to the pneumatic dimension of the term *Geist* (spirit, дух) than to the noetic one. Thus, Europe's pride, the achievements of the Age of Enlightenment, and man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage are considered as a story of loss and decay.

Following Schelling, Eric Voegelin phrased the term of a "pneumopathology" that had affected the history of Western Europe since the early modern ages.⁴ Voegelin dealt intensively with Dostoevsky's work, using his new term to

2 L. НЕМО, "Комментарии к статье Ю. Латыниной 'Если мы не Европа, то кто мы?'" <https://fishki.net/1317366-kommentarii-k-state-julatininoy-esli-my-ne-evropa-to-kto-my.html>.

3 Cf. "Если мы не Запад, то мы – Россия!" [N.U.], <http://politrussia.com/society/esli-my-ne-zapad-to-my-rossiya-686/>.

4 C.f. e.g. ERIC VOEGELIN, "Universität und Öffentlichkeit. Zur Pneumopathologie der deutschen Gesellschaft", *Wort und Wahrheit*, 21 (1966), pp. 497-518. For background information see PETER J. OPITZ, "Der 'neuen Innerweltlichkeit' auf der Spur. Studien zu Eric Voegelin".

define the Western spiritual crisis as a disorder, as a separation of the spirit from its religious roots. In his talk on “University and the Public” from 1966 he defines the spirit as follows:

“By spirit we understand the openness of man to the divine ground of his existence: by estrangement from the spirit, the closure and the revolt against the ground. Through spirit man actualizes his potential to partake of the divine. He rises thereby to the *imago Dei* which it is his destiny to be.”⁵

Voegelin regards the Age of Enlightenment as the historical era in which humans freed themselves from the divine and lost their attachment to a higher transcendental reality.

Accusing Western societies of being, in the words of Voegelin, in “a very complex pneumopathological state of mind”⁶ and asserting that a pseudo-humanistic liberalism and a ‘wrong’ enlightenment caused the estrangement of the spirit from his religious ground has been an essential topos in anti-Western civilization criticism in Russia for nearly 200 years. Being an influential intellectual, Dostoevsky supported and amplified that view. In what follows, the roots of this topos will be traced back to its early beginnings in Russian culture in the 1820s/30s. Dostoevsky’s journalistic works, in particular, convey fierce criticism of European spiritlessness and a misconceived enlightenment. Two of his texts will be scrutinized in which the terms ‘enlightenment’ and ‘spirit’ play an important role. Interestingly, those texts also reveal that Dostoevsky’s notion of the latter terms does not really change but is even intensified after his return from Siberia. The first text is the “Series of Articles on Russian Literature”, serving as the introduction to the magazine *Time* (Время), which he founded with his brother in 1861. The second text was published 20 years later in the *Diary of a Writer* (Дневник писателя) and was a reply to Alexander Gradovsky’s criticism of Dostoevsky’s *Pushkin Speech*. In brief, my thesis is that in the early 1860s, Dostoevsky assumes Johann Gottfried Herder’s notions of a *Geist der Völker* (national spirit / spirit of the people; дух

gelins *History of Political Ideas* und seiner Deutung der westlichen Moderne”, *Occasional Papers*, 80, Januar 2011, pp. 105-108, <http://eric-voegelin-gesellschaft.de/files/user/pdfs/voegeliana/OccPaper-80.pdf>.

5 Eric VOEGELIN, “Reconsidering the Nazi Era”, in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, English translation by Russel Nielli, <https://voegelinview.com/reconsidering-the-nazi-era-pt-1/>.

6 Eric VOEGELIN, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 164.

народа / национальный дух).⁷ The concept of the spirit had been secularized in the Age of Enlightenment, then mystified by Herder who did not attribute a component pointing to transcendence to it as the *Volksgeist* appeared in people's customs, legends and myths. A complete re-sacralization of the spirit was caused by a 'genuine' Russian enlightenment, which Dostoevsky reveals in his *Diary* from 1880, stressing the pneumatic dimension of the divine spirit within the Russian people. At the end of this study, Dostoevsky's articles from 1861 will be interpreted from a postcolonial point of view, as it is both astonishing and disconcerting to see the author's first lines published after his return from exile in Siberia. With vehemence he tries to construct a fundamental division between Russia and Europe, which seems to foreshadow his anti-Western civilization criticism.

The controversy about the interpretation of the term 'enlightenment' and its polemical use in the debate on Russia and Europe, which is the point here, goes back into the phase when the opposition between Westernizers and Slavophiles in Russia started to become obvious.⁸ As early as in the mid-1820s Dmitry Venyutinov, one of the founders of the *Society for the Love of Wisdom* (Общество любому́дрия), reflected intensively upon Russia's role in the process of Enlightenment.⁹ In 1830, three years before Pushkin wrote his poem *The Bronze Horseman* (Медный всадник), Stepan Shevyryov's poem entitled *Petrograd* was

- 7 Cf. Isaiah BERLIN, *Vico and Herder. Two studies in the History of Ideas* (New York: Viking Press, 1976). Although Berlin considers the German philosopher to be part of a Counter-Enlightenment movement, it is important to stress the German differentiation between the terms *Volksgeist* und *Geist der Völker*. The first one was never used by Herder but was introduced by Hegel; Herder used the latter one evoking Voltaire's *esprit de nations*. Therefore Nathan Gardel's statement from an interview with Isaiah Berlin, "Of course, Herder's *Volksgeist* became the Third Reich", seems completely inappropriate (cf. Jochen JOHANNSEN, "Völker als Gedanken Gottes? Zur politischen Herder Rezeption", https://dspace.ub.uni-siegen.de/bitstream/ubsi/1109/1/Johannsen_Voelker_als_Gedanken_Gottes.pdf, p. 1. First published in *Herder Handbuch*, hg. von Stefan GREIF, Marion HEINZ und Heinrich CLAIRMONT (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2016), S. 671-677).
- 8 Юлий А. АСОЯН, "'Сумерки просвещения': как в России просвещение было переименовано в культуру", *Вестник РГГУ. Серия Философия. Социология. Искусствоведение*, 2009, с. 11-24. Asojan has studied intensively with the different levels of meaning of the term 'enlightenment – просвещение' in Russian and relates it to 'culture, civilization and education'. He does not refer to Dostoevsky though.
- 9 ДМИТРИЙ В. ВЕНЕВИТИНОВ, "О состоянии просвещения в России", in *Сочинения*, ч. II, 1831, с. 24-32, http://az.lib.ru/w/wenewitinow_d_w/text_1826_o_sostoyanii_prosvesheniya_v_rossii.shtml. This article conveys a peculiar blending of enlightenment thinking both as a universal idea and a notion reminding of Herder that every people has its own enlightenment.

published in the *Moscow Herald* (Московский вестник). It depicts a struggle between the raging sea and the founding father of the city of St Petersburg. The author puts a remarkable statement into the Tsar's mouth: "Для моей России он [= Санкт-Петербург] / Просвещенья будет оком".¹⁰ The lyrical 'I' says clearly: It was Peter who enabled Russia to shake off the nocturnal darkness of its ignorance and who made Russia see the light of the new dawn. A few years later, Shevrygov will modify this perspective substantially. In 1844 pre-modern and post-Petrine Russia are no longer as different as day and night; in fact, premodern Russia developed the solid ground (почва) on which Peter's reforms became fully efficient. Therefore, according to Shevrygov, the Russian people evolved into a powerful organic entity that could look into the future with great hope: "Все же бытие Русского народа едино, цельно и полно – и никакого разрыва и противоречия во внутренней святине существа своего не допускает". The latter statement is taken from his "Introduction into the History of Russian Literature".¹¹ What can be discerned here is a pattern which also appears in the present debate on Latynina's article, namely the assumption that the Western world is stuck in a spiritual crisis that has been caused by the enlightenment. The fruits of Western enlightenment have become rotten in the eyes of Russia: "Мы и всегда принимали плоды просвещения западного под условием уподобления их себе согласно с духом и характером нашего целого бытия; но теперь усвоение этих плодов в крайностях западного кризиса резко противится нашей внутренней основе". In his "Introduction" Shevrygov divides the phenomenon of enlightenment into a spiritual inner education and an outer material one. He now attacks 'Westernizers', who reject the old Russia severely. According to him they are nothing but soulless copies of the outward materialistic aspect of the western enlightenment: "В них [поклонники Петра первого] одна бездушная, хотя щеголеватая снаружи, копия со всей внешней, матерьяльной стороны просвещения западного, без всякого внутреннего его значения, без мысли живой и греющей". He compares them with the "whitewashed tombs" (Гробы повапленные), – a term that Jesus used to insult the Pharisees and scribes (cf. *Matt.* 23, 27). Outwardly they seem beautiful but inwardly they are dead. And this comparison is not far from his central metaphor of the rotting Western world. Russian Westernizers might wear the latest Paris fashion but they only use the perfume to cover up their own rotting smell: "Это повапленные гробы России, одетые

10 Степан П. ШЕВЫРЕВ, *Стихотворения*, под ред. М. Аронсона (Ленинград: Советский писатель, 1939), с. 70-72. Shevrygov wrote the poem ten years earlier.

11 Степан П. ШЕВЫРЕВ, "Введение в Историю Русской Словесности", *Москвитянин*, 1844, 1, с. 219-240, quoted after <https://www.proza.ru/2019/03/05/375>.

во фраки последнего покроя, украшенные всеми причудами последних мод Парижа, его духами прикрывающие запах внутреннего своего гниения”.

The reversal of the meaning of the metaphor of enlightenment from the light of day equated with reason that has prevailed against the nocturnal darkness of ignorance was already familiar from Aleksey Khomyakov in his famous poem *The Dream* (Мечта) from 1835.¹² In this poem the lyrical I first praises the benefactions of the age of enlightenment, the sun of reason “in the far Western world, the land of holy miracles” (На дальнем Западе, стране святых чудес). However, in the following lines, it observes that the Western world has followed a reversed path namely from daylight to the darkness of night: “Но горе! век прошел, и мертвенным покровом / Задернут Запад весь. Там будет мрак глубок”. The Golden Age of Europe has expired. Also in Khomyakov’s poem the dichotomy of life and light and death and darkness plays a crucial role (although the enlightenment is nothing but a metaphor of light in the first place).

However, Dostoevsky will even go one step further in 1880 in his controversy with the professor from St Petersburg, Gradovsky, as he refers to a Russian enlightenment of its own right, not referring to “our Russian enlighteners” (see below). By contrast, the idea of a Russian form of enlightenment that Dostoevsky develops while arguing with Gradovsky contains a clearly positive connotation of the term: “Наука дело одно, а просвещение иное” (ПСС 26; 154). That is what he says in August 1880. However, this insight is something relatively new in Dostoevsky’s work. But the same idea has already been developed by other slavophile thinkers. Certainly, Ivan Kireevsky has already expressed this concept in his essay entitled *On the Character of Enlightenment in Europe and its Relationship to the Enlightenment in Russia*, published in 1852.¹³ Right

12 Алексей С. ХОМЯКОВ, *Стихотворения и драмы* (Ленинград: Советский писатель, 1969), с. 103.

13 Иван В. КИРЕЕВСКИЙ, “О характере просвещения Европы и о его отношении к просвещению России”, in Иван В. КИРЕЕВСКИЙ, *Избранные статьи*, сост., вступ. статья, и комментарии Владимира А. Котельникова (Москва: Современник, 1984), с. 199-238. The article takes the form of a letter. Cf. Наталья В. ВОЛОДИНА, “Диалог И. В. Киреевского и А. С. Хомякова о характере русского и европейского просвещения”, *Quaestio Rossica*, 7 (2019), № 1, с. 243-254. Interestingly, the only German translation of this essay that I know is entitled “Über den Charakter der Bildung [!] Europas und ihr Verhältnis zur Bildung [!] Russlands”: Iwan W. KIREJEWSKI, *Russland und Europa*, übersetzt und mit einem Nachwort herausgegeben von Nicolai von Bubnoff (Stuttgart: Klett, 1948). The Heidelberg professor of Slavic studies understands the Russian *просвещение* as *Bildung* (‘education’ and ‘образование’). In his epilogue, Bubnoff refers to rational Western sciences

at its beginning, Kireevsky contradicts the assertion that the enlightenment has been a universal human enterprise with global claim. According to him, this interpretation is caused by Western arrogance and does not consider cultural differences.¹⁴ The universal philosophical instruction to the individual is regarded as a national characteristic, which explains the title of the article. Kireevsky contrasts the ‘holistic’ Russian personality with the fragmented Western one, *цельность vs раздвоение*: “[...] богословие на Западе приняло характер рассудочной отвлеченности, – в Православном мире оно сохранило внутреннюю цельность духа”.¹⁵ The *цельность духа* (‘spiritual wholeness’) becomes a key term here. Kireevsky expresses an interesting thought that is meant to emphasize the differences between Russia and Western Europe. In his essay Kireevsky names three elements derived from the history of the Western world, unknown to Russian nature: the Catholic church, Roman-imperial thinking and the violence exerted by European states while fighting each other. Concerning the latter aspect, Kireevsky referred to the French romantic historian Augustin Thierry whose ideas were very popular at the time. According to Thierry, the development of all greater Western European states was caused by a bitter fight between two nations. Therefore, the foundation of European nations is always preceded by an act of violence. Kireevsky argues:

[...] третий элемент просвещения [...] представляет ту особенность на Западе, что почти ни в одном из народов Европы государственность не произошла из спокойного развития национальной жизни и национального самосознания [...]. Напротив, общественный быт Европы [...], почти везде возник насильственно, из борьбы на смерть двух враждебных племен.¹⁶

By contrast Russia: “[...] не испытал завоевания, русский народ утравивался самобытно”.¹⁷ Kireevsky claims that the organic entity in Russia

and a logically abstract thinking. So one can conclude that he also refers to the philosophical enlightenment that both Kireevsky and Dostoevsky attack.

14 See: “В последнее свидание наше, мы много беседовали с вами о характере просвещения Европейского и об его отличиях от характера того просвещения России, которое принадлежало ей в древние времена, и которого следы, до сих пор еще, не только замечаются в нравах, обычаях и образе мыслей простого народа, но проникают, так сказать, всю душу, весь склад ума, весь, если можно так выразиться, внутренний состав Русского человека, не переработанного еще Западным воспитанием” (КИРЕЕВСКИЙ, с. 248).

15 *Ibid.* p. 234.

16 *Ibid.* p. 208.

17 *Ibid.* p. 209.

could evolve naturally because its growth had not been disturbed in a thousand years. By contrast, eruptive violent acts of war caused the fragmentation of European thinking.

Dostoevsky picks up this idea to provide a basis for his first own reflections on the differentiation between Western and Eastern culture. The author's thoughts can be found in "A series of articles on Russian literature" (Ряд статей о русской литературе) that he published together with his brother Mikhail in their magazine *Time* from 1861 onwards.¹⁸ After being forced to silence for more than ten years, those were his first written public statements together with the subscription announcement. There is a deep connection between these articles and Kireevsky's essay. In the subscription announcement from 1860, Dostoevsky takes up Thierry's thought: "Не вражда сословий, победителей и побежденных, как везде в Европе, должна лечь в основание развития будущих начал нашей жизни. Мы не Европа, и у нас не будет и не должно быть победителей и побежденных" (*ИСС* 18; 35-36). The previous sentence is both astonishing and unique in its categorical absoluteness. The announcement of the publication of the new magazine is to be considered equally as a manifesto that states the future political direction of the *Time*. The "Introduction" has been considered as a detailed clarification of the ideas from the announcement. Accordingly, the *Introduction* can be regarded as the first "манифест 'почвенничества'" (*ИСС* 18; 238). This is an aspect of the series of articles that Georgy Fridlender has already highlighted and I will not go into it here.¹⁹ What I would like to emphasize is the strict dichotomy of, on the one hand, Europe and the Western world and, on the other hand, Russia. It is a sharp distinction that Dostoevsky establishes for the first time in his work and he tries to support it theoretically. So doing, he proves to be a great master of rhetorical arts, showing his skills in using poignant mockery, irony and wit.

As the "Introduction" concretises the ideas from the announcement, it includes, of course, Kireevsky's ideas on the Russian entirety as opposed to the Western fragmentation and the natural Russian life as opposed to belligerent Europe. And indeed, it says: "[...] у нас давно уже есть нейтральная почва, на которой всё сливается в одно цельное, стройное, единодушное, сливаются все сословия, мирно, согласно, братски [...]" (*ИСС* 18; 49-50). Dostoevsky

18 For more background information to this series of articles see Владимир А. ТУНИМАНОВ, "Почвенничество и 'полемика идей'", in Владимир А. ТУНИМАНОВ, *Творчество Достоевского 1854-1862* (Ленинград: Наука, 1980), с. 193-224.

19 See Георгий М. ФРИДЛЕНДЕР, "У истоков почвенничества (Ф. М. Достоевский и журнал 'Свечеч')", *Известия АН СССР. Серия литературы и языка*, 5 (1971), с. 400-410.

also judges that the conflict between nobles and peasants, between *les boyards et les serfs*, is not as severe as in the Western world, “в смысле победителей и побежденных” (*Ibid.*). And finally Kireevsky’s words are quoted almost literally: “И всё это сливается [в России] так легко, так натурально, мирно – главное: мирно, и этим именно мы от вас и отличаемся, потому что вы каждый шаг свой добывали с бою, каждое свое право, каждую свою привилегию”. (*Ibid.*) By the way, this passage is a wonderful example of Dostoevsky’s own fine rhetorical technique of polemic. Dostoevsky creates an imaginary dialogue, *мы и вы*, and we have the impression that he is turning directly to the foreign reader, preferably maybe to a French or German one. But a little further above in his article he has argued ironically that Europeans could never understand Russia: because none of them would ever subscribe to his magazine *Time*, even if he could attract Cicero as his employee -whom he would, in fact, not like to employ.²⁰ But the imaginary dialogue with a foreigner is not meant to be a rhetorical dead end. Indeed, Dostoevsky addresses here those foreign specialists in Russian culture that have recently expressed their dismissive attitude after short, superficial travels through Russia, showing unjustified prejudice against the country that they considered backward and marked by barbarian slavery: “[Француз] еще в Париже знал, что напишет о России; даже, пожалуй, напишет свое путешествие в Париже, еще прежде поездки в Россию, продаст его книгопродавцу и уже потом придет к нам – блеснуть, пленить и улететь” (*ПСС* 18; 44). At the centre of his criticism is Astolphe de Custine. Dostoevsky thinks of him as his potential dialogue partner as it had been Custine whose I-narrator said in his report called *Russia in the year 1839* that he preferred reading works by Augustin Thierry’s as those of a ‘real’ historian to historical novels as those of Walter Scott: “Quant à moi, j’aime mieux, même pour me divertir, lire M. Augustin Thierry que toutes les fables inventées sur des personnages connus”.²¹ And Dostoevsky seems to communicate to him that de Custine does not really understand his own fellow countryman who had emphasized the violent, belligerent, brutal and barbarian history of Western Europe. The background to this polemical point is the accusation that Europeans have preconceived and unshakable (negative) judgments on Russia. But as far as their self-realisation of their own historically developed national character is concerned, they fail miserably.

20 “[...] по всем вероятностям, французы не подпишутся на ‘Время’, хотя бы нашим сотрудником был сам Цицерон, которого, впрочем, мы бы, может быть, и не взяли в сотрудник” (*ПСС* 18; 45). One wonders why Dostoevsky wouldn’t employ Cicero. Maybe because the Roman rhetorician was an inveterate Republican?

21 Le Marquis de CUSTINE, *La Russie en 1839* (Paris: D’Amyot, 1843), p. 199.

Dostoevsky's attacks on European foreigners are merciless and obviously malicious. He openly admits that his descriptions appear to be caricatures: "Между тем мы сами чувствуем, что слова наши как будто отзываются пародией, карикатурой" (ИСС 18; 45). He claims that it corresponds to the ridiculous prejudices that European express against Russia. The Europeans pretend to know the Russian people, although they have never fully understood the depth of the Russian nature. Dostoevsky accuses Europeans of being superficial and, above all, arrogant. This is how he portrays the Germans: "[...] во всяком случае беспредельное высокомерие перед русскими, – вот характеристика почти всякого немецкого человека во взгляде на Россию" (ИСС 18; 43). Due to their superficiality and arrogance, Europeans only manage to describe the outer characteristics of Russian life and thus draw mistaken conclusions about Russia. The originality of Russian life, "русская истина, русский дух, характер и его направление" (ИСС 18; 41), remains concealed to them. The "способность высокосинтетическая, способность всепримиримости, всечеловечности" are ascribed to the Russian people in opposition to the European "угловатости, непроницаемости, неподатливости" (ИСС 18; 55). Nevertheless, in 1861, the nature of the Russian *Volksgeist* still remains immanent. In this *Series of articles* the Russian people is represented as a people rooted literally in the почва.

Dostoevsky's line of reasoning is consistent when he describes Russia and Europe as two completely different 'civilizations'. What did Europe give to Russia? Dostoevsky leaves no doubt: science ("то, что от вас с благоговением получила и за что вечно будет почитать вас добром", ИСС 18; 50). His point is that Russia has already exceeded the level of the European civilization. He refers Khomyakov's figure of thought and reverses the categories 'new vs. old': the formerly 'new' European idea of science and enlightenment has frozen and become the 'old' one. "Наша новая Русь", our new Russia is evoked a couple of times. As a consequence, the supporters of Western civilization in Russia rank among the 'old ones' whose adoration of European ideals and reason is outdated. The "Introduction" appears as an imaginary dialogue with the "European gentlemen": "Нет, господа европейцы!", "О, не думайте, г-да европейцы, [...]" (ИСС 18; 56 and 60). Of course, this passage does not address French or German readers but Russian Europeans, Westernizers and Liberals.

The latter are the targets of his relentless criticism. He ridicules them, describing them as bad copies of outdated French philosophers who only shout foreign slogans. Dostoevsky directs his criticism especially against the "господа русские просвещенные европейцы", the enlightened Russian Europeans. *Просвещенные европейцы*, enlightened Europeans, is a term he uses deroga-

tively, especially in his *Diary* from the year 1877.²² I could not find any passages in the diary in which the terms ‘enlightened’ or ‘enlightenment’ are used in a positive, non-ironical or non-oppositional context or way until his quarrel with Gradovsky. Dmitry Tschizewskij has found crucial evidence for Dostoevsky’s view in the following statement: “Для него [Дост.] понятие ‘нигилизм’ является, фактически, обозначением русского просвещения”.²³ A typical example of the defamatory mockery he employs to ridicule Westernizers is to be found in his *Diary* from April 1876. In the chapter called “The Beneficent Swiss Who Liberates a Russian Peasant”, he uses a witty pun, quoting some lines: “...И просвещение несущий всем швейцар” (*ИСС* 22; 116), and the Swiss who brings enlightenment to all of them, Rousseau is meant. But the quotation is misleading. The alleged author, Mr. Avseenko has never written the poem that the verse is supposed to be taken from. So Dostoevsky must have written it himself in a parodistic intention, leaving open the nationality, швейцар (doorman?) and швейцарец.²⁴ According to Dostoevsky, you cannot be both: “homme de la nature *et* de la vérité”, a child of nature *and* truth.

In the last year of his life, Dostoevsky seems to interpret the enlightenment metaphor in a more positive way, which can be seen in the debate that he had with Gradovsky after his Pushkin Speech. As the connoisseur of Dostoevsky has certainly realized, the debate about Latynina’s article (see above) seems to be a reflection of the argument that Dostoevsky had with the professor from St. Petersburg after delivering his speech on Pushkin. In 1880, Gradovsky published an article entitled “Dreams and reality”, in which he anticipated Latynina nearly word for word:

Так или иначе, но уже два столетия мы находимся под влиянием европейского просвещения [...]. Уйти от этого просвещения нам некуда, да и незачем. Это факт, против которого нам ничего нельзя сделать, по той простой причине, что всякий русский человек, пожелавший сделаться просвещен-

22 Cf. above all the issues from May, June and November of that year. Dostoevsky’s use of the term *просвещение* implies a rational thinking marked by science which he condemns in connection with the moral standards of humanity (гуманность) and liberalism (либеральность).

23 Dmitrij TSCHIZEWSKIJ, *Dostoevskij und die Aufklärung* (Skripten des Slavischen Seminars der Universität Tübingen, Nr. 5, Tübingen, 1975). Russian translation by M. Кармапов, “Достоевский и просвещение”, in *Вестник Русской христианской гуманитарной академии*, т. 12 (2011), Вып. 3, с. 179-198, here с. 182.

24 See Борис Н. ТИХОМИРОВ, “Заметки на полях ‘Полного Собрания сочинений Достоевского’ (уточнения и дополнения)”, in *Достоевский и мировая культура*, Альманах № 15 (СПб: Серебряный век, 2000), с. 237-239.

ным, непременно получит это просвещение из западноевропейского источника, за полнейшим отсутствием источников русских. Затем, предусматривая даже сильное развитие русской науки, русского искусства и т.д., мы должны будем признать, что все эти вещи вырастут на почве западноевропейского просвещения [...].²⁵

It is this very passage that Dostoevsky refers to in his response in his *Diary*, taking up the term ‘enlightenment’. He distinguishes between the enlightenment as a Western European phenomenon, aiming at developing ‘useful’ sciences, and a spiritual enlightenment, aiming at the soul: “Просвещение. Позвольте же спросить, что вы под ним разумеете: науки Запада, полезные знания, ремесла или просвещение духовное?” (*ИСС* 26; 150) Dostoevsky highlights the importance of the inner, spiritual and mental enlightenment. The enlightenment of the mind, the reason enables the sciences to develop – it may certainly have been the Western world that has achieved it. But so doing, it has neglected the inner formation and this is how *европейская бездуховность* (the European spiritlessness), as mentioned by Latynina, came into being. Dostoevsky goes on in his article to give his own definition of ‘enlightenment’ which could be considered as a direct opposition to Kant’s “Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”. Dostoevsky says: “[...] под просвещением я разумею [...] то, что буквально уже выражается в самом слове ‘просвещение’, то есть свет духовный, озаряющий душу, просвещающий сердце, направляющий ум и указывающий ему дорогу жизни” (*ИСС* 26; 150). According to Dostoevsky, enlightenment based on reason, as practised in the Western world, has caused people to fall away from God and Jesus Christ.

It is quite different with the Russian people whose souls have been enlightened ‘for a long time’. Dostoevsky continues:

Я утверждаю, что наш народ просветился уже давно, приняв в свою суть Христа и учение его [...] если наш народ просвещен уже давно, приняв в свою суть Христа и его учение, то вместе с ним, с Христом, уж конечно, принял и истинное просвещение. При таком основном запасе просвещения науки Запада, конечно, обратятся для него лишь в истинное благодеяние. Христос не померкнет от них у нас, как на Западе [...] (*ИСС* 26; 151).

25 See Александр Д. ГРАДОВСКИЙ, “Мечты и действительность”, *Голос*, 25 июня 1880 г., № 174, quoted after http://az.lib.ru/g/gradowskij_a_d/text_1880_mechty_i_deistvitelnost.shtml.

What becomes obvious in these lines is the transcendental orientation of the *дух народа*, the *Volksgeist* which was not conveyed in the articles that Dostoevsky had written about 20 years earlier. *Дух народа* and *просвещение* form a unity as they both refer to Christianity and God as the last reason. Both terms are re-sacralized and identified as the main characteristic of the Russian people.

Taking this argumentation into account, it is not surprising that Dostoevsky can be classified as an antimodernist whose approach shows, like that of Eric Voegelin, an anti-enlightenment orientation.²⁶ In 1917 Max Weber referred in his speech entitled “Science as a Profession” to a “disenchantment of the world”, brought about by an Occidental faith in science which had been promoted by the Enlightenment:

The increasing intellectualization and rationalization do not, therefore, indicate an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives. It means something else, namely, the knowledge or belief that if one but wished one could learn it at any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted [! – C. G.] One needs no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means.²⁷

In this aspect Weber refers to Friedrich Schiller’s sixth letter in his work entitled *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), in which the German poet and philosopher contrasts the ideal of a unity of Greek life with the fragmentation of modern life.²⁸ Dostoevsky is unable to accept this disenchantment carried

26 See e.g. Katherine HEMPLE PROWN, *Flannery O’Connor, Fyodor Dostoevsky and the Antimodernist Tradition*, Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects, Paper 1539625432 (College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1988), <https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-72wy-1z59>. Considering Dostoevsky’s modern and innovative poetological approach, one can agree with Svetlana Boym who called him as follows: “Dostoevsky is a modern antimodernist, at once dialogic and authoritarian” (See Svetlana BOYM, *Another Freedom. The Alternative History of an Idea* (Chicago, London, 2012), p. 107.

27 Max WEBER, “Science as a Vocation” [Wissenschaft als Beruf], in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, transl. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 129-156, here p. 136. In German the term *Beruf* can mean both, vocation and profession.

28 Cf. Ian H. ANGUS, “Disenchantment and Modernity: The Mirror of Technique”, *Human*

out by rational sciences of the Western world as a way for the new Russia. Similar to Schiller, he contrasts the unity of the Russian people with the fragmentation and segregation of the European people. But whereas Schiller establishes a historical opposition between the Ancient and Modern times, Dostoevsky establishes a typological opposition between Russia and Europe as two different cultures.

Finally, it seems highly interesting to me to interpret Dostoevsky's first *Series of articles* that he published after spending ten years in exile in a method known from postcolonial studies. For this purpose, one can combine two necessary preconditions. Firstly, the view on Russia. Western European reports on Russia had already been characterized by the stereotype of barbarism and despotism – as the example given by Custine in his book *La Russie en 1839* had shown – but the Crimean War intensified this tendency. Russia's defeat was followed by a journalistic war that drew an extremely negative picture of Russia among Western Europeans. Backwardness of technology and civilization, barbarian despotism and a post-modern societal system are only some of the clichés that constantly appear in the Western press and cartoons.²⁹ Russia seems to be the pariah among the civilized European countries. Of course, Russia cannot be considered as a colony in the literal sense. However, since the era of Tsar Peter it has undergone a kind of cultural colonization caused by the Western world as Dostoevsky also shows in his text. The defeat in the Crimean War against two of the leading representatives of Western civilization caused this Petrine model to end up in an obvious crisis.

The second precondition for a postcolonial reading of Dostoevsky's *Series of articles* is the writer's own fate. After returning from Siberian wilderness to the civilized capital he appears as the exotic 'other', a savage stranger to his amazed environment, a pariah outcast from society. He is someone who has to struggle to be accepted again as an equal interlocutor when the fate and future of Russia is discussed in the capital. Apart from his close family circle practically no one knew him anymore. Dostoevsky certainly wrote the announcement of the new magazine mostly on his own but he was still not allowed to use his own name to sign it (cf. *IICC* 18; 229). Spontaneously one is remind-

Studies, 6 (1983), 2, pp. 141-166.

²⁹ See e.g. Anthony CROSS, "The Crimean War and the Caricature War", *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 84 (2006), 3, pp. 460-480. In this publication one can also find some caricatures. They also remind us of Honoré Daumier's caricatures that depict an extremely negative image of Russian militarism as it combines Prussian blind obedience with Cossakian barbarity.

ed of Gayatri Spivak's question: "Can the Subaltern speak?"³⁰ In order to regain the ability to 'speak' it is crucial in such a situation to turn from being an object of discourse to being a subject who is able to act. And this is exactly what Dostoevsky is striving for in his first series of articles by making use of an almost classical method that the subaltern refers to when he wants to gain a voice: the 'Othering'.³¹ As far as an enlightening and progressive thinking is concerned Russia is a 'belated' and backward nation. It differs from 'civilized' Western European nations in terms of science, culture, political constitution and social institutions, as it has not yet reached the same level. But the differences are only gradual. On the other hand, Dostoevsky declares Russia to be something completely 'Other' than the Western culture. He does not only use gradations but refers to the "riddle of the Sphinx" ("Для Европы Россия – одна из загадок Сфинкса", *ПСС* 18; 31) that Western Europeans are less likely to conceive than Japanese or Chinese culture. The logic of this argument does not imply a compromise or a creolization as a cultural blend. According to Bron's definition the 'Other' is regarded as inferior and deficient. As shown above, Dostoevsky presented almost in an obsessive way German, French and English individuals as ridiculous caricatures. However, not only foreigners are 'strangers' but also Europeanized Russians. In the strict binary contrast that he establishes, the Western world is separated from Russia as well as the majority of Russian noblemen are separated from the Russian people and the Westernizers from the Slavophiles. Dostoevsky strives to regain discursive power by pointing out his very own ideology of Russianness, the *почвенничество*, and appointing himself to its spokesman. A necessary precondition to construct a stable identity is a rigorous distinction between the Self and the Other. And this is – to my mind – a maybe conscious or unconscious approximation of Dostoevsky's critical position to that of his home country which is in transition. His own fragile and threatened existence as a writer and journalist cor-

30 See Gayatri C. SPIVAK, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*, ed. and introduced by Patrick WILLIAMS and Laura CHRISMAN (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 66-111.

31 For more details on SPIVAK's concept of 'Othering' cf. "The Rani of Simur. An Essay in Reading the Archives", *History and Theory*, 24 (1985), 3, pp. 247-272. Lajos Brons delivers a plausible definition of 'Othering': "Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit" (Lajos BRONS, "Othering, an Analysis", *Transcience* 6 (2015), 1, p. 70.)

responds with Russia's struggle to be acknowledged as an imperial and above all independent superpower. In a nearly hyperbolic form Dostoevsky makes a sharp distinction between this other Russia and the strange West and thus turns into a subject again that is able to act.