work constitutes an invaluable resource to Russian studies students but will also be fascinating for any educated reader with a particular interest in medieval literature. To quote Likhachev, "The great task of cultural historians of different specialties lies in widening our horizon, in particular of the aesthetic. The more intelligent a person is, the more he can comprehend and assimilate, the wider is his horizon and ability to understand and accept cultural values, both of the past and present" (346). One can only hope that more of the works of this great intellectual will become available in translation in years to come.

KARINE ZBINDEN
University of Sheffield

Dostoevsky and the Epileptic Mode of Being. By Paul Fung. Oxford: Legenda, 2015. xii, 148 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Maps. £55.00, hard bound.

This book continues the philosophical discussion of Fedor Dostoevskii started by Friedrich Nietzsche, Lev Shestov, Alex de Jonge, and many others. Paul Fung describes existential experiences of caesura (suspension), timelessness, and anticipation of death, which he attributes to some of Dostoevskii's characters and, possibly, to the writer himself. Apart from Dostoevskii, he draws on Mikhail Bakhtin, Emmanuel Levinas, Walter Benjamin, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Maurice Blanchot. What he terms "the epileptic mode of being," after Robert Lord, is "the quixotic desire to experience the impossible and its continual failure." Fung also describes it as "the alternation between the continual desire to seize upon the moment and the annihilation of that desire," or "an infinite postponement" (20). Whether this desire has to be called *epileptic*, with its medical connotations, is another matter. The author, in a footnote, confesses to using the term as a metaphor. But once uttered, the word may create confusion rather than clarity.

In a short introduction, Fung treats the history of epilepsy and what could be considered its symptoms: an intense experience of the suspended moment and "mystic terror" (14). He then suggests that Dostoevskii attempts, in his post-Siberian novels, to "write the impossible" (18): the moment when consciousness is interrupted and the near-death experience is both terrifying and orgasmically pleasurable. In the chapters that follow, he considers the novels chronologically, starting with *The Humiliated and Insulted*. The problem Fung focuses on is "the egoism of suffering." Bringing to the discussion the Marquis de Sade, Freud, and Lacan, he argues that the Kantian categorical imperative "has repressed the sadistic/masochistic relationship between the subject and the law" (33).

The author next turns to *Crime and Punishment* and continues to find ambivalent patterns in the characters. Thus, in the mare-beating dream, "Raskolnikov is stepping over the father's law by looking at the beating [and, presumably, doing the beating] and seeing himself being punished for transgressing the law at the same time" (67). However, the role of creating "the epileptic mode of being" in the novel belongs rather to the Petersburg cityscape, which is "deaf and dumb," in the manner of the "dumb and deaf spirit" that Christ drove out from an epileptic child (Mark 9:17–27). Yet Fung calls the city "schismatic by nature" (67), thus evoking the image of schizophrenia, not epilepsy.

Further chapters treat *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Fung interprets Prince Myshkin's epileptic world as a mixed experience of ecstasy and death, with the limitation that one cannot experience one's own death. He finds in it

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a reflection of Dostoevskii's suffering, and of the mock execution, and compares this experience with that of Blanchot, who narrowly escaped execution by the Nazis. Fung also draws on Victor Hugo's story "Le dernier jour d'un condemné." Should one look for "the epileptic mode of being" in the last two examples? Fung wants to convince us that we should. The forth chapter is titled "The Will to Epilepsy: Suicide, Writing, and Modernity," while the fifth focuses on the "shriekers," as hysterical peasant women were called in those days.

The conclusion has more to do with the expectation of death than with epilepsy as an illness, even understood metaphorically. It might best be expressed in Blanchot's words in *L'instant de ma mort*, rephrased here: "The instance of my death is always pending, just as the process in the court" (133). Fung tries to give to the medical term *epilepsy* a philosophical meaning by interpreting it as "caesura," "rupture," or "suspension." It is for the reader to judge how successful that is.

IRINA SIROTKINA
Institute for the History of Science and Technology, Russian Academy of Science

The Way: Religious Thinkers of the Russian Emigration in Paris and Their Journal, 1925–1940. By Antoine Arjakovsky. Trans. Jerry Ryan. Ed. John A. Jillions and Michael Plekon. Foreword, Rowan Williams. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013. xiv, 766 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. $65.00, paper.

This is a remarkable but demanding, even daunting, history of the Russian religious-philosophical emigration in interwar France. Antoine Arjakovsky is a French professor of ecumenical theology at the Ukrainian Catholic University. His subject is the Paris school of Russian émigré religious thought. The school consisted of several institutions: the Academy of Religious Philosophy (founded in 1922), the YMCA Press (founded in 1923), the Russian Student Christian Movement (founded in 1923), the journal *Put'* (The Way, founded in 1925), and the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute (founded in 1925). The YMCA generously supported all these institutions, which helps account for their ecumenical spirit. Paul Anderson, an American who became director of the YMCA mission to Russian immigrants in Europe, played an indispensable role. In Arjakovsky's judgment, he "deserves to be canonized today by the universal church" (579). But the figure who looms largest in the book is Nikolai Berdiaev, director of the Academy of Religious Philosophy (which he founded in Berlin before moving to Paris, in 1924) and editor of the YMCA Press and of *The Way*. Though Berdiaev is probably the best-known Russian philosopher in the west, this book adds to our knowledge of him. It also sheds light on many other prominent Russian religious thinkers, including Sergei Bulgakov, Georgii Fedotov, Georgii Florovskii, Semen Frank, Lev Karsavin, Vladimir Losskii, Lev Shestov, Lev Zander, and Nikolai Zernov.

Arjakovsky divides his book into three parts, corresponding to his periodization of *The Way*'s history: its modernist phase (1925–29), nonconformist phase (1930–35), and spiritual phase (1935–40). The logic behind the periodization and labels is not always clear, and there is some overlap and repetition. For example, nonconformist intellectuals, whether French or Russian, defended what Jacques Maritain and others called the "primacy of the spiritual," so it is not immediately obvious what distinguishes the journal's second and third phases. The author's painstaking method is to survey many of the journal's 400 articles and 206 reviews, highlighting the various themes, problems, and controversies that emerge along the way. It would have been better, perhaps, to organize this sprawling book more tightly according to its three

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