

ABSTRACTS

Mark Galeotti

(MIS)UNDERSTANDING RUSSIA'S TWO 'HYBRID WARS'

Formulations such as 'hybrid war' that have been used to try and explain Russia's political campaign against the West have political utility but little scholarly relevance. Apart from the fact that the Russians themselves see *gibridnaya voina* as a Western approach used against them and their allies, the term also conflates two distinct, even if overlapping Russian concepts. To the military, such non-kinetic means as subversion, hacking, disinformation and sabotage are instruments with which to prepare the battlefield, as in Crimea. However, to the national security establishment, they are an alternative to direct military operations, and it is this kind of 'political war' that is being waged on the West. Understanding this distinction is crucial for a proper appreciation of the nature of the challenge and the most effective means with which to resist it.

Keywords: Russia, hybrid war, political war, subversion, disinformation.

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Andrei P. Tsygankov

AMERICAN RUSSOPHOBIA IN THE AGE OF LIBERAL DECLINE

The paper addresses the US media perception of the Russia-threat following the election of Donald Trump as the United States' President. Trump's election revealed a major value divide within the American society. The Russia issue became central in the new internal divide between the Trump administration and the liberal establishment. To the latter the Russia story was more about Trump than Russia. If the two countries are to move beyond viewing each other as potential enemies, they must find a way to reframe their values in non-confrontational terms.

Key words: Russophobia, American media, Russia, Donald Trump, liberal establishment

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Tom Junes

PROPAGANDA IN BULGARIA: MADE IN RUSSIA OR HOME-GROWN?

This paper discusses the main tenets of how Bulgaria was represented in what can be coined as ‘Russian propaganda’ and how the dynamics of this process functioned in the period from 2013 to 2016. First, it will provide a discussion outlining the general framework and illustrate some discourses that appeared in Russian media outlets concerning Bulgaria. Secondly, it will focus on how Russian propaganda operated in relation to Bulgaria’s presidential elections in the autumn of 2016. The latter case study is important as an empirical study since the ultimate winner of the election, Rumen Radev, was largely portrayed in both international and domestic media as being a ‘pro-Russian’ candidate. Such media portrayals of the Bulgarian presidential elections can be seen as consistent with similar depictions of other electoral contests in Europe and the United States over the past years in which Russian propaganda, social media trolls and bots, fake news have supposedly come to play a role in promoting politicians or political parties that are perceived to be ‘pro-Russian’. This paper will qualify such simplistic dichotomies and attempt to bring some nuance to the question of what constitutes ‘Russian propaganda’. In contrast to widespread assumptions following the logic of the so-called ‘information’ or ‘hybrid’ war, it argues that what is generally regarded as ‘Russian propaganda’ in Bulgaria tends to be a ‘home-grown’ phenomenon rather than a foreign-directed or steered influence.

Keywords: Bulgaria, Russian propaganda, Russia, Rumen Radev, hybrid war, Russian influence.

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CO-OPTING DISCONTENT: BULGARIAN POPULISM, LOCAL INTERESTS AND RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

Russian propaganda co-opts western grassroots criticism of liberalism and globalization, recasting both left and right populism in nationalist terms. Vice versa, local actors borrow the Russian propaganda package and use it for their populist purposes. This is the general finding of the analysis of Bulgarian media discourse, 2013-2016, analysis that proceeded in three steps: semantic analysis of the vocabulary of the anti-liberal and anti-democratic propaganda and extraction of specific keywords and catch phrases; frequency analysis of the uses of these words and phrases in 3080 on-line media outlets for four-year period; content-analysis of a sample of 3305 single publications from 8 typologically different media outlets.

The analysis identified four simplistic and interrelated anti-liberal and anti-democratic theses:

The US and NATO are a global hegemon/puppet-master which is pulling the strings both of Brussels and of national governments; Europe is dying because of its cultural decline ('liberasty') under the blows of the migrant invasion unleashed by the US, and because of the lame-duck, puppet European bureaucracy ('Eurocracy'). In the final analysis, Europe is dying because it is united: the EU is a construction which serves the interests of the US and of global corporations, and it is an enemy of the European peoples; Russia is rising. Although it is a victim of Western aggression, Russia is a guardian of its age-old sovereignty and of traditional values, and it is actually the true saviour of Europe; Bulgaria's liberal elites are venal: civic movements, human rights organizations, independent media outlets, pro-western politicians and parties are represented as an indistinguishable whole, and all of them are 'foreign agents' – puppets of foreign interests.

The populist-propaganda discursive front developing in the Bulgarian public sphere since 2013 is distinctly 'pro-Russian', although the data show that it is not always directly inspired by Russia. The content-analysis identified three different rationales of using those clichés.

Keywords: Bulgarian media, Russian propaganda, populism, oligarchic uses, hate speech, sovereignty.

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He is also a team leader of the collective research project “Anti-Liberal Discourses and Propaganda Messages in Bulgarian Media: Dissemination and Social Reception”.

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Boryana Dimitrova

**INFLUENCE OF THE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA
ON THE BULGARIAN PUBLIC OPINION: PSYCHOLOGICAL
PRESSURE AND POLITICAL CHOICES**

The article analyzes the results from the national representative survey on the impact of the anti-democratic propaganda in the Bulgarian media on the

public opinion. Three topics are discussed in detail. First, the support for the basic democratic values, trust in the institutions, and in the key foreign countries and world leaders; second, the level of penetration of the most common propaganda messages in the public attitudes and in the specific socio-demographic and electoral groups; the role of the fake news; third, the ability of these messages to influence the direction and the character of the key citizens' political choices. Based on the analysis of the results, two main theses are argued. The more directly politically oriented a message is, the more it polarizes the society. It gathers its supporters, but in the same time it mobilizes its opponents. And vice versa, the more hidden and psychological a message is, the more it is effective, awakening profound fears and reaching the widest influence. The second finding concerns the fact that, regardless of the wide spread of the propaganda messages in the media, they have not changed the basic geopolitical choices of the Bulgarians - until and as long as they do not offer an acceptable alternative to this choice.

Key words: Democratic values, propaganda messages, fake news, public opinion, political choice, geo-political orientation.

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Deyan Kiuranov

BULGARIANS AND RUSSIANS TODAY: A MISMATCH OF TWO COMPLEXES

This is the story of the modification of a hypothesis about the attitudes of Bulgarians towards Russians as a result of an empirical survey. The main tenet is that both groups regard one another through two different complexes. The adequacy of the notion of complex in the context is explained (in the sense of Charcot rather than Freud). The Bulgarian complex is vassality: Bulgaria is/should be a vassal to suzerain Russia, therefore expecting protection for services rendered. The Russian complex is imperialism: Bulgaria is/should be a colony of Russia, therefore Russia is under no obligation to Bulgaria regardless

of circumstances. As in reality Bulgaria is a member of the EU and NATO, these complexes create misunderstandings that complicate further a relationship that objectively is complex enough.

Keywords: Russians – Bulgarians, social attitudes, complexes, imperialism, vassality.

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Dimitar Vatsov

LOGICS OF PROPAGANDA

FIRST PART. POPULISM AND PROPAGANDA:

DANGEROUS LIAISONS AND FAMILY RESEMBLANCES

On the basis of the empirical data from the collective study “Anti-Democratic Propaganda in Bulgaria” and reframing a cluster of already existing post-Wittgensteinian theoretical approaches this text aims to outline the *logics of propaganda* on two levels: Its First Part has to describe some more general typological features of the propaganda usages of language (i.e. propaganda’s “general” practical logics) and its Second Part has to describe the particular conspiracy grammar and typical vocabulary of the recent populist, antiliberal and national-sovereigntist propaganda (from Putin through Orban to Trump), i.e. its specific practical logics.

Here, in the First Part, in comparison with the scientific and everyday-life modes of speech, some more general features of the propaganda usages of language (common both for the commercial advertisement and for the political propaganda) are outlined:

- We can speak of propaganda if a strategic dissemination and repetition of stereotyped messages (clichés) is done; the strategic goal of such repetitive dissemination is to transform those clichés into meta-clichés: into a depth grammar that frames the articulations for a multitude of individuals. In this aspect propaganda resembles education but it also differs from scientifically informed education by other features:

- Propaganda works in a regime of totalisation of the discourse, where the specific modalities of the separate messages lose their significance: the peculiar task of propaganda is to create an overgeneralized discursive horizon that

enables the fusion of modalities and hence a free play of associations between messages. Being overgeneralized the propaganda discourses resemble the scientific discourses and differ from the everyday-life discourses; being freed from any strict sense (from any strict modalisation), propaganda differs from science and resembles the ordinary bullshitting (in Harry Frankfurt's sense). Propaganda usually does not lie about the facts but it lies through modal extensions (or modal reductions) of the meanings of selected facts.

- Propaganda works in a regime of metonymy: It deposits utterance over utterance in such a way that the modal differences between them disappear and instead a metonymical chain appears: in the end it looks as if every utterance substitutes the other, as if they mean the same. This metonymical propaganda operation is conditioned by the overgeneralized and fused discursive horizon but it also produces this very horizon: a circular productive relation takes place. Through metonymy propaganda simulates coherence but such coherence is a lie because every modal concordance between the terms and the utterances is broken out in advance.

Beyond the "general" logics of propaganda, another distinction has been made: between populist uses of language and propaganda uses that are parasitic in relation to populism and operate with the demarcation between "we, the people" and "they, the elites". We agree with Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe that in the spontaneous populist movements "the people" comes into being as an empty signifier springing from metaphors and catachreses. The practical unfolding of the discourse however – with everyday-life metonymies from below or with strategic propaganda metonymies from above – inevitably fulfills the empty signifiers of populism with one or another specific meaning and transforms it into a half-empty signifier. It is a specific populist-propaganda operation to totalize such half-empty signifiers (as "the people" and "its enemies") and to use them as propaganda epithets: as devices for discursive terror.

Keywords: Propaganda, logics, grammar, clichés, metonymy, modalisation, generalization, empty signifiers, propaganda epithets.

Dimitar Vatsov - see above.

Boyan Znepolski

IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA IN THE BULGARIAN MEDIA

The article aims to study five ideological dimensions of anti-democratic propaganda in Bulgarian media that articulate in a variety of perspectives the same general talking points: 'The decline of Europe', 'The Rise of Russia', 'Bulgaria's venal elites', 'The US/NATO as global hegemon/puppet-master'. The task is namely to check the 'elasticity' of anti-democratic propaganda, to see how, and to what extent, the general talking points can be rearranged and extended in different ideological directions so as to encompass different social

stereotypes and discontents and package them around three basic oppositions: nationalism versus liberalism, the people versus the elites, Russia versus the West. The article tries also to clarify what are the political implications and what is the future of the world that the ideological variations of the main propaganda points presuppose and suggest.

Key-words: Anti-democratic propaganda, liberalism, anti-liberalism, anti-americanism, nationalism, sovereignism, elites, the people, Russia, Europe, EU, USA, NATO.

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Albena Hranova

THE BULGARIAN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA: TALKING POINTS, STYLES AND AUDIENCES

The paper is a part of the research endeavour in the framework of the project *Anti-Liberal Discourses and Propaganda Messages in Bulgarian Media: Dissemination and Social Perception* in the period between 2013 and 2016. It is a case study stressing on differences of styles and public discourses with reference to their audiences in the advancing process of disseminating three major talking points of up-to-date anti-democratic propaganda: 1. ‘Bulgaria’s venal elites’; 2. ‘The decline of the West/Europe’; and 3. ‘The rise of Russia’.

The case study focuses of two types of public propaganda speakers – ‘people’s tribunes’ (Alexander Simov, Kevork Kevorkyan), and “thinkers’ targeting a more sophisticated and almost academic audience (dr. Nikolay Mihaylov, prof. Ivo Hristov). The analysis frames their political viewpoints – Simov’s stalinist attitude with discursive formulae coming from the 1950s; Kevorkyan’s thoroughly xenophobic and nationalistic attitude; Mihaylov and Hristov claiming the “arti-

ficial” character of the Modern Epoch and liberalism contrary to the “natural” character of the Russian authoritarianism. The paper also pays attention to the different rhetorical devices of propaganda style: the special use of the catachresis as a total trope of the discourse which gathers up all possible talking and focal points, and plots, and themes into one and the same political message, which rhetorical and topical ingredients seem to collapse into a consequent synonymy (Alexander Simov); the use of “manifest” or “slogan-like” short paragraphs and meaningful artificial capital letters of nouns and verbs in Kevork Kevorkyan’s sentences; the special use of prestigious quotes (most often mistaken and mistreated) in dr. Nikolay Mihaylov’s, and prof. Ivo Hristov’s discourses, etc.

Keywords: Anti-democratic, anti-liberal propaganda, propaganda styles, Russia, Bulgarian media.

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Boyan Zahariev

TO SELL YOUR SOUL TO THE DEVIL

The article uses the technology of web-scraping and social network analysis to track the use of keywords from the language of primarily East European anti-liberalism – *tolerast, liberast, and sorosoid*. A corpus of about 500 web-pages containing at least one of the key words serves as empirical material for the analysis.

The three key words extracted from the net a large corpus of anti-liberal texts including a mixture of political and geopolitical topics intertwined with xenophobic, homophobic and plainly vulgar jargon. Word frequency and correlation analysis of the whole corpus and the construction of a bi-partite network with webpages and words revealed several thematic fields. The main sources of anti-liberal rhetoric using hate speech do not seem to quote or directly borrow from each other. Most of them maintain a multitopic profile and their relation to

kindred spirit web pages can only be discovered through web search.

Keywords: the language of anti-liberalism, hate speech, ‘tolerast’, ‘liberast’, ‘sorosoid’, web-scraping, social network analysis.

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Valentin Valkanov

ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA REACTIONS TO THE ‘ANTIDEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA IN BULGARIA’ REPORT

The ‘Antidemocratic propaganda in Bulgaria’ report managed to touch a sensitive media nerve in the public discourse and raised a massive wave of reactions after its release in April, 2017. This article focuses on exactly these materials released on the Internet. In order to gather the needed information all articles were included in a detailed press clipping.

This article has a double focus in describing the material related to the matter – quantitative and qualitative. The press clipping has revealed not only the number of reposts of articles and authors, but also the exact subjects that were mentioned and discussed in them. Most of those subjects were in direct connection to the report – researchers and organizations.

The press clipping has covered all kind of articles in connection to the report – positive, negative and neutral. Therefore the article can account for a wholesome view of the internet media reactions with exact numbers and ratios. Thus it manages to follow the origin and means of dissemination of materials on the Internet.

Of particular interest is the other aspect of the description of the gathered materials – the substantial analysis. It follows the logic of propaganda as it has been described in the report, on the grounds of the four pillars of populism –

“The corrupt elites”, “The decline of Europe”, “USA – overlord” and “The rise of Russia”. Following these four major themes in all materials in the press clipping, the article describes the means of presenting and in most cases discrediting the organizations and researchers involved in the making of the report. But the wave of negative reactions does not stop here and reaches as far as Europe/EU, USA and even liberalism itself.

Keywords: “Anti-democratic propaganda in Bulgaria” report, media reception, networks, content analysis.

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Konstantin Pavlov

ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA REACTIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL NATIONAL SECURITY REPORT FOR 2016

The paper analyzes the media and political reactions in Bulgarian online media to the Government's Annual National Security Report, subsequently approved by the Bulgarian Parliament, for the period September 2017 – November 2017. References to the report were subject to content analysis according to the timeline of the reactions and the intensity of their occurrence, according to the different categories of institutional and non-institutional speakers, as well as according to the basic messages they were carrying. The findings show a strong disproportion in the representation of different opinions and the lack of public debate on the subject. Since the beginning of the period, there is a visible disparity between the reactions to the Report and their media coverage. The passages in the text of the Report that describe the role of Russia for the Bulgarian national security focus almost all of the media attention and were the most debated political issue on this topic. With a great deal of certainty it can be speculated that the next national security topic that will get great coverage will revolve around the state of security in the Black sea.

Keywords: Content analysis, online media, national security, Bulgaria, propaganda.

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NEWS... IN DETAIL

The “News... In Detail” study, presented by the Association of European Journalists (AEJ-Bulgaria) on July 25, 2017, was prepared by researchers from the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”: Prof. Maria Neikova, PhD, Assoc. Prof. Jana Popova, PhD, and Assoc. Prof. Vyara Angelova, PhD (the first three papers in this block are theirs). It takes a snapshot of journalistic handwriting on the most visited media sites in Bulgarian and the three most popular televisions in the country. The aim is to identify the most common ethical violations in journalistic material, predominantly news. The survey covers 3,556 journalistic publications over a three-month period (February–April 2017). News, reports and news releases in the three top rated national televisions – bTV, BNT and NOVA, and the five most visited news sites according to the Alexa world counter on January 15, 2017 – Blitz, Bradva, Vesti, Dnes and Plovdiv24. It is a part of the project of AEJ-Bulgaria “Mediator 2: A Bridge between Ethical Journalism and Society”, supported by the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

Maria Neikova

WHY THE NEWS ARE WHAT THEY ARE

The introductory text provides a brief overview of the state of media freedom in the world. Against this background the problems with media/journalistic self-regulation in Bulgaria are traced back to the appearance of the first private media in 1989. Then the paper turns to the quantitative results of the research of the three-month period February – April 2017). These results are then presented along the lines of: **size** of publications – an indicator that is directly related to the completeness and clarity of the texts; **topics** – where predominantly early parliamentary elections dominate the event's orientation, but the significant presence of “crime” and “disasters/accidents” poses questions not only about the way journalism reflects but also about the social surroundings that the media reflects; **authorship** – which has a direct relation to the authenticity of the publications; **sources** and their nature; main actors; place of the event; conflict; negativity; sensationalism and more.

The media impose a catastrophic agenda that causes a high emotional response in the audience and exerts a strong psychological effect on it. An established practice in websites and in televisions is the packaging of materials through sensational titles, which especially in some of the sites reinforce the “missing” from the text – scandalous, extraordinary, shocking. Through various techniques, sites that are researched often multiply the same text, and so practically is debunked the working myth that the diversity of the media on the web is great and the authorship is rising tremendously.

Keywords: Journalistic self-regulation, size of publications, topics, authorship, sources, main actors, conflict, negativity, sensationalism, catastrophic agenda

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Vjara Angelova

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AS JOURNALISM AND (OR) POLITICS

The text analyzes the data about the respect paid to some media ethics principles in the context of the 2017 parliamentary elections campaign in Bulgaria. The relation between the political and journalistic discourses is discussed. Political confrontation of ideas, as seen from media’s point of view, often becomes a sensationalistic conflict. Media reflect the social and political conflicts as a series of speeches that do not meet in a direct debate. The lack of discussion profanes the profession, transforms the journalists in ordinary registrators of events and maintains just a formal pluralism. The aim of the replacement of the journalistic purpose to inform with an artificial confrontation is to attract bigger audience. This media approach of vulgarization of the political processes leads to demotivation and demoralization of the civil society.

Keywords: Media representation, parliamentary elections, political confrontation, sensationalistic conflict, media ethics.

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Zhana Popova

HOW SENSATIONALISM IS BROUGHT ABOUT IN THE TV NEWS?

The typology of the ways in which TV journalists create the sensational news content is presented. The analysis is based on the results of a survey of the daily news segments of the three national TVs – bTV, Nova and BNT between 01.02 and 30.04.2017. What are the models with which the emotions of the viewers are influenced? In what cases do the journalists use sensationalism as an element of news and what does this kind of transformation of the story about the reality lead to?

The main directions of research relate to violations of ethical norms and professional standards which causes fear and terror. They are also connected with the ways sources are quoted, the use of rumors or information without a source and what the journalist or the media can do in such cases.

Keywords: Sensation, television, information, news, ethical norms.

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Milena Iakimova

**POPULIST PROPAGANDA AND SOCIAL SOLITUDE
(ON JOURNALISM IN BULGARIA)**

Paper draws on 13 semi-structured interviews with journalists from print media and information websites to outline their perceptions of their professional world. The interviews were conducted between March and June, 2016, in the frames of the research on the anti-democratic propaganda in Bulgaria.

Without exaggeration, both the analysis of media and the interviews with journalists have shown **the disintegration of the field of journalism as a differentiated field in Bulgaria**. What is this due to? Our interviewees explained it with the commercialization and shift in focus from winning trust to securing higher ratings – the media have come to be understood as entertainment and journalism is trying to adjust to this “commercial” requirement. But this is not the main (or at least not the sufficient) reason. The market, in turn, is changing under pressure from free online media, the reorientation of television towards new formats (of entertainment), and the subsequent fragmentation of audiences. What differentiates print media and news websites however is the drastic merge of entertainment and direct politics through omerta on certain topics and names, through advertorials that are not properly (if at all) marked as such and all this – in the lack of information who the owner of the media is. Our interviewees share a common practical dilemma: you **either** do journalism, **or** work for a media corporation. If one wants to do proper journalism, one has to withdraw from the topics of the day to the safer territories of marginal topics.

Keywords: media, journalism, tabloidization, propaganda

Milena Iakimova - see above.

Martin Kanoushev

**SOCIAL (IN)COMMENSURABILITY BETWEEN
TOTALITARIAN AND ANTIDEMOCRATIC PROPAGANDA**

The article is devoted to a very important scientific problem: it represents a sociological attempt to conceptualize social continuity and social incommensurability between propaganda as a classical power instrument of totalitarian regimes and propaganda as an immanent functional instance of postcommunist publicity. Hence the central mission of the analysis: to trace out those focal points of significant difference-repetition, in which their discursive (non)coincidences convene and disperse, and which constitute the uniform, comprehensive and undivided ideological programming of the antidemocratic propaganda. The latter does not conform or appeal to some organizational potential, innovative methods of management or alternative political model, but instead to sheer intensive accumulation of power through dispersion of the civil society and creating cynical social environment – key precondition for “modulate inclination” of the public opinion with the purpose of giving a new meaning to

the Bulgarian membership in the European Union and North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Keywords: Terror, propaganda, indoctrination, demagoguery, ideology, totalitarian movements, totalitarian regime, neoliberal order, democratic values, antidemocratic discourse.

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Nadya Danova

FEATURES OF THE BULGARIAN OCCIDENTALISM DURING THE 18TH-19TH CENTURIES

The article focuses on an understudied trend in the ideological and political life of the Bulgarian society. An analysis of the texts of Bulgarian authors from the 18th-19th centuries underlies the conclusion that they contain a number of elements of Occidentalism, of the negative predisposition to the West. An attempt is made to reveal the cultural, historical and geopolitical factors determining these elements. The article accounts the negative effects from the confrontation between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism on the image of the West. It is pointed out that in the early decades of the 19th century Occidentalism in the Balkans acquired an increasingly distinct geopolitical ring related to the resurgence of Russian policy in the Balkans. The author claims that the activities of the Odessa circle, led by Vasil Aprilov, toward tying Bulgarian culture to Russia resulted in the establishment of a powerful trend of Occidentalism in the Bulgarian cultural life that would play a significant role in the life of the Bulgarian society in the decades to come. Bulgarians, due to their needs and the degree of their spiritual development, were forced to communicate with the official Russian culture, which, in the reactionary period during the rule of Nicholas I, was dominated by the ideas of Orthodoxy and Pan-Slavism. This left an imprint on the mentality of the Bulgarian youth educated in Russia and had an impact on the orientation of the cultural, social and political development of the Bulgarian society.

Keywords: National identity, the image of “the other”, Occidentalism, Panslavism, geopolitics

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Valentin Asparuhov

TRANSCENDENTAL STRATA IN RUSSELL'S PHILOSOPHICAL LOGIC

The failure to demarcate the field of philosophical logic is in the basis of many of the difficulties that arise when Russell tries to form his own conception of logical analysis. The article considers Russell's fragmentary conception of analysis. An attempt is proposed to locate and elucidate a transcendental component that could be visible when we focus on his analytical practice. Series of suggestions about transcendental strata upon Russell's thoughts are following, but although they are polemical, in my opinion they have the power to form an impulse for outlining the area of philosophical logic. This enables the author to sketch out a transcendental point of view, founded in a presumption that there isn't an active transcendental subject.

Keywords: Philosophical logic, logical data and experience, mental synthesis, transcendental motive, transcendentalism als ob.

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