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"Lev Shestov and Seren Kierkegaard: the ontological foundations of faith"

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the research

Lev Shestov and Seren Kierkegaard are philosophers and despite several decades separating them, they were often called the founders of existential philosophy in the twentieth century. Both thinkers placed at the forefront of their philosophy the "inner world" of man, trying to overcome the dominance of classical rational metaphysics. From their point of view, classical rational metaphysics «depersonalized» human life and deprived it of a human free dimension.

The term “existence” became one of the main «innovations» of European philosophy almost a century later, and all the major European philosophers, such as: Sartre, Heidegger, Camus mentioned the name of the Danish philosopher. The mention of Seren Kierkegaard by Karl Jaspers is significant: «I engaged in reading of Plotin during the World War, the main reason why I did it is because Kierkegaard commented on it. I owe him the term «existence», it had become a key term for me since 1916; in order to comprehend what I had been trying to realize since then in my restless search».¹

The Russian philosopher Lev Shestov had also such fame. For example, Albert Camus in his work «the Myth of Sisyphus²» called Shestov one of the first philosophers who formed the concept of «man of the absurd», as well as Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Heidegger and Jaspers. Lev Shestov had a significant influence on the formation of French personalism and separate trends of religious existentialism. He was an opponent of Edmund Husserl, but despite their philosophical differences, they remained good friends. It is worth noting that

¹ Jaspers C. Introduction to philosophy. Philosophical autobiography. - M: Canon+ROOI "Rehabilitation", 2017. P. 267.

² Camus A. the Myth of Sisyphus / / the Rebellious man. Philosophy. Politics. Art-Politizdat, 1990. Pp. 24-100.

Edmund Husserl advised Shestov to read Kierkegaard. Thus, thanks to the German philosopher, there was a long-distance acquaintance of two thinkers. Shestov dedicated his famous work «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy» to Kierkegaard. He recognized Kierkegaard as a like-minded person in his work, but at the same time Shestov criticized him for not having sufficiently released himself from the «shackles» of mind and ethics.

Of course, they are united not only by the fact that Shestov in his own book said about Kierkegaard as a like-minded person. The main subject of the authors' works is really close-it is the subject of the limitations of reason and its pretences, the problems of faith and mind, moral imperatives and free will, philosophy and religion, large rational systems and individual human life. These issues were classic for the mid-twentieth century, but Kierkegaard wrote about it in the mid-nineteenth century, and Shestov, independently of him, wrote about it in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At that time, their calls and the style of philosophizing, free, periodically transferring into a literary text, combined almost with manifestos and declamations, seemed something new and surprising, far from the rational system philosophy.

The question of man was extremely important for Shestov and Kierkegaard. In the history of philosophy, it is known that existentialism is the philosophy of human existence. However, this interpretation of this word is only a general dictionary definition. But Shestov and Kierkegaard tried to build an existential philosophy on a unique religious anthropology. In other words, anthropology for them (the question of man and his freedom) is always a religious question, and without an explanation of the religious nature of man, it is impossible to build a philosophy that can talk about man.

Man arises only at the moment of relation to God, and the gradations of the «human» are possible only as stages of his movement to (or from) God. This idea is most fully expressed in the study of Søren Kierkegaard on the stages of human existence.

The phenomenon of faith and religious consciousness of man became the center of the philosophy of Shestov and Kierkegaard. It is necessary to build a philosophy that describes the «human» to explain what a person is. It is impossible to describe the human without building an ontology of faith, that is, to use almost Kantian language, without describing how faith is possible as an act, what it consists of, and how it constitutes human life as an individual (as «existences»).

Thus, the philosophy of Shestov and Kierkegaard is transformed into an «ontology of faith», that is, a systematic description of how the act of faith is constructed and how the «human» as a singular and unique appears against this background. This is how, from this point of view, a person is «released» from the power of totalizing rational schemes.

However, then there are some differences. If analysed properly, you can see that Shestov and Kierkegaard offer us two different versions of how the ontology of faith is possible.

First of all, the style of philosophizing of the authors is significantly different. Shestov, who did not have a systematic philosophical education, tried to «shake» traditional philosophical ideas with his statements. The most obvious example is his work «Apotheosis of groundlessness», it has a lot of fragments and reflections, not combined in a single coherent text. Kierkegaard is much more systematic, the style and form of many of his works are similar to the style of philosophical works by Schelling or Hegel, it is a coherent text written according to the dialectical rules. Nevertheless, the work of both authors is an example of a philosophy that opposes any systematization. It is one of the main difficulties of this work.

Secondly, the philosophers sometimes use the same terms such as: «faith», «absurdity», «despair», and so on in different meanings. Moreover, these terms occupy different «places» in Shestov and Kierkegaard's system of ontology. Even when they criticize the same features of rational philosophy, they do it based on different reasons. A similar exterior does not yet determine the unity of goals and objectives set by both philosophers. «The search for a new Christianity» is the

main subject of Kierkegaard's philosophizing, he defines it as Christentum (Christianity in the strict sense), in contrast to Christenheit (real, historical Christianity). As for Kierkegaard's philosophical development, it was determined by polemics with the pietism and romanticism of Novalis and Schleiermacher, as well as with the rationalism of Hegel. All these philosophical doctrines represented for Kierkegaard various ways of distorting the true, «natural» Christianity.

In contrast, Lev Shestov is a philosopher of «groundlessness» and «super-rational» pathos, which is beyond rationality and Christianity as a whole as a religious tradition. His ideal is «groundless absurdity», faith as an expression of a pure, almost unarticulated and not represented in concepts and categories act, in which a person, realizing his immensity, comes into contact with the outrage and absolute power of the Creator. Shestov's «method» is also interesting, he called it «soul-searching». The historian of philosophy N. K. Bonetskaya notes that this methodology is actually hermeneutics, «the thinker reveals his own idea through other people's texts».³

Historical and philosophical construction of ontological foundations of faith in the philosophical concepts of Shestov and Kierkegaard in their contrast and «correspondence» dialogue will help us to look at the philosophical systems in terms of their real similarities and differences, as well as to find the features of Kierkegaard's reception by Shestov. This work is relevant for several reasons

Firstly, despite a significant number of texts devoted to existentialism and the philosophy of Shestov and Kierkegaard, in particular, there are no works in Russia or abroad that compare the views of the two philosophers by problematizing the religious foundations of their philosophy. Both authors still remain between the classical definitions of them as «existentialists» and «irrationalists». T. G. Shchedrina said about Shestov in the preface to the 2016 collection of articles «Lev Shestov: pro et contra» the following: «The philosophical image of Shestov has a

³ Bonetskaya N. K. The wanderer and his goal (L. Shestov's hermeneutics) // Lev Isaakovich Shestov. Edited by T. G. Shchedrina, Moscow: Political encyclopedia, 2016, p. 232

specific shape in the modern cultural, philosophical and scientific consciousness. <...> Meanwhile, his philosophical ideas ... <...> ... need not just to be learnt, but to be processed and further deepened».⁴

Secondly, usually the comparison of the views of Shestov and Kierkegaard either occurs independently, or through the traditional «templates» of existential philosophy, such as the problematic of «existence» and the criticism of rational philosophy. In this study, the «dialogue» between Russian and European thinkers is modeled and constructed. Despite the fact that their lives are separated by several decades, they «talk» as contemporaries in this work, and the «initiator» of this conversation is Lev Shestov. He actualized the themes of Kierkegaard's philosophy in his work «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy» (1935). That is why the consideration of the problem is built in the reverse order, in comparison with the traditional chronology: after analyzing the general historical and philosophical context, the study begins with Shestov, then turns to Kierkegaard, and in the last chapter, both authors are united in a single plot.

Thirdly, an appeal to the interpretation of Kierkegaard and Shestov's philosophy through the prism of the «ontology of faith» allows us to analyze the «origins» and prerequisites for the emergence of existential philosophy. There may be new details and nuances of the transition of Western philosophy from the classical stage to the «non-classical»⁵, new methods and approaches, because of an actualization of the philosophical heritage of these authors. The historian of philosophy E. V. Mareeva notes: «It is difficult to understand the essence of the Bible with the help of Shestov, but it is much easier to understand the evolution of non-classical philosophy. Therefore, the result achieved by Shestov in the overthrow of ideals is negative, but despite this fact, it is a result. Through Shestov's mouth speaks the paradoxical religiosity of the twentieth century man ».⁶

⁴ Shchedrina T. G. from the editor// Lev Isaakovich Shestov. Edited by T. G. Shchedrina, Moscow: Political encyclopedia, 2016, p. 9

⁵ Read more about it: Gasparyan D. E. Introduction to non-classical philosophy. - Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011. - 398 p.

⁶ Mareeva E. V. L. Shestov: the soul beyond the ideal // Lev Isaakovich Shestov. Edited by T. G. Shchedrina, Moscow: Political encyclopedia, 2016, p. 307

Fourthly, the consideration of the main issues of the philosophy of Shestov and Kierkegaard allows us to actualize many epistemological questions. T. G. Shchedrina and B. Pruzhinin note in an article about Shestov and another famous Russian philosopher – G. Shpet : «... when we read the texts of Shestov and Shpet and compare their views, there are connotations that are very closely related to what is happening in science - a crisis whose symptoms they felt».⁷ Although Shestov is compared with the Danish philosopher Seren Kierkegaard in this study, this statement also remains true, because the questions of the crisis of scientific rationality, enlightenment worldview, questions of faith and positive knowledge are important components of their work.

Degree of development of the problem

«Ontology of faith» is a complex multi-component term that needs a separate historical and philosophical rationale. The attempt to problematize the phenomenon of faith in the ontological cross-section is a way to overcome some of the established lines of differentiation since Modern times: the separation of the value-sense world from the world of «strict» logic, epistemology and ontology. Using the definition of N. Berdyaev, we could say that it is the «philosophical justification of faith» that secularized culture so needs. A. F. Losev more definitely noticed that it is in faith, for example, the Russian philosophical tradition sees the basis in which the rational and «irrational» are given in their original, undivided form. The importance of the «ontological» aspect of faith was also highlighted by the main Western thinkers of the twentieth century-G. Marcel, J. Maritain, M. Buber, P. Tillich, M. Heidegger, and others.

Russian philosopher V. Nesmelov observed that if epistemology is a developed «theory of knowledge» for knowledge, no such philosophical work has been done for faith. S. Bulgakov also noted the necessity for such a «fourth

⁷Shchedrina T. G., Pruzhinin B. I. Historism of Lev Shestov and Gustav Shpet (about the existential dimension of phenomenology) // Lev Isaakovich Shestov. Edited by T. G. Shchedrina, Moscow: Political encyclopedia, 2016, p. 254

critique» of religious judgment in the Kantian sense. According to Nespelov, a «certain knowledge» and the task of the ontology of faith is to show that it is philosophically possible to prove and construct it as a definite theory. Therein lies the problem.

The difficulty also lies in the fact that thinkers, philosophizing about faith, often use different terminology and are in polemics with different philosophical or theological traditions, which makes it much more difficult to build a general model of this problem. This is especially true for thinkers whose philosophy is the subject of this study. For example, Kierkegaard's work and his idea of faith cannot be understood without realizing the controversy with liberal Protestant theology, and Shestov's aggressive attacks on reason – without the influence of Jewish mysticism on his work.

There are widespread interpretations that faith is something opposite to «knowledge» and «reason», and consequently, the construction of an ontology of faith loses its object. However, Leibniz also noted that in disputes about faith, the only tool we can use is reason. Even when we deny mind, we do it only by logical and philosophical methods. Perhaps faith is the knowledge of the «impossible», and according to S. L. Frank, faith is something «incomprehensible».

This point of view was developed in the twentieth century by K. Jaspers in Western philosophy. He introduced the concept of «philosophical faith». From his point of view, it can only be revealed in union with knowledge; reason is necessary element in «philosophical faith». Jaspers believed that the mind is one of the tools, ways and manifestations of «existence».

There are examples of the construction of an ontology of faith even in Soviet philosophy, for example, we can find it in the work of M. Mamardashvili, which E. Solovyov defined as «existential soteriology». According to Mamardashvili, philosophy is almost an act of «faith» in the Christian sense, that is, an act of «holding» integrity (in Paul Tillich's terms, it is a state of «ultimate interest»), in which man is not just a part of the natural world, but the final meaning and purpose of what is called «the world». This meaning can be found not through freedom of

choice, but through «holding» such thought and an order of consciousness, in which I realize myself as not just an individual being, «thrown into the world» and forced to live in it, but as a being who is the only one in the world connected with the unchanging order of things, and that is why «isolated» from it. A person must become an instrument, a «conductor» in the world of this order, but not automatically, but freely, through overcoming in himself what is transitory, natural, and through discovering what is related to the «eternal». Mamardashvili calls it the «birth» or «second birth». Thus, we can say that faith, according to Mamardashvili, is the ontological basis of philosophical and «true existence».

If we try to give some brief description of how the views on the implementation of the construction of the «ontology of faith» developed in the history of philosophy, we could say that it would hardly have been possible to put this question explicitly until Modern times. The generation of metaphysics as a teaching about the superrational occurred in the classical philosophical teachings of antiquity, then it received its embodiment in Christian theology in the form of reflection on faith in God.

Traditional metaphysics could not stand under the pressure of the rationalistic philosophy of Modern times, and critical philosophy came in its place, in which the main question of faith could only be raised in the sense of the «conditions of possibility» of faith in human consciousness. Phenomenology was a logical continuation of this project in the twentieth century in the West, it defined faith as a «phenomenon» of consciousness, eliminating the question of the ontological foundations of faith and the specifics of religious experience.

In this context, the work of Kierkegaard and Shestov, despite the decades separating them, belongs to the era of a new, non-classical philosophy, but at the same time, it does not adhere to its traditions. The characteristic is that the subject of their philosophizing is the problems of faith and religion. On the one hand, this feature connects their problems with the classic dilemma of faith and reason for Western philosophy, and on the other hand, shows the techniques and methods of non-classical philosophizing on a specific material for this direction.

Literature review on the problem

There are not so many historical and philosophical studies on the problems of the ontology of faith in the modern academic history of philosophy. The articles and monographs by the researcher S. A. Nizhnikov⁸ and R. K. Omelchuk⁹ are the most extensive and detailed works in this field in Russia.

Scientific and historic-philosophical literature devoted to Shestov's work is characterized by its fragmented problems. The reception of L. Shestov's ideas began during his lifetime by his contemporaries. N. Berdyaev, N. Mikhailovsky, S. Frank, R. Ivanov-Razumnik, S. Bulgakov and others gave the first reviews of Shestov's work.¹⁰ Numerous reviews and comments from his colleagues, friends and supporters (B. A. Gritsov, B. F. Shletzer, B. Fondan, R. Besspalova, and so on) are valuable.

Berdyaev and Bulgakov recognized the undoubted significance of Shestov's philosophy and believed that it does not achieve its final goal and remains at the level of individual experiences. Berdyaev noted in his famous work «Russian idea»¹¹ that Shestov tried to find faith, but he could not find it as a universal worldview.

Well-known historian of Russian philosophy V. Zenkovsky considers Shestov's work almost the summit of Russian thought¹². In contrast, N. Lossky devotes only one paragraph to Shestov in his work «History of Russian philosophy».¹³

The main Western philosophers of the twentieth century such as A. Camus, E. Husserl, E. Levinas, J. Maritain interested in Shestov's work.

⁸ Nizhnikov S. A. Metaphysics of faith in Russian philosophy. Monograph. - Moscow: INFRA-M, 2012. - 313 p.

⁹ Omelchuk R. K. Ontology of faith: personal and socio-cultural mechanisms of continuity of values. - M.: ROSSPEN, 2011. - 280 p.

¹⁰ Reviews can be found in the collection: L. I. Shestov: pro et contra, anthology / Comp., introductory article, comments by T. G. Shchedrina. - Saint Petersburg: RCHA, 2016. - 719 p.

¹¹ Berdyaev N. A. Russian idea-M., Azbuka-klasika, 2011.

¹² Zenkovsky V. V. History of Russian philosophy, Moscow, AST Fenix, 1999.

¹³ Lossky N. O. History of Russian philosophy. - M., Progress, 1994.

Historical and philosophical studies devoted to existential issues of the philosopher's work appeared in the West, in the middle of the last century. There was an active search for parallels with the main subjects of Western philosophy of the twentieth century.¹⁴ We can highlight the work of Genevieve Piron at the Sorbonne University from modern Western research on Shestov. We can read the results of this study in Russian thanks to V. P. Vizgin's review.¹⁵

A detailed analysis of the main Western studies, as well as an analysis of the reception of Shestov's legacy in the works of his followers in Europe, in particular, in France, is given in the study by K. V. Vorozhikhina «Lev Shestov and his French followers».¹⁶

The works of V. Asmus, P. Gaidenko, A. Akhutin, N. Motroshilova, N. Okuntsova, V. Kulikov and A. Chernykh have great significance for the Soviet period of the national history of philosophy. These works are devoted to nihilism and irrationalism in Shestov's philosophy.

It is known that Russian philosophy became more popular in the 1990s, and Russian culture began to «return to its homeland». It contributed to a new research that was free from ideological restrictions. Special attention should be paid to numerous articles and works by R. Galtseva, V. Kurabtsev, S. Polyakov, N. Batova, T. Morozova, L. Talanina. Historical- philosophical research on the philosophy of Shestov by the works of A. Akhutin, N. Bonetskaya, V. Porus, V. Kantor, V. Vizgin, T. G. Shchedrina, B. I. Pruzhinin and others are of great interest. The last dissertation research and monographs devoted to the work of

¹⁴ For example: Kline G.L. Religious Existentialists: Shestov & Berdiaev // Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia. - Chicago, 1968;

Wernham J.C.S. Two Russian Thinkers. An Essay in Berdiaev & Shestov. Toronto, 1968;

Milosh. Shestov, or on the purity of despair // Shestov L. Kierkegaard and existential philosophy (the Voice of the crying in the desert). – M., 1992;

Bayley J. Idealism and Its Critic // The New York Review of Books, vol. 14, no. 12 - June 18. NY. 1970.

¹⁵ Piron G. Léon Chestov, philosophe du déracinement. The article about the book: V. P. Vizgin Existential philosopher under the microscope of a philologist // Question of philosophy. 2011. no. 12. - P. 97-106.

¹⁶ Vorozhikhina, K. V. Lev Shestov and his French followers // Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of philosophy, Moscow: IFRAN, 2016. - 157 p.

Shestov by Y. Shirmanov and V. Apreleva, E. Mekhanikova, V. Pimenov, A. Frolova and others (the full list is given in the list of references)¹⁷ are also of great interest. The historical-philosophical analysis of Shestov's work through the prism of Nietzschean philosophy by N. Bonetskaya is extremely interesting. The results of these studies are used in this work.

Important information and facts for solving the problems of this research were taken from the work of N. Baranova-Shestova «the Life of Lev Shestov». The publication of this book presents the epistolary part of Shestov's work, which allowed us to discover many interesting features of his philosophical heritage. B. Fondan was Shestov's disciple and follower and his book «Conversations with Lev Shestov»¹⁸ has incredibly valuable information.

¹⁷ Asmus V. F. Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard. About the relation of Lev Shestov to the originator of Western European existentialism // Philosophical Sciences. 1972. №4. - p. 72-80

Motroshilova N. V. Russian Thinkers and philosophy of the West (V. Solovyov. N. Berdyaev. S. Frank. L. Shestov). - Moscow, 2006. - 447 p.

Kurabtsev V. L. the Worlds of freedom and miracles of Lev Shestov: the life of a thinker, «Wanderings of the soul», Philosophy, Moscow, 2005, 307 p.

Gaidenko P. P. the Tragedy of aestheticism. - M.: Republic, 1997. - 207 p.

Polyakov S. A. Philosophy of Lev Shestov, Moscow, 1999, 94 p.

Batova N. K. Vyaz ' moyey dushy -M., 2000. - 157 p.

Moreva L. M. Lev Shestov. - L., publishing house of the Leningrad University, 1991. - 88 p.

Evlampiev I. I. History of Russian metaphysics in the XIX-XX centuries. Russian philosophy in search of the absolute. St. Petersburg, 2001. P. 1-2. - 820 p.

Vizgin V. p. Faces and stories of Russian thought // Moscow: Foundation for the development of fundamental linguistic research, 2016. - 360 p.

Porus V. N. At the edge of culture: (Philosophical essays). - Moscow: CANON+ROOI «Rehabilitation», 2008. - 464 p.

Porus V. N. the Tragedy of philosophy and the philosophy of tragedy (S. N. Bulgakov and L. I. Shestov) // Polygnosis. 2004. no. 3. - Pp. 106-119

Porus, V. N. V. Solovyov and L. Shestov: unity in the tragedy of freedom // Questions of philosophy, 2004, no. 2.- Pp. 148-159.

Kuvakin V. A. Religious philosophy in Russia: the beginning of the XX century. - M., 1980, 312 p.

¹⁸ 410-417 Baranova-Shestova N. I. The Life of Lev Shestov. – La Presse Libre, 1983 – 367 p.; B. Fondan Conversations with Lev Shestov - a New journal. New York, 1956, book XIV. - pp. 410-417

Fondane B. Léon Chestov à la recherché du judaïsme perdu // La Revue juive de Genève. 1936. No. 4. P. 326–328. 152

The work of Seren Kierkegaard became the subject of great interest among Western philosophers and researchers in the twentieth century. Contemporaries saw only a writer and a brave «fighter» with the official Danish Lutheran church in him. In addition, Seren Kierkegaard in many ways complicated the development of his own popularity himself. His philosophical texts were published under different pseudonyms and it was extremely difficult for the public to identify his work. He wrote in Danish, which was not common in Europe. The possibility of expansion of Danish culture was also complicated by the political situation: Denmark adhered to the principle of armed neutrality during the Napoleonic conquests.

Moreover, Kierkegaard didn't leave behind any philosophical school, anybody who could continue his work and thus glorify him.

The first «reviews» of his work appeared in the 1870s, the well-known Danish literary critic Georg Brandes wrote the articles about Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's philosophy became familiar to the Scandinavian cultural area over time. There are obvious effects of philosophical constructs of Kierkegaard on the work of his younger contemporaries such as Ibsen, Strindberg, and Heffring, etc.

European popularity came to him only in the 1930s. His main works were translated into European languages: German, French, English. In America, a full translation of its main texts appeared only in 1967.

However, German intellectuals became familiar with individual texts of Kierkegaard through secondary sources and interpretations at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ludwig Wittgenstein used Kierkegaard's philosophy in the 1910s. Obviously, he knew the thoughts of the Danish philosopher in the interpretation of one of his first translators into German – Theodor Hacker.

Kierkegaard became known in the theological environment in the 1920s. Very young theologians Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultman, Emil Brunner referred to him. In the same years, Karl Jaspers wrote about Seren and Martin Heidegger mentioned

him in his work «Being and time». His influence on the works of Gabriel Marcel in France is also obvious.¹⁹

Today, the number of interpretations of Kierkegaard is endless. Almost all the major philosophical directions of the twentieth century, such as psychoanalysis, existentialism, Freudo-Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism, etc recognized Kierkegaard's works.

In the second half of the twentieth century, there are also historical and philosophical studies about Kierkegaard: in Danish, German and English (a detailed list is presented in the list of references).²⁰

An overview of Kierkegaard's (mostly European) philosophical receptions is presented in a modern monograph edited by D. Stewart.²¹

In Russia, the first translations of Kierkegaard appeared in the 1880s, it was translated by Peter Hansen. He translated not only Kierkegaard, but also many thinkers of the Danish «Golden» cultural age.

The first extensive study of Kierkegaard's work is undertaken by Lev Shestov in his work «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy», it was published in Paris in 1936. However, the mass Russian readership was able to read it only in 1992, after its reissue by the publishing house "Progress-Gnosis".

¹⁹ Stewart J. (ed.). Kierkegaard's International Reception Tome I: Northern and Western Europe. Aldershot, 2009.

Stewart J. (ed.). Kierkegaard's International Reception Tome II: Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. Aldershot, 2009.

²⁰ Rudd A. Kierkegaard and the Limits of the Ethical. Oxford, 1993.

Schlechte E. Christentum und Christenheit von Soren Kierkegaard. Kosel, 1957.

Schleifer R. & Markley R. (eds.). Kierkegaard and Literature: Irony, Repetition, and Criticism. Norman, 1984.

Schmid H. Kritik der Existenz. Analysen zum Existenzdenken Soren Kierkegaards. Zurich: EVZ, 1966.

Schmidinger H.M. Das Problem des Interesses und die Philosophie Soren Kierkegaards. Freiburg / Munchen, 1983.

Suhr I. Das Problem des Leidens bei Soren Kierkegaard. Munchen, 1983

²¹ Stewart J. (ed.). Kierkegaard's International Reception Tome I: Northern and Western Europe. Aldershot, 2009.

Stewart J. (ed.). Kierkegaard's International Reception Tome II: Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. Aldershot, 2009.

Stewart J. (ed.). Kierkegaard's International Reception Tome III: The Near East, Asia, Australia And The Americas. Aldershot, 2009.

In Soviet times, the most famous work about Kierkegaard was the book of the historian of philosophy P. P. Gaidenko «the Tragedy of aestheticism. Experience characteristics of the worldview of Seren Kierkegaard» (1970). It should also mentioned about the biographical work on Kierkegaard by B. E. Bykhovsky «Kierkegaard» (1972).

Attention was also paid to Kierkegaard in various articles, but almost all of them were of an ideological nature ²². He was accused of «decadence», his philosophy was defined as an example of «bourgeois ugliness», «irrationalism», and abstract thinking. An example of this type of research is the article by D. I. Zaslavsky²³, the texts of V. A. Karpushin and L. Rubina are less radical.

The work of excellent translators and interpreters of S. Kierkegaard S. A. Isaev and N. V. Isaeva was an important milestone in the «discovery» and study of Kierkegaard. Their translation made in the early 1990s of Kierkegaard's main works is still «canonical» for the Russian-speaking reader. Moreover, these translators introduce us not only the Danish philosopher himself, but also the historical and cultural context of Kierkegaard's work.

Research interest in Kierkegaard increased after the collapse of the USSR, freeing from ideological restrictions. It is worth noting monographs and dissertation research by D. A. Lungin, T. V. Shchittsova, O. I. Stavtseva, N. I. Cheker, etc. (the full list is provided in the list of references). The study closest in subject to this dissertation was also conducted by E. N. Levicheva, it is devoted to the religious anthropology of Seren Kierkegaard. The main conclusions and results of these works are used in this work.

²² Read more about the «Soviet period» of Kierkegaard's interpretations: Levicheva E. N. Religious anthropology of Seren Kierkegaard p. 10-11

²³ For example: Zaslavsky D. I. Foolishness and fools in modern bourgeois philosophy // Question of philosophy. 1954. no. 5. Pp. 67-75

Karpushin V. A. Seren Kierkegaard-the forerunner of existentialist anthropology. // Question of philosophy. No. 12. 1967. Pp. 103-113.

Rubina L. Y. In favor of the scheme. On the incorrect opposition of the ethical and aesthetic in the philosophy of S. Kierkegaard // Aesthetics - into life. Scientific notes. Ural state University. The Series of Philosophy. - Issue 1. No. 68. - Sverdlovsk, 1967. Pp. 105-107.

Scientific novelty of the research

According to the degree of development of the problems of the dissertation research, we can say that no attempts were made in Russian to create a systematic work that would construct the «ontology of faith» in the works of Shestov and Kierkegaard through the modeling of the conversation between them.

Thinkers are often either considered separately or referred to together as representatives or «progenitors» of the philosophy of existentialism. According to common view, Kierkegaard and Shestov are philosophers who wrote about the same thing, but at different times. Thus, this work is intended to fill the necessary gap, it offers a comparison of the positions of two philosophers in the framework of modeling the «dialogue» between them for the first time.

Purposes and tasks of the research

Purpose of work – an analysis of the ontological foundations of faith in the philosophy of Shestov and Kierkegaard. It is necessary to complete several tasks to achieve the research goal.

Research task

1. Analyze the main features of Shestov's philosophy: to identify the main philosophical and theological bases of his intellectual constructions and define the phenomenon of «faith» in Shestov's philosophy
2. Determine the basic conceptual foundations of Kierkegaard's philosophical creativity, identify the main problematic philosophical subjects related to the concept of «faith»
3. Highlight the common and different intellectual constructions of Shestov and Kierkegaard in their polemics with the new European philosophy of rationalism, identify critical arguments through a set of

main stories in their opposition, find the features of Kierkegaard's reception by Shestov (through the analysis of L. Shestov's work «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy»)

4. Construct the «ontology of faith» in the philosophical work of Shestov and Kierkegaard and identify the basic philosophical foundations.

The object of this dissertation research is the work of L. Shestov and S. Kierkegaard.

The subject of the research is the philosophy of faith and religion in the texts of L. Shestov and S. Kierkegaard.

Methods of dissertation research

Some **methods** are used in this dissertation research to achieve the set goals and objectives. The method of historical-philosophical reconstruction is the most significant in this work, because the subject of the dissertation belongs to the field of history of philosophy. This method allows us to consider the problems of the dissertation in the historical- philosophical context, and it makes possible to make the connection in the development of certain ideas of philosophers in their dependence on historical events and the development of philosophical concepts of the period under consideration.

A specific method in this dissertation research is the modeling of dialogue between thinkers, as well as the method of biographical and contextual analysis and hermeneutic work with sources.

Reliability of scientific research

The degree of reliability of the results obtained in the dissertation research is determined by a significant amount of philosophical, historical and literary

material, primary sources and research literature. All this information was studied in the framework of writing this work.

The aspects for work defence are formulated and verified based on the results obtained during a detailed analysis of a large volume of literature in Russian, English, and German.

Aspects for work defence

The results of this dissertation research are the following aspects, which are submitted for defense:

1. The main idea of Shestov's philosophy is the struggle with Necessity, the laws of mind and nature, any type of knowledge that operates with «necessary truths» is the result of the «fall», according to Shestov, the most systematic type of knowledge was developed in the new European philosophy;
2. Existential dialectics is the main method of philosophizing for Kierkegaard, it is understood as a sequential transition of human consciousness (existence) from «ordinary» to «religious» through a number of ontological transformations («the doctrine of stages»)
3. The Ontology of faith is built by Kierkegaard as a definition of what is the existence of a person at the «religious» stage, «faith» is constructed through a special kind of ontological «leap» on the other side of the world of truths (through the statement of «singularity» in the absolute sense) and it is defined as a special kind of act of human freedom associated with overcoming fear
4. Shestov's Ontology of faith is built through the discursive negation of any systematic type of philosophizing and reasoning; The absurd (Freedom) is not defined in positive categories, but it is described only by contrasting «necessity» and «construct validity»;

5. The level of Shestov's acquaintance with Judaism and religious mysticism of the Jewish sense is rather superficial, it is difficult to unequivocally establish their influence on Shestov's work. In historical Christianity, he sees "compromise" with the new European philosophy of reason, however, he accepts many plots of Protestantism, positively evaluating Luther's theology.
6. The revolt of the «underground man» is the key plot point of Shestov's philosophizing, while the interpretation of Dostoevsky's story serves as a model for the philosopher of how it is possible to build a denial of «necessity». The content of the «paradoxalist» revolt "is «faith», because it is the final stage and meaning of the «struggle against necessity»;
7. According to Kierkegaard, faith is an ontological overcoming of the fear of non-existence and Angst. Faith is defined as the transition from the «habitual» to the «paradoxical», the rejection of thinking in «concepts», the overcoming of the «universal» through the affirmation of the «individual» as the absolute («knight of faith»)
8. Lev Shestov believed that Kierkegaard came close to denying the world of reason and necessity, but stopped before the last line. Shestov thought that the reason was Kierkegaard's personal fate, combined with suffering and despair, and the ontology of faith based on fear

Theoretical and practical significance

The results of the dissertation research provide a deeper realizing of the significance of the construction of the ontology of faith for the philosophical creativity of L. Shestov and S. Kierkegaard. The dissertation offers a systematic analysis of the provisions of their philosophy with an emphasis on the «religious component».

The dissertation offers a systematic analysis of the provisions of their philosophy with an emphasis on the "religious component". The systematic reconstruction of the main provisions of the philosophy of Shestov and

Kierkegaard through the problems of the ontology of faith is presented, the main features of the philosophical systems of Shestov and Kierkegaard in the context of the development of Western philosophy of the XIX-XX centuries are presented. In this dissertation, for the first time, modeling and construction of the "correspondence" philosophical dialogue between thinkers is carried out and an analysis of Shestov's reception of Kierkegaard's philosophy in the text "Kierkegaard and Existential Philosophy" is carried out, the significance of this interpretation for Western philosophy of the 20th century is shown.

The historical and philosophical reconstruction can be used as a basis for further pedagogical activities and the development of the lectures, special courses or electives for undergraduates and postgraduates of the philosophical, philological and cultural departments in the framework of University education.

Structure of the work

The dissertation research consists of an introduction, main part, conclusion, and bibliography.

The relevance and novelty of the thesis, the degree of development of issues on the topic of the dissertation, the subject, object, goals and objectives of the dissertation are indicated in the **introduction**. In addition, the introduction contains the methods used, the degree of reliability of the research, the theoretical and practical significance of the thesis, and the structure of the work.

The main part consists of four chapters.

The first chapter analyzes the main stages of development of European philosophy related to the problems of religion and the problem of faith and mind. The review expands the context of the narrative and defines the problem of this research in the context of the European and Russian philosophical traditions.

In **the second chapter**, the main models and principles of Lev Shestov's philosophizing are analyzed, the periodization of his work is given, and the historical and philosophical context of his work is described. The main literary

references significant for Shestov's philosophy are also mentioned. First of all, it is «Notes from the underground» by Dostoevsky. The second and third parts are based on the work «Athens and Jerusalem», it is the main program work of Shestov, where he formulated his main claims to the new European philosophy and gave a brief author's interpretation of the history of philosophy from the perspective of the main intentions of his philosophy, and he also defined such phenomena as «faith» and «absurdity».

The third chapter studies the philosophy of Seren Kierkegaard. In the first and second parts of the Chapter, the concept of «existence» is considered, as well as the «teaching» of Seren Kierkegaard about the stages of existence, based on the material of his the main work «Enten - eller». В третьей части, на основе работы «Страх и трепет» и некоторых других, определено понятие «греха», сущность веры, по Кьеркегору, и понятие «скачка веры», связанное у Кьеркегора с учением о «религиозной» стадии существования. In the third part, the concept of «sin» is defined, based on the work «Fear and trembling» and some others, the essence of faith, and the concept of «leap of faith», associated with the doctrine of the «religious» stage of existence.

The fourth chapter compares the views of the two thinkers on key positions, and constructs the ontology of faith in the work of both philosophers. Shestov's work «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy» is analyzed in detail in the first part of the chapter. The second part analyzes the philosophical anthropology of two thinkers. We can see two key «characters» in the work of each of the philosophers—Abraham in Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky's «underground man» in Shestov.

There are the main conclusions made on the basis of the research work in **conclusion**.

Conclusions

The problem of the ontology of faith is one of the oldest philosophical problems that arose in the middle ages, with the development of Christian philosophy and theology, as well as the emergence of the problem of the relationship between faith and reason. However, in Modern times, the equality of this ratio is changing, faith becomes a problematic philosophical category, and it needs to be justified by «mind». Secularization of culture leads to the gradual displacement of religious issues from the main philosophical trends and concepts.

However, the subject related to the metaphysics and ontology of faith remains one of the central ones in Russian culture. This work presents and explicates the paradoxical ontology of faith by Lev Shestov, in its contrast and comparison with the famous Danish thinker, Seren Kierkegaard. As we have said, Shestov dedicated his important final work to Kierkegaard, it is called «Kierkegaard and existential philosophy».

Main conclusions of this study:

1. Shestov consistently criticized the new European style of philosophizing, he defined it as a dictate of necessity and «general concepts». The philosopher rejects the claims of Modern culture to the objectivity of knowledge and truth, questions the epistemological strategies of modernity, and the ontological value of the new European subjectocentrism. The disappearance of freedom is the direct consequence and result of the new European culture for Shestov. Shestov realized it as an experience of «superrational», divine existence, an act of «impossible» and «incomprehensible».

2. It should be noted that clearly identify a strong influence of Jewish mysticism on the formation of philosophical ideas Shestov and dogmatically define the philosopher as a Jew or a Christian is not possible. He is too free with dogmatics for a Jew and the main religious subjects, as well as he remains indifferent to the main meaning-forming subjects of Christianity. He finds «agreement» with the new European philosophy of reason in historical Christianity. He contrasts formalized religion with faith as a personal intimate act in God the Creator.
3. The basic foundation of his philosophical anthropology for Shestov is the «revolt» against «allness», universal and generally valid laws. Religious experience is also born from this experience, it is connected with the awareness of the absurd and addressed to the Creator's paradoxical omnipotence for the world. According to Shestov, a «believer» rises above universal laws in order to assert his will, his paradoxicity, and his own unique personality. Thus, Shestov's ontology of faith is built on the negation of the new European mind and its laws, it is a pure negation of reason, and it embodies its content.
4. Kierkegaard's «Knight of faith» is a much more subtle and contradictory. The «knight of faith» overcomes all generally significant, morally-imperative contents. It is illustrated by the story of Abraham. Abraham decides to sacrifice his son to God, and in the ethical dimension, in the understanding of the morally universal, this act is murder, but for a truly religious consciousness, this action is a manifestation of true faith. Faith is paradoxical, because in its manifestations it overcomes and violates the boundaries of generally recognized rules and standards. Abraham eliminates the ethical and overcomes it, leaving the «power of the universal» and reaching the end in this existential dialectic of

«stages». Abraham abolishes his obligation to the ethical, and thus gains faith. The paradox of faith, its ontological basis, is that the «individual» becomes higher than the universal, and thus approaches the Absolute.

5. Kierkegaard's ontology of faith appears to be a «concession» to rationalism for Shestov. Shestov believed that the reason for it was the personal fate of Kierkegaard, the fullness of his life with suffering. According to Shestov, Kierkegaard used philosophy as an apology for his suffering, faith and religion was part of this unconscious design for him.
6. According to Shestov point of view, Kierkegaard's ontology of faith is based on the fear of Nothing and the ideal of victim. All this is also a form of Necessity and service to universally valid truths. Thus, Shestov believed that Kierkegaard in his ontology of faith and religious anthropology did not go beyond the boundaries of the world of reason and rationalism.

To sum up, it is worth noting the similarity of views of the two thinkers. Firstly, it is expressed in the fact that both of them were radical critics of philosophy in its systematic, speculative way, presenting faith as an alternative to systematic and well-founded logical thinking. Faith is higher than reason and moral standards, that is, higher than all that is universal and «individual». It is important to emphasize the «non-worldliness» of God and faith for Kierkegaard. He thought that Christianity is fundamentally not illustrative, unrepresentable and elusive in the forms of classical philosophy. The main task of Kierkegaard's artistic reflection is not to construct a «philosophy of Christianity», but to «truncate the world». Moreover, he believed that philosophy should be figurative, apophatic, indicating something that cannot be expressed in terms of science or theology. The researcher D. A. Lungina notes: "... according to Kierkegaard, Christianity does not have the evidence that operates in the world and it is the subject of philosophy and all eidetic sciences. The Christian view does not belong to the number of

things that work by themselves, such as the evidence of the world in the sense of everyday concreteness...»²⁴

Similar motives There are similar motives in Shestov's philosophy. Shestov also rejected speculative philosophy, he found the most complete embodiment in Modern times (for example, in the systems of Spinoza or Hegel) and defended the «philosophy of miracle», «philosophy of absurd», a reflection that tells us about the infinity and omnipotence of the Creator, and not about the power of universally valid, necessary truths.

However, there are more differences than similarities in the philosophical systems of the analyzed authors. Shestov, attracting Kierkegaard to his «allies», analyzed him in a «convenient» way. He offered an existential reading of many of his ideas, and highlighted the fight against rationalism as the main feature of his philosophy. However, rationalism is not for Kierkegaard an end in itself, rather it is one method of demonstrating that historic Christianity lost the feeling of «alive», unique and «individual» faith (described through the character «knight of faith»). In addition, for Kierkegaard, as a Protestant and as a more systematically educated philosopher the historical dimension of Christianity, the plot associated with the «fall» of real Christianity from the true faith, is important. For Shestov, the concept of faith is not so related to the concept of personality as it is to the concept of absolute, unlimited freedom emanating from the same wayward and omnipotent God. The historical reality of religion does not important to him.

²⁴ Lungina D. A. Seren Kierkegaard and the history of Christianity in the XIX century: Textbook / faculty of Philosophy of Lomonosov Moscow state University. - Moscow: Publisher Vorobyov A.V., 2016. - p. 8

Approbation of work

Author's publications on the topic of the thesis study

The works published by the author in journals indexed in the international databases of indexing and citation, as well as on the list of high-level journals of the HSE:

1. Girinsky A. A. Philosophical attraction and repulsion of Lev Shestov: "long" dispute with rationalism // Problems of Philosophy. 2016. No. 11. P. 125-130.
2. Girinsky A.A About the difference in the anthropological views of L. Shestov and S. Kierkegaard // Man. 2017. No. 6. S. 104-112.
3. Girinsky A.A. Criticism of Hegelian philosophy in the works of Søren Kierkegaard and Lev Shestov // History of Philosophy. T.25. # 1. 2020 - p. 27-39

Conferences:

1. Girinsky A.A. Conference "Lev Shestov in the context of modernity. To the 150th anniversary of the birth of the philosopher. " (September 15, 2016), Lecture "Philosophical Attractions and Repulsions of Lev Shestov: Long Dispute with Rationalism"
2. Girinsky A.A. Conference "Russia a Hundred Years after the Revolution: Causes and Consequences" (April 27-28, 2017, NRU HSE) Report "Bolshevism as a Paradox of the West's Responsibility to Russia: from Merezhkovsky and Shestov to Solzhenitsyn"

3. Girinsky A.A. Conference "Three centuries of Christian enlightenment in Russia: from Simeon of Polotsk to the Russian religious Renaissance", (April 27-28, 2017, HSE)
4. Girinsky A.A. Conference "Semyon Frank: Post-Revolutionary Downfall of Idols" (November 23-24, 2017, NRU HSE), Report "Russian Philosophy and Marxism: From Admiration to Disappointment"