

**Samobytnost'**, *самобытность* (Russian). Literally: "self-being"; the term also connotes the ideas of self-sufficiency, independence, authenticity and singularity. *Samobytnost'* is one of the central categories in *Slavophile's* worldview, which was meant to underscore the unique character of the Russian civilization (or Slavic people in general), and its essential distinctness from the western European forms of historical development. The most important slavophiles who advocated the idea of Russia's *samobytnost'* include Ivan Kireevskiy (1806-1856), Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860), and Alexey Khomyakov (1804-1860). According to these thinkers, the unique features of Russian reality include the innate emphasis on the communal way of living (as opposed to the individualistic tendencies of the West), the organic unity that exists between the people and the Orthodox Church, as well as the capacity to create and maintain a perfect balance between personal freedom and the necessity imposed by the social and religious communities, the idea denoted by the term *sobornost'*. Some further aspects of the East-West divide, that the notion of *samobytnost'* tries to highlight, include the juxtaposition between the intuitive and mystical approaches to the natural world, typical of the Eastern mindset, and the overly rationalized, instrumental handling of nature in the West, combined with the claim of the superiority of the former practice. (Andrei Zavaliy)

(See also: *slavyanofilstvo*, *sobornost'*)

***Literature:***

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