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*Philosophical, Theological
and Literary Perspectives*

Edited by Teresa Obolevitch
and Paweł Rojek

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Christ Pantocrator, St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, 6th-7th century

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Religion, Culture and Post-Secular Reason. The Contemporary Significance of Russian Thought

“Religion – as Vladimir Solovyov wrote at the beginning of his groundbreaking work *Lectures on Divine Humanity* – must determine all the interest and the whole content of human life and consciousness.”¹ This straightforward claim briefly summarizes the problem of the relation between religion and culture in Russian religious thought. We believe that this account, undermining the fundamental philosophical principles of secular modernity, is not only of historical importance.

The relation between religion and culture is one of the most crucial issues in Christian thought. When we realize that the concept of culture includes philosophy, science, art, politics and economy, we can see that this issue is perhaps the most fundamental. Contemporary philosophy and theology are still more conscious of the fact that the current model of relations between religion and culture developed in the modern Western world is fundamentally flawed. The processes of the secularization of society, culture, and even religion, are rooted in the dualistic vision of religion and culture introduced in the late Middle Ages. Modern thought, language and practice are deeply affected by this dualism. Even our formulation of the problem as a question of the relationship between religion and culture implies some form of dualism since it presupposes that religion and culture are two separate domains which must somehow be related. The division between the sacred and the secular brings about the gradual removal of the sacred and the final triumph of the secular. Religion, instead of being the fundamental inspiration of human life, ultimately becomes a particular private interest of no real importance.² Solovyov saw this process with admirable clarity:

¹ V. Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, trans. F. Jakim, Hudson 1995, p. 1.

² For a concise summary of accounts of the endogenous process of secularization see J. Martínez, *Beyond Secular Reason. Some Contemporary Challenges for the Life and the*

For contemporary civilized people, even for those who recognize the religious principle, religion does not possess this all-embracing and central significance. Instead of being all in all, it is hidden in a very small and remote corner of our inner world. It is just one of the multitude of different interests that divides our attention. Contemporary religion is a pitiful thing.³

In other words, dualism at first leads to secularization, then to privatization and, finally, to the annihilation of religion. The current pitiful state of religion in the modern world is a direct consequence of the conceptual division between religion and culture in past.

Russian religious thinkers have provided not only a profound diagnosis of the crisis, but have also searched for ways to overcome it. Russian thought was remarkably well prepared to formulate an alternative to secular modernity. Indeed, in Russian culture there was neither a Renaissance nor an Enlightenment. Eastern Christianity retained an integral patristic vision of human nature which had not been divided into separate “natural” and “supernatural” elements. This pre-modern vision is now gaining exceptional value in the post-modern reality. As Artur Mrówczyński-Van Allen has recently noticed, the reflections represented in Russian philosophy

although are largely unknown in the West, belong to the most valuable heritage of human thought [...], a heritage that still offers answers to many questions before which Western philosophy remains powerless. [...] The Russian Idea [...] gives us valuable insights in our own search for answers at the beginning of twenty-first century, for our world is not that different from the world [...] in response to which the Russian Idea was first formulated.⁴

We also find that the heritage of Russian religious thought may serve as a source of inspiration for alternative approaches to religion and culture, most of all because it is free of the dualism which is so typical for Western theology and philosophy. In this aspect, Russian religious thought may be compared with *Nouvelle Théologie*, Radical Orthodoxy and other recent movements in Christian post-secular thought and for this reason it remains astonishingly contemporary.⁵

Thought of the Church, as Seen from the West, Granada 2008.

³ V. Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, op. cit., pp. 1–2.

⁴ A. Mrówczyński-Van Allen, *Between the Icon and the Idol. The Human Person and the Modern State in Russian Literature and Thought: Chaadayev, Soloviev, Grossman*, trans. M. P. Whelan, Eugene, OR 2013, pp. 80, 104.

⁵ See for instance a collection of essays *Encounter Between Eastern Orthodoxy and Radical Orthodoxy*, eds. A. Pabst, Ch. Schneider, Burlington, VT 2009.

Here we would like to draw attention to two elements of this Russian alternative. Surprisingly enough, both are clearly suggested at the beginning of Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity*. The first is the conviction that religion must be a true foundation of culture. The second is the claim that, due to a reference to religious principle, all of the elements of culture form an integral unity. The resumption of the integrality of the sacred and the secular is the only way to overcome the current cultural and religious crisis.

Religion, if it is supposed to be something at all, must be everything. It must penetrate all domains of human life: spiritual and corporeal, emotional and intellectual, private and public, individual and social. This was the main concern of Solovyov in his *Lectures*. He wrote:

All that is essential in what we do, what we know, and what we create must be determined by and referred to such [religious] principle. [...] If the religious principle is admitted at all, it must certainly possess such all-embracing, central significance.⁶

It seems that on the very first page of his *Lectures* Solovyov challenged the deepest foundation of secular order. Strictly speaking, Russian thinkers desired the "re-enchantment of the world," the reversal of the process recognized by Max Weber as the core of modernization. Duns Scotus, Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith and many other fathers of modernity tried to delineate the boundaries between religion on the one hand, and the autonomous secular domains of philosophy, politics and economics on the other. Solovyov, together with many other previous and subsequent Russian thinkers, blurred these supposed boundaries. That is why Russian philosophy is so often indistinguishable from theology from the Western point of view. It is not a methodological error, but rather a direct consequence of alternative approach to the supposed relation between religion and culture.

The grounding of culture in religion brings about the reintegration of culture itself. Culture is no longer a plethora of unrelated phenomena. If all the elements of human life reflect the divine principle, they also create a special kind of unity. As Solovyov put it:

If we admit the existence of such an absolute center, all the points on the circle of life must be linked to that center with equal radii. Only then can unity, wholeness, and harmony appear in human life and consciousness.⁷

⁶ V. Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, op. cit., p. 1.

⁷ Ibidem.

This is the true stake in the dispute over religion and culture. The lack of integrity in culture undermines the stability of personal identity. The unity of individual life is possible only in a united culture. Again, the principle of integrity leads to the characteristic blurring of genres in Russian culture. Philosophy is not separated from theology, but also from literature, religion life, social and political activity and biography in general. Again, this is not an error in classification, but a result of an integrated approach to culture.

Thus far we have tried to trace some distinctive features of the relationship between religion and culture which appear at the very beginning of Solovyov's *Lectures*. These principles perhaps determined the whole tradition of Russian religious thought, although they have found different interpretations in various authors. We have invited scholars from Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria to investigate in detail how Russian thinkers have combined Christianity with philosophy, literature, social life and their own lives. The contributors to this book analyze the visions of not only philosophers such as Vladimir Solovyov, Nicolai Berdyaev, Lev Shestov or Semyon Frank, but also theologians such as Sergei Bulgakov, Pavel Florensky or Vladimir Lossky, and writers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Lev Tolstoy, Nicolai Leskov and Marina Tsvetaeva. This multi-perspective approach remains faithful to the integrated tradition of Russian religious culture.

The book at hand is a sequel to a number of other publications made jointly by the community of scholars interested in Russian philosophy and gathered around the "Krakow Meetings," annual conferences organized, among others, by the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.⁸

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have helped in publishing this book. Our project was made possible thanks to the support of the Pontifical University of John Paul II, the Copernicus Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Krakow, Instituto de Filosofia Edith Stein in Granada, International Center for the Study of the Christian Orient in Granada and the Science and Culture Creators Association Episteme in Krakow.

In Krakow we are proud that Vladimir Solovyov spent a few weeks in our city at the turn of 1888 and 1889. "In Krakow I led a distracted, but virtuous life,"

⁸ *Symbol w kulturze rosyjskiej*, eds. K. Duda, T. Obolevitch, Kraków 2010; *The Influence of Jewish Culture on the Intellectual Heritage of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. T. Obolevitch, J. Bremer, Kraków 2011; *Metafizyka a literatura w kulturze rosyjskiej. Метафізика і література в руській культурі*, ed. T. Obolevitch, Kraków 2012; *Russian Thought in Europe. Reception, Polemics, Development*, eds. T. Obolevitch, T. Homa, J. Bremer, Kraków 2013.

he wrote to one of his friends.⁹ Perhaps the proposed book is also distracted to some extent, but we hope that it nevertheless remains intellectually virtuous. Besides, it is worth recalling that Solovyov's supposed distraction was only a guise; in fact, in Krakow he worked intensely on a secret memorandum to the Tsar with which he hoped to realize his far-reaching ecumenical projects.¹⁰ Great things begin in Krakow.

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⁹ S. M. Solovyov, *Vladimir Solovyov: His Life and Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Gibson, Fairfax, VA 2000, p. 350.

¹⁰ Solovyov's “Krakow affair” was investigated in detail by Professor Vyacheslav Moiseev, see his brilliant paper: В. И. Моисеев, Тайна “краковского дела” Владимира Соловьёва, “Przegląd Rusycystyczny”, 2003, vol. 1, pp. 5–21.

Philosophical Perspectives

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The Meaning of Love in V. Solovyov and P. Florensky

The main topic here is the drawing of a comparison between the concept of love in the works of Vladimir Solovyov and Pavel Florensky. Both authors point to the connection of love to the Divine Sophia, a theme which became central to Russian religious thinkers following the path opened by V. Solovyov himself. P. Florensky is one of the main sophiologists who developed a concept of love as friendship, in contrast to V. Solovyov who elaborated more on erotic love.

Before focusing on these thinkers, we have to understand the differences between the various aspects that are described by the same word, “love.” Indeed, the single noun “love” contains many different aspects which were distinguished by the ancient Greeks with four different words: *eros*, *philia*, *agape* and *storge*.

Pavel Florensky explained the difference between these four types of love in the letter about Friendship in his book *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (1914).¹ The difference between the four kinds of love depends on their quality and on the object towards which they are oriented. Firstly, Florensky describes *eros* as the re-orientation of one’s all feelings toward a single object with the implication of passionate, sensual and jealous tones. Secondly, *philia*, or love as friendship, is the inclination towards a person based on similarities of the soul: this creates satisfaction and feelings of self-saturation. Thirdly, *storge* expresses a familiar organic connection which is typical of the bond between family members. Finally, *agape* is based on a rationalized love during which the object is appreciated because of his or her qualities: *agape* is a kind of love which follows the act of free will and one’s own rational decision. *Agape* and *philia* are very similar in their rational and moral aspects. However, *agape* lacks immediate action that is not mediated by reason, one that originates in the heart and connected to love as in *philia*. Based on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* Florensky explains that *philia* is connected to the beloved persons and *agape* is connected

¹ P. Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, trans. B. Jakim, Princeton 2004.

not to a person but to his or her attributes and specific characteristics. This is why *agape* can be considered a kind of love that is impersonal and abstract. However, it is also a moral love because it is determined by the will, consciously directed and determined by rational elaboration. This kind of love is free. On the contrary, *philia* is not free and is an expression of a natural inclination towards another person. In this sense it is similar to *eros* although *eros* is more inclined towards a sensual and affectionate approach. In relation to *eros*, *philia* is more directed towards similarities and proximity with another person.

At this point, we will discuss why V. Solovyov decided to focus his interest on erotic love and why P. Florensky prefers love as *philia*. Solovyov is the first Russian sophiologist who tried to reconcile the Christian East and the Christian West. His followers created a particularly inspired period at the beginning of the 20th century, now considered the golden age of Russian philosophy.² Solovyov's poetry and aesthetic theories determined the movement of Russian symbolism. Symbolist poets lauded Sophia³ as an eternal feminine and Beautiful Woman. Through this image they wanted to illustrate the idea of the Wisdom of God. Solovyov's mystical experiences are connected to his vision of Sophia. For the rest of his life he wanted to rationally express this kind of experience in his philosophical system. Jonathan Sutton described Solovyov as a philosopher in this way:

Solovyov is deemed to be the "father" of Russian philosophy, but one question to ask is this: *did* he establish a school of philosophy that owes its origin directly to him? Not really. He exerted an influence which is more *oblique* than the founding of a "school." His mode of thinking goes far beyond the confines of academic philosophy, to be sure, and over the course of several generations it has helped to shape modern Christian spirituality.⁴

In the same way, we can see Pavel Florensky's thoughts which are based on the mystery of his own mystical experiences that cannot be transmitted directly. Both Solovyov's and Florensky's philosophy aim to achieve the ideal

² In an interview in the program "Философские чтения." *Философия отца Сергея Булгакова*, Kozyrev stated that Silver Age of Russian literature, in particular of Russian poetry, corresponds to a period of Golden age of Russian philosophy.

³ The Greek *Sophia* corresponds to *Hokmah* in Hebrew which is described in the biblical texts as a creation of God and in later Jewish mysticism as a divine hypostasis, *Ein-Sof*, the Endless and the ten *sefirot*.

⁴ J. Sutton, *Vladimir Solov'ev as Reconciler and Polemicist*, [in:] *Vladimir Solov'ev: Reconciler and Polemicist*, eds. E. van der Zweerde, W. van den Bercken, M. de Courten, Leuven 2000, p. 1.

and eternal being described as Sophia or Divine Wisdom. In both cases, their thoughts were formulated in the context of scientific progress of the time.

Solovyov lived in a period of classical science which passed over the revolution and influenced Florensky in a different way. Solovyov emphasised atomic theory and the principle of universal gravitation. He also integrated organicist thought and evolutionary theory into his philosophy. He was more naturalistically oriented than Florensky who incorporated into his philosophical system the theory of relativity, quantum physics and Cantor's set theory,⁵ particularly the concepts of discontinuity and actual infinity. In relation to the all-unity truth (*всеединная истина*), considering their different approach to science, Solovyov embraced the all-unity of elements, while Florensky exchanged elements for symbols. According to Solovyov, all beings are connected and total unity is an extended continuum. In *La Russie et l'Église Universelle* Solovyov described different steps towards total unity:

the first, determined by universal gravitation, which makes the lower world a relatively compact mass and creates the material body of the universe. There is the *mechanical unity* of the whole. [...] The Word takes possession of this idealized material, as the proper medium of its formative action; projects imponderable fluids into all the parts of the universe; envelops all the members of the cosmic body in a network of ether; manifests the relative differences of these parts and places them in fixed relationships, and thus creates a second cosmic unity more perfect and more ideal, the *dynamic unity* realized by light, electricity and all the other imponderables, which are simply modifications or transformations of one and the same agent. [...] Nevertheless, it aspires always towards this union, and will not confine itself to the contemplation of the heavens and the shining stars, to immersion in the fluid ether; it absorbs the light, transforms it into living fire and as the fruit of this new union produces from its loins every living soul in the two kingdoms of plants and animals. This new unity, the *organic unity*, with inorganic matter and the etheric fluids as its base and medium, is the more perfect in that it forms and governs a more complicated body by a more active and universal soul.⁶

Florensky, on the other hand, emphasised the discontinuity and actual infinity within the holistic conception of total-unity. This different approach to the total-unity is connected to a different view of Sophia:

⁵ Florensky was probably the first advocate of Cantor's set theory in Russia, see F. Haney, *Religious Thought and Natural Science in Vladimir Solov'ev and Pavel Florenskij. A Comparative Study of their Conception of Rationality*, [in:] *Vladimir Solov'ev: Reconciler and Polemicist*, op. cit., p. 271.

⁶ V. Solovyov, *Russia and the Universal Church*, trans. H. Rees, London 1948, p. 165.

Solov'ëv understood Sofia as the realisation of the divine idea by way of unity in the manifold, as a matter, penetrated by the principle of unity which was potentially infinite only at each stage of the godhuman process. According to Florensky, two aspects were interwoven. Sophia is cosmos and symbol. As cosmos, Sophia is the accomplished unity in the manifold of its forms, elements and figures. As a symbol, Sophia itself is a discrete personality which is interconnected with all other personalities [...]. As a symbol, Sophia is an accomplished total unity, she is actual infinite.⁷

On the basis of these two philosophical approaches, we can compare the concept of love in the works of Solovyov and Florensky. We will see that the two thinkers emphasized two different kinds of love. Solovyov was much more involved in theories related to love as *eros*, while Florensky elaborated love as *philia*.

Solovyov described Sophia as both a male and female entity that corresponds to the ideal humanity. This androgynous ideal should be restored within every single man or woman but at the same time there is an erotic tension which leads to the unitotality of all.

In *The Meaning of Love* (1892–1894)⁸ Solovyov distinguished five paths of erotic love which progress from the lowest negative paths of hell and physical attraction through the positive human experience of *eros* like marriage, procreation or ascetism, culminating in the supreme path of divine love as a sign of rebirth. Solovyov develops a kind of transcended *Eros* in response to the Platonic *Eros*. In Solovyov's view, Platonic *Eros* gives way to the resurrection of mortal nature in a new dimension in which man transforms himself into Godmanhood as an expression of spiritual-corporeal union. But as Solovyov described in his work *The Life Drama of Plato* (*Жизненная драма Платона*), Plato did not realize his intuition about *Eros* as it was described in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. Plato's *Eros* seems to be more the fruit of theoretical speculation than of life experience. It is because in this historical period there was no experience with Godman who appeared on the Earth with Jesus. Godmanhood is a result of a divine-human process during which a human being becomes its active part. Solovyov described the theory of this divine-human process in the book *Lectures on Godmanhood*.⁹ Paul Valliere reminded that Mochulsky described Solovyov's theory as "an inverted Platonism:"

⁷ F. Haney, *Religious Thought and Natural Science in Vladimir Solov'ëv and Pavel Florenskij*, op. cit., pp. 279–280.

⁸ V. Solovyov, *The Meaning of Love*, trans. T. R. Beyer, Aurora – Colorado 1995.

⁹ V. Solovyov, *Lectures on Godmanhood*, trans. P. Zouboff, San Rafael – California 2007.

In Plato the appearance of the object produces the recollection of its idea sleeping in the human soul; in Solov'ev it is the other way around: the idea living in the soul makes possible the perception of the object. In [Plato] the movement is from below to above, *de realibus ad realiora*, while in [Solov'ev] the movement is from above to below, *de realioribus ad realia*. The human being responds to the condescension of the idea through his own creative activity. Thus, the process of cognition in Solov'ev is shown to be a *divine-human process*.¹⁰

As was the case of comparison between Solovyov's and Florensky's relation to science, here we can also see an evaluative process fuelled by erotic love.

In Florensky's elaboration of love as friendship he focuses much more on the love for truth which is antinomical and includes potential and actual infinity. He distinguished two kinds of truth: all-united divine truth (*Истина*) and human truth (*истина*): "the love for the absolute, infinite, divine Truth (*Истина*) requires relative, finite, human truth (*истина*)."¹¹ There are two ways to achieve the infinite Truth through the finite truth: "directly, through the intuition of the whole, or indirectly, by stepwise discursive thought (*дискурсия*)."¹²

Truth and total-unity are interconnected and both Solovyov and Florensky understand them as a living entity, the all-united objective idea which contains it all. Truth is the central concept of Florensky's book *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* which is constructed as a series of twelve letters dedicated to an unidentified "brother," "elder" and "Guardian."

The eleventh letter is dedicated to Friendship but it is not the only letter where Florensky referred to love. Even in the fourth letter dedicated to Truth he spoke about love but in a different way than in the eleventh letter. Love from the fourth letter is a spiritual activity which can appear only in a purified consciousness. Only this kind of love permits the knowledge of Truth. However, there is a difference between love as a psychological condition and an ontological act typical of Christian love.

In the eleventh letter, love is related to the society which should be constituted from brothers. Florensky pointed out that religious community is connected through two kinds of bonds: a personal connection between people and an idea of the whole of the community. In ancient times, the personal bond was mediated by *eros* and the principle of mankind was *storge*. These two

¹⁰ P. Valliere, *Solov'ev and Schelling Philosophy of Revelation*, [in:] *Vladimir Solov'ev: Reconciler and Polemicist*, op. cit., p. 124.

¹¹ F. Haney, *Religious Thought and Natural Science in Vladimir Solov'ev and Pavel Florenskij*, op. cit., p. 284.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 279–280.

loves created a metaphysical stability of existence of society. Christian society, on the other hand, was based on *philia* in the personal sphere and society was connected by *agape*. In fact, according to Florensky, *philia* is a spiritualized and transformed *eros* and *agape* is a spiritualized and transformed *storge*. Agapic brotherhood within Christian community is expressed through the communion of the Holy Body and Blood. *Philia* or Friendship is created by sharing fraternal and sacramental acts. According to Florensky we can live in relation of friendship only if we have a Friend but at the same time we can have a Friend only if we are living among friends. It seems that a Friend can be understood symbolically as Christ.

To conclude, both Solovyov and Florensky aim for the unification of the whole through love and their elaborations complement each other. Solovyov's erotic love is more connected to esoteric Christianity which included gnostic and kabbalah teachings.¹³ Elevated sexual love leads humanity to the androgenic union which reflects Sophia. Florensky focused his interest more on different aspects of love within a Christian community. However, it is not important whether man starts from the idea of Truth, from the idea of Good or the idea of Beauty because these three ideas all form the One. Everything is interconnected in the whole total-unity. With the scientific revolution of the 20th century, the theory of relativity and quantum physics, a new view of the physical world emerged. It does not mean that previous discoveries are not valid anymore; they are always valid, but on different levels of reality, which is one. Likewise, we can discuss different kinds of love and explain their differences between them but in the end, ontologically, Love is only one and all Love is the One.

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¹³ J. D. Kornblatt, *Solov'ev's Androgynous Sophia and the Jewish Kabbalah*, "Slavic Review", 1991, vol. 50, no 3, pp. 486–496.

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“In Wisdom Hast Thou Made Them All:”

The Concept of Culture in Sergius Bulgakov’s Articles

The first part of the title of this article – “In Wisdom Hast Thou Made Them All” – is verse 24 from Psalm 104 (according to the Massorah text) (or 103, according to the Septuagint text). In the Orthodox Church, one can hear this Psalm in the very beginning of Vespers when the Church in its Divine Service shows the world before Christ’s coming; particularly, this Psalm symbolizes the Creation of the world. The key-phrase in this verse is “in wisdom,” which in the original is בהכמה (*bəhohma*), and the preposition ב (*bə*) means not only “in” but also “by.”¹ So this phrase can be translated also as “by wisdom” if we understand “wisdom” as some Divine instrument by which God creates. But this doesn’t mean that the first translation is wrong: it completes the meaning of the whole phrase, and “wisdom” using with preposition “in” we understand like the special statement or the special energy of God, about which we can also read in Proverbs.

The question of the creative abilities of a person is strongly connected with the question of Divine creative power and of the mystery of this world’s creation. This problem can also be understood as the relation between the Creator and His creation – a problem which always intrigued S. Bulgakov.

“The central problem of sophiology is the problem of relations between God and this world or – that is almost the same – God and man.”² These words begin the quite short but very important article *The Central Problem of Sophiology* written by the Russian religious philosopher S. Bulgakov and first published in 1936.

¹ *Тегулим. Шатер Йосефа-Ицхака*, trans. Дов-Бер Хаскелевич, Москва 2005, p. 127.

² S. Boulgakov, *La Sagesse de Dieu. Résumé de Sophiologie*, trans. C. Andronikov, Lausanne 1983, pp. 13, 15.

In tackling this problem, S. Bulgakov discusses two attitudes towards the world, i.e. the Universe: “In Christianity there are two poles, but both of them are false: the first is Manichaeism which sets a great difference between God and this world, so that there is no place for Godmanhood, and the second pole is pantheism or cosmotheism which says that this world is God.”³

The question of how God relates to this world is for Bulgakov strongly connected with the question of importance of Godmanhood as “unity of God and all created world,” where the word “unity” in Russian is *jedinstvo* which reminds us of Vladimir Solovyov’s philosophy of *vseedinstvo* or *sobornost*. To put it briefly, true Godmanhood for V. Solovyov can lead to *vseedinstvo* which is the ideal world of ecumenical culture. It is important to notice that the term “ecumenical” in Solovyov’s works of course doesn’t have such negative connotations as it sometimes can have in the works of some orthodox authors. In his article *The Central Problem of Sophiology* S. Bulgakov says that Godmanhood is the main topic of sophiology which is interpreted in Church, and, to speak further, we have to understand the Church as revelation of Godmanhood and Sophia as the Wisdom of God. But if God has created this world in wisdom and if God created man “in image, after likeness,” man can also create, and the creative works of man or of mankind are called pieces of culture.

For S. Bulgakov, culture in its diversity – as literature, music, painting etc. – exists in its connection with sophiology as the study about Sophia (Wisdom). The existence of Sophia in this world was noticed in the Old Testament, but revealed in the New Testament – in the mystery of incarnation and especially in the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles – and upon this world, when the Church began its being.

Pavel Florensky wrote that culture stems from the cult, i.e. religion is the first thing and culture is the second. S. Bulgakov does not speak about priority: one of his main ideas is that true pieces of culture exist only in Sophia and with Sophia. One can find this idea in S. Bulgakov’s articles concerning culture: about Pablo Picasso’s works and V. Solovyov’s poetry, about Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

The article called *Vasnetsov, Dostoyevsky, Vl. Solovyov, Tolstoy (Parallels)* was first published in St Petersburg in 1902. Perhaps, the strangest thing which one can see just from the name of the article is the fact that Bulgakov chooses for his parallels four people who are very different, especially from the point of view of Orthodox Christianity (we mean that the name of Leo Tolstoy is

³ S. Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, New York 1993, p. 69.

surprising in this line). Yet Bulgakov finds the common basis for these four great people of art: this basis is nationality or, to be more precise, national self-knowledge. S. Bulgakov points to Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, Vasnetsov and Solovyov as "mirrors" for Russian society, a "mirror" where Russians can recognize themselves.

Speaking about the concept of culture in S. Bulgakov's articles, one must mention *The Destiny of Pushkin* because of the importance of this text. In this article S. Bulgakov notices the main purpose of poetry – to see in holy meditation the glory of God in this world, which means for S. Bulgakov to see and to feel Sophia. The destiny of Pushkin, according to this article, is the key to a poet's life, because death is the most important event and revelation in the life of each person, especially in Pushkin's tragic life. The basis of this tragedy in a great poet's life is spiritual. Of course, Pushkin realized during his life the importance of the Bible, of the New Testament, but his inclusion into the Church as the mystical Body of Jesus Christ was not complete nor serious. Bulgakov points out that in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church, Pushkin knew only the metropolitan bishop Philaret (Drozdov) and Syvatogorsky Monastery (in Pushkinskiye Gory). It does not mean that Pushkin's attitude towards Philaret was not positive: in his notes, the poet called the bishop an "old liar." Yet Pushkin does not notice Optina Monastery, St Tikhon of Zadonsk and, perhaps most importantly, he did not hear about the great Russian saint, Seraphim of Sarov who was his contemporary. Bulgakov thinks that this fact has a symbolic meaning: Pushkin's way of life was out of historical and mystical Orthodoxy, so Pushkin in his life and poetry *passed* St Seraphim. But Bulgakov doesn't describe this way of life as wrong: he says that Pushkin had his own way, *his own destiny*, that is "to serve as poet before God's face."⁴ After that Bulgakov explains the meaning of the word "serve" for a poet and interprets the purpose of poetry: "poetry [...] is contemplation of the glory of God in His creations."⁵ Understanding this definition in the context of sophiology, one can say that poetry is the contemplation of God's Wisdom in this world, seeing this world as a revelation of beauty, and the source of beauty is Holy Spirit. The main question that Bulgakov asks is whether Pushkin knew this aim and the source of his poetical talent.

Of course, Bulgakov realized that Pushkin turned from an atheism which was also not serious and was determined by the young age of the poet, to religion: in this case the most important time in Pushkin's life is the end of

⁴ Ibidem, p. 59.

⁵ Ibidem.

the 1820s, because just at that time, the poet felt a spiritual emptiness and nothingness. During this period he wrote his masterpiece *Prophet* (1826), about which Bulgakov says that it could not be a simple paraphrase of the Bible, because the character of theophany is different in the Book of Isaiah and in the poem. In the book of the Prophet, God appears in the Temple, but in Pushkin's poem one can see nature as it is changed by Sophia, or Wisdom (Bulgakov's interpretation). Remembering the poem, we see how the poet (prophet) feels, hears and sees with his inner sight all of nature's mysteries: his sight expands from the heavens and angels to the depths of the sea. According to the poem, a poet is a prophet who does not work but rather *serves*. The only thing is that this poem, as Bulgakov says, only shows the life of a poet and an increasing of his poetic talent, but not his spiritual growth, not his spiritual work. So the main tragedy of Pushkin's life is that it is not enough to live only in poetry, because a person is wider and bigger than a poet and because poetry must also be inspired with God's Wisdom which is not only in the beauty of body but in the beauty of the heart and soul.

In the context of sophiology, Pushkin's death is the final act of his spiritual tragedy, but final here means *catharsis*, that is the purification and purgation of emotions, especially pity and fear, through an art that results in renewal and restoration. So S. Bulgakov tries to follow A. Pushkin's life in the context of his poetry that is realized in a similar manner to the Gospel and Christianity. The life of Alexander Pushkin in this article is shown to be similar to the Way to such seeing, the Way from the dark world without Wisdom to the world transfigured by Sophia.

If we speak about other kinds of art, we must say that S. Bulgakov's articles were dedicated not only to literature: there are some of them in which he analyses fine art, sculpture and music. The main motive of these articles is the same as in the texts about Russian literature: Divine Beauty inspired by God's Wisdom, in this world. In this case, it's important to say a few words about Bulgakov's articles on Picasso's pictures and A. Golubkina's sculptures.

In the texts mentioned above, Bulgakov meditates on one of the most important and oft-discussed topics in Christianity – the flesh and spirit, body and soul. For Bulgakov, this world is the Divine Universe, Sophia, Eternal Beauty, and one can see it if he repents and his heart feels all the Universe as created in and by God's Wisdom. Bulgakov names this “holiness.” Without repentance, a man has “hard heart” and he cannot see the beauty of this world, so he cannot show it in his creations (as Picasso). It means that culture can exist only in God, being strongly connected with God and world, to be more precise – being in love with Divine Wisdom, Divine Beauty, Heavenly Sophia.

So the concept of culture in S. Bulgakov's philosophy is one of the aspects of his sophiology. All the main works in different kinds of art could not appear without the inspiration of the Wisdom of God who is the main source of creativity and culture.

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Sergei Bulgakov and Alexander Elchaninov – Reflections on Real Friendship¹

In 1934 Aleksander Elchaninov, one of Bulgakov's Parisian friends, died. The latter dedicated a beautiful memoir² to him, later published by YMCA-Press,³ in a new edition, in a collection of memories about him. In a speech, he noted that Elchaninov had come to the Orthodox Church from afar, "his road had diverged from Athens towards Heavenly Jerusalem" and he continued: "he was a friend of those for whom Russian religious thought may be proud, he participated in their difficulties and successes."⁴ He most certainly had in mind, above all, Florensky and Ern – grammar school colleagues of Elchaninov. Perhaps one should not count him as a representative of the Silver Age in the sense that he was not *sensu stricto* a philosopher. Khoruzhy also does not refer to him in his work *After the Break. Pathways of Russian Philosophy (После перерыва. Пути русской философии)*.⁵ He was certainly not an academic philosopher,

¹ The article is partly financed by the National Science Centre, on the basis of decision nr DEC-2012/07/B/HS1/01641.

² С. Булгаков, О. Александр Ельчанинов, "Путь", 1934, no 45, pp. 55–58.

³ See *Слово о. Сергия Булгакова (сказанное на отпевании тела о. Александра Ельчанинова 27-го августа 1934 г.)*, [in:] *Памяти отца Александра Ельчанинова*, Париж 1935. The same text was later published in the book: А. Ельчанинов, *Записи*, Париж 1935; 4th edition referenced here, Москва 2010, pp. 218–222.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 219.

⁵ The author discusses the "panorama" of philosophic emigration of the representatives of the Silver Age. He writes, with reference to Borys Yakovenko, that the Russian elite of the philosophical Silver Age can be divided into three groups: 1) those that left Russia of their own accord in the years 1914–1924, 2) those that were expelled from Russia, 3) those that died then. Belonging to the first group are: legal theoretician Leon Petrazycki, classical philologist Tadeusz Zielinski, historian of philosophy Vasily Zenkovsky, legal theoretician Mikhail Alekseev, philosopher of the "heart" Boris Vysheslavtsev, existentialist Lev Shestov, philosopher and cultural commentator Eugene Spektorsky, philosophers Sergei Hessen, Fr Mikhail Trubetskoy, Lev Zander, Dmitri Chyzhevsky, and Boris Yakovenko, legal

but rather a pedagogue, and also an historian of religion and philosophy, indeed he studied history. Similarly to many other representatives of Russian social thinking, he made statements on important topics concerning Russian matters, and discussed historiosophical problems. We place him therefore in our study of friendship, the more so that even Bulgakov himself described the feelings that he had for Elchaninov's concept of *philia*, i.e., pure and sincere friendship. The father of Sergei, in his memoirs of the above memoir, writes

sociologist George Gurvitch, cultural commentator and art historian Vladimir Veidlé, and others. To the second group (exiled) belong: Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Nicolai Lossky and his son Vladimir, sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, philosophers Semyon Frank and Ivan Lapshin. While the third group included figures only closely related with philosophy: among them were commentator of Neo-Kantianism and representative of logical idealism V. Savalsky (1873–1915), positivist Eugene de Roberti (1843–1915), theoretician and legal historian Maxim Kovalevsky (1851–1916), Slavophile Vladimir Ern (1881–1917), commentator on German philosophy Mikhail Karinsky, religious philosophers Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919), Jacob Oz (1860–1919), Fr Eugene Trubetsky (1863–1920), Lev Lopatin (1855–1920), lawyer and sociologist Bogdan Kistiakovsky (1868–1920), and others. In the opinion of the author, those who were exiled from Russia are figures of great significance. Their departure signals the end of intellectual development in the fatherland, and the beginning of existence in émigré “dispersion.” The first centre of the Russian Diaspora was Berlin, where already in 1922 they had opened their dual Academy of Religion and Philosophy (founded by Berdyaev in Moscow, too), and a year later the Russian Institute of Science. By 1924 Berlin had become the unmistakable capital of Russian philosophy. Countless philosophical treatises of Berdyaev, Karsavin, and Frank were published there, as well as in the publications of the YMCA-Press, which in 1925 was transferred to Paris. A further centre arose in Prague, and was, moreover, the result of an official programme by the government of Czechoslovakia and the “Russian action” of President Tomáš Masaryk as support and financial help for various forms of education in emigration. There even arose two Russian universities in Prague: The Russian University (1922–1928) and The Russian National University, renamed as the Free University of Russia (1923–1939). Active for some time also were the Russian Pedagogical High School, the Institute of Russian Studies and the Russian Institute of Slavic Studies, and the Historic Archive of Russia Abroad came into being and, as a result of Bulgakov, in 1935 the Russian Museum of Emigration was opened. Of less significance were publishing activities. On the other hand, in Chechoslovakia (in 1923 at a congress of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Pířerov) the activity of the Brotherhood of St Sophia was reinstated (renovated). Bulgakov became its leader. The third centre, the most famous and intellectually fruitful, was Paris, to where Bulgakov made his way in 1925, and a year later Zenkovsky. Already by 1921 the Russian National University had opened, and next in 1924, a filial of the Berdyaev Academy of Religion and Philosophy, whose activity was sponsored by the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), and then in 1925, the Saint-Serge Orthodox Theological Institute, of which Bulgakov became the dean. Paris also became the publishing centre of the YMCA and the organizational centre of the Russian Student Christian Movement, and of the movement of Eurasianism. For more, see С. Хоружий, *После перерыва. Пути русской философии*, Санкт-Петербург 1994, pp. 190–208; idem, *Опыты из русской духовной традиции*, Москва 2005, pp. 335–382; L. Kiejzik, *Sergiusza Bułgakowa filozofia wszechjedności*, Warszawa 2011, passim.

that he had had known him for 30 years and for as many years had loved him. Similarly to Bulgakov himself, even Elchaninov had slowly come to the religious conviction and acceptance of holy orders. Probably the final impetus for this came from a letter from Bulgakov. Tamara Elchaninov⁶ seems to touch upon this in her husband's notes:

I have received a letter from father Sergei Bulgakov, in which he insists that I take holy orders. First it made me feel terrible, so terrible that in a moment you feel that nothing from you matters, that it is destiny. I instantly understood that there was now no return. In other circumstances I might hesitate, but then I had no doubt – I had accepted the decision and it had settled so lightly on my soul, so clearly and joyfully. My activities up till now (teaching and lecturing) no longer satisfy me, the new one has given me hope for a rebirth.⁷

He applied for holy orders in 1926. The ministry gave him a new impulse for action and filled his life with new sense.

Elchaninov taught in two classical grammar schools in Tbilisi, in one class with Vladimir Ern, Pavel Florensky and Mikhail Asatiani,⁸ with all of whom he became friends. They all graduated from secondary school with honours, being awarded gold medals. In the last year at the grammar school (1900) Vladimir Solovyov became a devoted friend; they requested a meeting with him, and read *Critique of Abstract Principles*. Under the influence of his texts, which they became acquainted with and discussed in the Historico-Philosophical Circle, led by history teacher George Likhtman,⁹ they decided to “go to Solovyov” – as they said, i.e., to graduate from a Moscow or Petersburg university. When the train on which the boys were travelling arrived at the station in Rostov-on-Don, they learned of the death of the great philosopher. They did not change their plans, Florensky and Ern got to Moscow, Elchaninov chose the

⁶ Tamara Vladimirovna Elchaninov (1897–1981) – wife of Fr Alexander. They met at the school founded by her father, a general (Levandovsky Grammar School, Tamara was the daughter of the school principal). The entire family had emigrated to France, and lived first in Nice, later in Paris, where Tamara studied iconic painting. After the death of her husband in 1934 she took up the preparation and publication of his *Notes*. For more, see Н. Струве, *Православие и культура*, Москва 2000, pp. 192–195.

⁷ Т. Ельчанинова, *Предисловие*, [in:] А. Ельчанинов, *Записи*, op. cit., pp. 14–15.

⁸ Mikhail Asatiani (1881–1938) – doctor and psychiatrist, after graduating from a Moscow academy he then studied in Switzerland under Karl Gustav Jung. After returning to Russia he worked as a psychiatrist in Moscow and Tbilisi. From 1921 he was director of the School of Psychiatry at the University of Tbilisi, and in 1925 he established the Scientific Institute of Psychiatric Research in his name.

⁹ George Likhtman (1870–1956) – history teacher at two classical grammar schools in Tbilisi, founder of a Historico-Philosophical Circle, whose members were: Vladimir Ern, Pavel Florensky, Alexander Elchaninov. He graduated from the University of Kharkov.

Department of Historical Linguistics at the University of Petersburg. During his studies, he attempted to transfer to Moscow University, unfortunately in vain. However, he corresponded with his friends, exchanged views on class topics, professors, and new books.¹⁰ He called his circle “Solovyovites” – with enthusiastic thoughts of the great philosopher. He kept his letters to Florensky, in which he told him about his acquaintance with Moscow student Turchanin, who was supposed to know all of the works of Solovyov “almost by heart.”¹¹ The whole time he tried to remain close with Florensky, wanted to live next to him, together worked at an Orthodox school, where together with pupils they could cultivate the ground. After graduating from university he returned to the Caucasus, later he entered a religious academy, but did not reach the end of his studies, being called up for military service. On his discharge he did not return to the academy. He started to work first as a teacher, afterwards as the principle of a private grammar school in Tbilisi. One of his female pupils – M. Zernova – remembered the time of her education this way:

Grammar school attracted the most talented teachers, but A. V. Elchaninov was among them the most exceptional and incomparable to any. His manner of teaching, like nothing else at school, gave life to its fundamental idea – to be a school of joy, creativity and freedom. He did not fit in any scheme and grew above the school programme. That time was for us, pupils of Fr Alexander, full of expressive, personal memories, we were charmed by his person.¹²

Later his pedagogical gift was often written about. It is interesting to note that a completely different opinion (speaking volumes in the context of our considerations on friendship and the demands which he put on the friends of Florensky) is stated by Fr Pavel in memoirs already written in exile in 1923 and dedicated to children. It is at least abrasive, in places frankly negative:

it seems to me that I have not met people so inconsistent as he [Elchaninov – L.K.], so light and casually formed through those with whom they have met and who interest him. [...]

¹⁰ During his studies, circa 1902 he met among others Dmitri Merezhkovsky, Zinaida Gippius (writer, literary critic, in private, wife of Merezhkovsky), Vasily Rozanov and Bulgakov; he worked on the publishing of the journal “Novy Put,” and informed Florensky of these acquaintances and work in letters, which can be found in the family archive of Florensky in Moscow.

¹¹ Quoted from Т. А. Шутова, *К истории создания диалога “Эмпирея и Эмпирия” Павла Флоренского*, [in:] *Владимир Соловьев и культура Серебряного века*, ed. А. А. Тахо-Годи, Е. А. Тахо-Годи, Москва 2005, pp. 393–395.

¹² Т. Ельчанинова, *Предисловие*, op. cit., pp. 12–13. It was not possible to determine the names of Elchaninov’s pupils.

[He exploited] his own abilities and mainly desire for entrance to foreign interests, but not with the goodness of heart, only completely, passionately and impetuously wanting to be imbued with them, more deeply than being interested in himself, adjust subtly to them, and again – more subtly than the one with whom they are concerned, express enormous sensitivity, delicateness, attention – in order afterwards, in a short time, to completely lose interest equally in those interests, only just becoming his own, and in matters and in people. At the same time charming and charmed, and even perhaps first of all charmed, and only afterwards, precisely because of his enchantment, charming, Elchaninov very quickly becomes satiated, bored, loses interest and goes away, and doing so in a boorish manner, and in any case – cruelly. [He] needs a constant change of impression, or otherwise he feels weary. Even literally with the most demanding person, the most interesting book, it is difficult for him to sit for more than half an hour, he starts to yawn in an uncontrolled manner, becomes gloomy and tears himself away from the place, in search of new impressions. In those years which I am describing those characteristics of his were not yet so visible and I thought only to myself that they existed. But later they became visible to all, and almost at the same time among all his friends and acquaintances his nickname appeared – butterfly. Indeed, that butterfly jumped from one flower to another, hardly savouring a drop of nectar. If someone had known his true inconsistent character, he might have said – wearied in his flightiness – that relations with Elchaninov were light, pleasant and charming, but only under conditions of disbelief both in his own feelings and in his explanations; in general [it was necessary] to treat a half-hour meeting as a thing-in-itself, not stretching this half-hour either into the past or into the future. And in such situations the butterfly could fly many times to the same place, and everything would have been smoothed out. It was enough, however, for some inexperienced heart to believe that that half-hour was the beginning of something important, [to desire] to fit his own life plans and hopes to that beginning, generally instead of waiting for Elchaninov's move, to surrender himself, as if a drama were beginning, the drama of Don Juan [...]. Without doubt, without exaggeration Elchaninov is Don Juan; but this expression should not be understood in simplistic terms.

In this lack of rusticity is concealed the central bane: Elchaninov shrugged off the possibility of the assessment of his behaviour, and in his own consciousness did not possess sufficient evidence to conclusively convince himself that he himself was completely innocent, but in any case not as innocent as he thought. He avoided closeness with his equals in age and strength, and especially with seniors. He preferred the young, who succumbed to his adoration unconditionally. All of his cleverness he used to charm and strengthen that charm. He put the one with whom he was engaged on a pedestal and fed the inexperienced soul stories with their unrepeatability, exceptionality, with their almost adorable entity, and himself at the same time sucked in the soul, opening before him with trust, which never before had been bestowed upon him. Everything else [...] love and the attention of close ones appeared to be empty, too measured and moderate,

everything which Elchaninov had not weighed his soul with. And he, if he happened to bring that about, started to become bored, cooled down and disposed of it, and if it were possible – did his best to go away and disappear from sight.¹³

And just one more small fragment.

Victory came to him particularly lightly and was most sweet if the victim of love was still quite young, and the younger it was the more desirable. Teenagers, and better children – upon whom above all Elchaninov's attention was concentrated. Everyone around, that is adults (goodness, how very blind those adults!), single-mindedly considered Elchaninov to be a born pedagogue. For his consultations, for his training methods, even simply for his pedagogical advice they clamoured, like a visit to the most famous doctor. [...] In fact, Elchaninov took a child from its family and imperceptibly suggested to it a lack of belief in relations to close ones and taught it to close itself off to them. [...] It was a form of flattery, but not as innocent as it seemed. With broken and departed family relations Elchaninov left the soul in perturbation, the feelings empty and injured, to which were joined the poison of heightened self-criticism and matching demands of attitude to life. Everything which I say here, I understood only later, when we had parted from Elchaninov [...], with my dear departed friend. I call him that because after a painfully experienced separation, and following, after some time, our repeated superficial separation, I could not receive him any other way other than the way one receives the dead.¹⁴

Let us admit that this is not a positive characterization. Quite the contrary, a bitterness can be felt in the words of Florensky, some sort of deep regret. However, no one else has confirmed his judgement and so we really do not know whether this assessment of Elchaninov is not exaggerated. Did something perhaps make him jealous? Or did he perhaps feel too bad, even Bulgakov, that he did not manage to travel abroad, live a quiet life, safely, become involved in teaching and science, while he himself (probably very much an all-round intellectual) suffered many humiliations in the Soviet Union? We do not know. In any case, on the correctness of the above thesis a certain light is cast in the correspondence of Florensky to his wife from October 1934 and it does not make any difference that the opinion of Elchaninov arose earlier.¹⁵ His

¹³ П. А. Флоренский, *Детям моим. Воспоминания давних дней*, [in:] idem, *Имена. Сочинения*, Москва 2008, pp. 830–832.

¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 832–833.

¹⁵ “I was not allowed to write, but also I had nothing, certainly I had not seen anything concrete. On August 16th I left Ruchlov, from 17th [August] to 1st September I was incarcerated in Svobodny. From 1st to 12th of September, in a convoy, I was taken to Medvezhya Gora, and between September 12th and October 12th I was again incarcerated

obsession had started during the time of his studies, and he was imprisoned for the first time in 1906, that is, in the period when for the second time he became close to Elchaninov. If we add that he accepted holy orders in 1911, the full text of the religious-philosophical work entitled *The Pillar and Ground of Truth* (*Столп и утверждение истины*) appeared in 1914, the text *Sketch of the Philosophy of Cult* (*Очерк философии культа*) in 1918, and the work *Imagines in Geometry* (*Мнимости в геометрии*), in which he stands against the heliocentricism of Copernicus (which for the record was satirized) in 1922 – there is nothing strange in the fact that he represented for the Soviet authorities a very suspicious element.

There is yet another explanation. Elchaninov was indeed the kind of person as described by Florensky, but in the times of their shared grammar school education. He wanted to shine, but could not match his class friend, his good manners, and perhaps his personal level of culture, his reading. And such behaviour was meant to supplement his limitations. He too wanted to have real friends, such that would devote everything in the name of friendship. But he simply became dependent on them. He realised that he could lose too much, and not only friends, but the opinion of his group and the community. Hence, he changed, led a fight with himself and won, but the price for it was the cooling of the relationship with Florensky, the loss of his friendship. They remained good colleagues. Evidence for this may be served by a short essay, which arose probably just after his acceptance of holy orders, *What is pride?* (*Что такое гордыня?*).¹⁶ The text is a description of the rise and development of a spiritual disease, which is the *pride* in the title (we can add – against friendship) and carries the impression that Elchaninov is describing himself. It says that the medicine for this disease may be acceptance of holy orders, becoming close to God and working for His praise, and also ecumenical activities. If we

[...], I arrived in Kem on the 13th and at this moment I am here. After my arrival at the camp I was robbed, I experienced an armed attack, there were three axes, but as you see – I rescued myself, although I lost my things and money. [...] The whole time I was hungry and frozen. In general it was considerably harder and worse than I had been able to imagine” (Florensky family archive). See *Переписка В. И. Вернадского и П. А. Флоренского*, “Новый Мир”, 1989, no 2, p. 203.

¹⁶ This text appears in two editions. Tamara Elchaninov placed it in *Notes*, but under another title – *Demonical Stronghold*. *On pride* (*Демоническая твердыня. О гордости*), about which we draw attention to the fact that Russian *гордость* is also pride, haughtiness, and only later hubris. Further, on the part of the Russian Orthodox Church of Jehova’s Witness in Baltimore (USA) the essay appears under the title *Что такое гордыня* (unambiguously hubris, in any case, not pride), and is divided into parts: 1 – Characteristic aspects of pride, 2 – What the course of this spiritual illness is, 3 – How do you recognize pride in yourself?

acknowledge such an interpretation as trustworthy, then that text (wise, well-balanced) we can accept as having forgiven Florensky, although nowhere is his name mentioned.

Those who got to know Elchaninov during the time of his studies, that is later, like Bulgakov, respected him, considered that he was perfect in action, longed to do something which indeed improved interpersonal relations. Bulgakov wrote about him:

he was loved and equally received in the literary circles of Moscow and Petersburg, met with joy everywhere by the appearance of a student with a radiant smile, thoroughly modest, ready to listen and maintain that endless discussion. In circles of friends he was called Eckermann of Vyacheslav Ivanov, and then of father Sergiyev Posad (probably even he himself, jokingly, called himself that).

The beginning of that century in the history of Russian thinking signified the establishment of the Religious-Philosophical Society, first in Petersburg, later in Moscow and in Kiev, in which there were expressed new struggles and explorations, with all of their problems and ideologies. The Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society under the patron of V. Solovyov was founded in 1905 and A. V. Elchaninov became its first secretary [...] and remained in that post as long as it were possible. [...] In those times it was an active voice of Christianity, of the struggle with the god-forsaken intelligentsia – the particular task which fell upon our generation.¹⁷

Bulgakov added that he was the only one among them who understood that they were fulfilling a Christian mission. It is most likely that precisely to this end Elchaninov wrote his short paper *The History of Religion (История религии)*. The text appeared in 1909 in Moscow. Added as an appendix to it was an article by Bulgakov *On the Contradictions of the Contemporary Atheistic World View (О противоречивости современного безрелигиозного мировоззрения)*. Without doubt the publication benefited from this. Bulgakov says in the article that Christianity is not solely a religion of the educated and philosophers. It is equally accessible in terms of belief to everyone, to St Augustine and to the herdsman, to Kant and to Russian peasants.¹⁸ And the Russian lack of belief is a yearning for a new heaven and a new earth, that is, a new belief, but a naive one.¹⁹ For it is not possible to lead life solely in the immanent sphere, without

¹⁷ С. Булгаков, О. Александр Ельчанинов, op. cit., pp. 57–58.

¹⁸ Quoted from С. Н. Булгаков, О противоречивости современного безрелигиозного мировоззрения, [in:] А. В. Ельчанинов, *История религии: С приложением статьи проф. Булгакова*, Москва (without year), p. 212.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 217.

any connection to that which is transcendental. And it has no significance whether we will think of ourselves as anthropoid apes, a cluster of material in the cosmos, a reflection of economic relations, a machine, no matter what, we remain that which made us the “hands of the Creator.”²⁰ Therefore, he asserted, if we abandon religion, immediately we will replace it with some new religion: reason, socialism, humanity, superman, etc. But that however does not lead to the automatic liquidation of poverty, it does not remove doubt, it does not give an answer to the question of evil. Science too does not simplify this task, for it is itself a kind of belief. Therefore it is possible for belief to replace science. And if science can throw off scepticism, then belief with its dogmas is free from its danger. It is also necessary to avoid the individualism of intelligence, for it leads to the automation of society. Only the strength of everyone, the strength of the Vatican Council, Christians, and thus communes, collectively will lead us to an escape from the times of hopelessness, into which Russian habits have fallen. The age of freedom, equality, brotherhood, optimism and wealth will not come, however, by themselves, or as a result of accepting economic truths.²¹ It must go to a rebirth of belief, to a rebirth of Christianity, Bulgakov emphasizes, which in turn will lead to the healing of the soul of the nation. And it is this which is the task of the intelligentsia. In this alone will be decided the future of Russia, its development or collapse.

For part of the Russian nation, the period between the two Russian revolutions was fatal. People like Elchaninov (according to the opinion of Bulgakov), as well as his society, attempted to give their actions an organizational framework. A secular movement of “followers of the belief” arose, that is, a secular “pastoral.”²² It was a handful of friends who managed however to achieve a great deal. And then afterwards the hell of Bolshevism was unleashed and their paths divided. One travelled across the ocean, another died, the memories were effaced. Elchaninov travelled to Nice, afterwards settled in Paris, worked alongside professors at the Saint-Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, where he educated and taught. One of his greatest passions became the Russian Student Christian Movement (PCXII),²³ with

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 219.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 229.

²² Т. Ельчанинова, *Предисловие*, op. cit., p. 12.

²³ After the October Revolution about 3 million people (for various reasons) found themselves beyond Russian borders. As a result, in all European capitals various kinds of societies and associations, including religious ones, started to function. In 1921, at the congress of the World Student Christian Federation in Beijing the Russian organization of students formed one loose organism. In turn, in 1923 (1st – 8th of October), with the financial help of the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association), in the town of Pířerov (Tchechoslovakia) it led to a founding congress of the majority of Russian Christian

whom he began to cooperate again in Russia. Each year he participated in the trips of the Movement, we should add, together with Bulgakov, who also engaged himself in Elchaninov's work. There are well-known texts which he wrote specially with young believers in mind. He directed to them letters full of advice, e.g., about such things as reading every day at least a few Evangelical verses, as well as treatises dealing with sacred lives; he explained about the sense of religious fasting, and about confession. Elchaninov was well aware of new trends in literature, of that which was modern. In *Letters to the Youth* (*Письма к молодежи*) he spoke on the theme of the contemporary crime story. He said that such literature was "stupid, boring, mediocrity, without any talent," and a specially prepared venom for the young reader.²⁴ In turn, the

youth organizations in Europe. In this way a movement arose whose representatives spoke of their Orthodox orientations. In the work of the first congress of the Russian Student Christian Movement (PCXД) an active part was played by Russian religious activists: Bulgakov, Kartashev, Afanasyev and others. The Russian Student Christian Movement (PCXД) brought together people of different political outlooks (from monarchists to socialists), it was not structured by Church authorities. Its central idea was to "churchified" culture and life, and the fundamental organizational form became the "orthodox brotherhood." In 1925, in France, there was a second congress of the Movement, which was dominated by discussion around the appearance of Berdyaev and the Bishop Benjamin (Fedchenkov) speaking on the means of envisioning the Christian mission in the contemporary world in the face of the new political order. Berdyaev saw in Christianity the tools for changing the world, while Benjamin considered that as the utopian dreaming of the Russian intelligentsia. He emphasized the subjective play on the road to asceticism. The congress made a positive recommendation and in the same year, in Paris, the Saint-Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute opened, quickly becoming one of the spiritual centres of Russian emigration. Moreover, in order to consolidate Russian youth in emigration, the monthly journal "Herald of the Russian Christian Movement" (ВРХД) was constituted. The journal quickly became the "megaphone" of the Movement, presenting its ideologies. Its aim became "the uniting of believing youth in the serving of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and recruiting the doubting and disbelieving to the belief in Christ" (from the Statute of the Russian Student Christian Movement 1959). It is worth adding that the "Herald" was published in Paris in the years 1925–1939 and 1945–1947, afterwards in München in 1949, again in Paris in the years 1950–1952, later in Paris – New York in the years 1953–1974 and from 1974 in Paris – New York – Moscow. It was variously called too, which might cause specific editorial problems. The following reminder will be useful: "Herald of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Western Europe", 1925–1926; "Herald of the Russian Student Christian Movement", 1926–1927; Religious-Public Monthly "Herald. Organ of the Russian Christian Movement Abroad", 1928, no 3; "Вестник = Le Messenger. Organ of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Western Europe", 1928–1929; "The Herald of the Russian Student Christian Movement = Le Messenger", 1930–1936; "The Herald. Organ of the Orthodox Public Life", 1937–1939; "The Herald. Organ of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Germany", 1949; "The Herald of the Russian Student Christian Movement", 1950–1974; "The Herald of the Russian Christian Movement" – from no 112/113 for 1974 up to today.

²⁴ Quoted from А. Ельчанинов, *Из писем к молодежи*, [in:] А. Ельчанинов, *Записи*, op. cit., p. 148.

young priest gave advice on how to conduct the Christmas Day service, how to hold a discourse on suffering, what to tell a young married couple, how to behave during preaching, in which he referred to the comments of Bulgakov.²⁵ He died on September 24, 1934, a few days after moving to Paris, as the result of a stomach ulcer which flared up suddenly and quickly led to the collapse of his internal organs.

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²⁵ Quoted from *ibidem*, pp. 169–182.

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The Anthropological Project of S. L. Frank

S. L. Frank (1877–1950), one of the most profound representatives of the philosophy of All-Unity in Russian philosophy, was a very versatile thinker. Yet it is symbolic that his whole creative activity is framed by the two books devoted to one subject – man. In 1916, Frank wrote *Man's Soul. An Introductory Essay In Philosophical Psychology* (published in 1917) and in January 1949, a year before his death, he finished working on *Reality and Man* (published in 1956).

In the book published in 1916, Frank pointed out the absence of a certain acknowledged study which dealt with “the essence of man’s soul and the role of man and his spiritual life in the system of existent things,”¹ “the soul’s relation to other forms of being.”² According to Frank, this gap could be filled by philosophical psychology which he understood as philosophical anthropology. In his views he was a step ahead of M. Scheler, whose ideas published in *The Human Place in the Cosmos* (1928) won him recognition as the founder of philosophical anthropology. Frank claimed that modern European philosophy, which was developing mainly along the lines of epistemology, had lost sight of living man. To counteract this tendency the Russian thinker contended that “to live is more important than to perceive.” Frank saw his goal in designing a philosophical theory of man’s mental life which, firstly, could illuminate the foundations of the absolute integrity of man and, secondly, could reveal man’s mental life as a special form of being. In the latter, Frank’s idea was close to Heidegger’s philosophy of existentialism.

The two tasks emphasized by Frank were interrelated. According to Kant, the soul as the ultimate unity of all subjective ideas cannot be a part of any experience and, consequently, can only be understood as an idea of the reason. For a religious philosopher like Frank, a certain way to perceive the soul through experience is through religious conscience, which opens “the soul alive.”

¹ С. Л. Франк, *Душа человека. Опыт введения в философскую психологию*, [in:] idem, *Предмет знания. Душа человека*, Санкт-Петербург 1995, p. 421.

² Ibidem, p. 445.

However, another kind of experience is essential if the goal is to study the soul in its integrity, not limiting oneself to separate “mental phenomena” explored by experimental psychology. “Our aim is not to preach, cherish faith or create art – Frank remarks – but to *cognize*; and we want to cognize not the exposure of the soul in the external world of objects, not its sensual and material shell, but its core, the essence of mental life as it exists.”³ Frank considers the perception of life opening to a person during self-cognition to be the kind of experience in which the soul as the essence of mental life is disclosed for cognition. The soul, the philosopher contends, is neither a substance, nor an immortal entity, but “what all the people call themselves.”⁴ This revelation of self to oneself is the “living knowledge” which comes from the depth of life itself and which, according to Frank, encompasses our whole inner core.⁵

The theory of “living knowledge” produced by Frank develops the methodology of the phenomenological analysis of human life in line with Russian philosophical tradition, presented by Aleksey Khomyakov’s *zhivoznanie* (“living knowledge”) and Vladimir Solovyov’s *tselnoye znanie* (“integral knowledge”). Yet in contrast to both Husserl and Heidegger, Frank’s phenomenology appeals to man’s living inner experience and aims to preserve ingenuousness of perception while describing the phenomena of psychic life. As a result, man in Frank’s philosophy appears not as a subject (as *cogito*, the carrier of all *cogitationes*, or as *Dasein*, differentiating things and being), but as a special dimension of being, different from the measurement of objects in time and space, as “something that he is *for himself*.”⁶

Something “that a person is *for himself*” is disclosed when any perception of a person is taken not as a perception of something (phenomenological reduction), but as a perception in itself, in other words, as life or being. This is the discovery point of a special world – the world of mental life, the substratum of the conscience, “the living, real point of being which differs from the rest of the world since it is the point where being *exists imminently for itself* and because of this is truly *unconditional*.”⁷ Mental life is the central subject of analysis in *Man’s Soul*. Although Frank’s focus refers his research to the realm of psychology, the Russian philosopher defines his perspective on mental life as philosophical psychology. His attention is focused on the integrity of mental

³ Ibidem, p. 429.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 434.

⁵ See S. Frank, *Reality and Man. An Essay on the Metaphysics of Human Nature*, trans. N. Duddington, New York 1950, p. 17.

⁶ С. Л. Франк, *Душа человека*, op. cit., p. 466.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 493.

life which determines the integrity of a man as a person. This idea connects Frank's philosophical psychology with the problems of anthropology.

As Frank remarks, we often want to know what this person is like. Then suddenly a word or a gesture discloses the essence of his soul, and we predict his behavior and his attitudes thereafter. This integrity of a person, the conscience of his Self which is "suddenly" disclosed, is given, according to Frank, as a primordial unity. One "does not need an overview of the whole array of its temporal manifestations"⁸ and it is rooted in the nature (core) of a person's mental life. Mental life is the real force which carries self-assertion of the real Self, the reality of the person. The basic feature of mental life is its immeasurability. As Frank contends, it is characterized with oneness, totality, formless unity. It is pure potency, the material which can acquire any shape of conscious life. It has limits neither in time, nor in space. Consequently, one cannot tell about a man as a person "*where* he is, or *when* or how *long* the processes in his life are taking, because he is nowhere and everywhere, always and never – in a sense that these parameters cannot be applied to him."⁹

Mental life as pure potency is an opportunity for a personality's integrity, but not yet its actuality. The latter is established when the element of mental life is influenced by

a certain supreme and authentic center. This center is both the nucleus point and the magnetic force shaping the empirical core of mental life which is defined as our "*I*."¹⁰

It is this force that gives us the chance to understand what the soul is. According to Frank "The soul is not some special thing or substance, neither is it an actual separate center of forces, affecting the element of psychic life from the outside: it is the goal-oriented shaping energy of psychic life itself, understood as unity."¹¹

Frank constructs a harmonious speculative model of a person's soul which comprises the common phenomena of people's spiritual life. It includes, for example, the battle of passions as a part of identity formation, when "noble passions" shape the area of patrimonial life (marital love, patriotism). It also includes the two centers of mental unity – the sensual/emotional center (the power of flesh) and the volitional/supersensory center (duty, choice). Finally, it includes the supreme level – the directing ideal/reason principle

⁸ Ibidem, p. 433.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 466.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 533.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 541.

or the spiritual principle (moral order, “I want,” “I can”). Frank’s exploration of immediate ordinary experience paints a truthful and appealing picture of the soul, however, it seems to have limited theoretical value. The philosopher’s use of introspection in descriptions of mental life created conditions for the perception of oneself, but did not provide methodological tools for organizing the process of introspection as well as for the analysis of the introspection data. Yet, an important theoretical contribution of Frank’s philosophical psychology was the characterization of mental life as a dynamic, goal-oriented formation. The dynamic character of mental life, its variability, orientation and focus on the future is its fundamental ontological characteristic. It is this focus on the future, “the making of the future itself” which is, according to Frank, the entelechy of mental life, its inner orientation on the goal which generates the unity of man’s soul. It is symptomatic that Frank’s theory about the element of mental life and its manifestations described in his book in 1917, appeared simultaneously with the literary works by Marcel Proust and James Joyce, both of whom seemed to plunge into the similar kind of reality in their *In Search of Lost Time* and *Ulysses* respectively.

Frank worked with anthropological themes even closer in his later book *Reality and Man*. While in *Man’s Soul* the problems of anthropology were explored from a psychological perspective, in the later work of 1949 they were discussed from the standpoint of the metaphysics of human beings. The former book by Frank was mainly concerned with the problem of man’s integrity as the integrity of his mental and spiritual life, while the latter was about the problem of man’s journey (exposure) to one’s genuine being.

Frank distinguishes the notions of actuality and reality. Actuality comprises both the external and internal world, given to people empirically, while “reality reveals to as the primary meaning of *being*,” it is the ideal being, where the thought and the thinkable coincide, it is the extratemporal unity of the living reality’s actual totality.¹² Under these conditions, man becomes a part of two worlds. Through the life of the body and the life of soul (which is determined by bodily processes and is on the whole subjected to natural mechanisms) he belongs to the world of “objective actuality.” Through his self-being disclosing to itself as a reality of itself “man belongs simultaneously to two worlds.”¹³ Man can only achieve the totality of his being through his simultaneous belonging to these two heterogeneous worlds.

However, it is not this duality which determines man’s core. His core is connected with his ability *to judge* and *to evaluate*. The presence of this ability

¹² Cf. S. Frank, *Reality and Man*, op. cit., p. 33.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 110.

means that man is capable of distancing himself from everything that actually exists. Frank suggests:

Man's being consists in transcending, in every moment of his conscious existence, all that is given as a fact. Apart from such transcendence, self-consciousness that constitutes the mystery of man as personality is unthinkable.¹⁴

The genuine reality of *I*, Frank argues, is beyond any doubt. It is ascertained by living knowledge, genuine observation. Yet this life of *mine* which opens to me from the inside is not the one and only reality, because the basic reality (my *I*) is naturally characterized by the awareness of its boundaries as well as by the urge to transcend one's own boundary. "To be conscious of a limit and to transcend it means in this case one and the same thing,"¹⁵ the Russian philosopher contends. The distinction of a boundary as an essential feature of man's being is a fundamental point of Frank's anthropological theory. This notion discloses the metrical character of the space of man's being. "No" and dissection (difference) become meaningful and relevant owing to the presence of a boundary in this space. Frank claims that when we say the horse is not a ruminant animal and the whale is not a fish, these negative definitions are not concerned with the internal positive content of the real objects. However, negation, separation, denial become a meaningful characteristic for people and their world of cultural phenomena. Cultural values exist and acquire their meaning through contrast; apophatic theology establishes the cognitive value of negation. A man as an individual asserts himself in the apophatic domain through negation, denial, restraint.¹⁶ Difference, or as Frank puts it, "dissection" embraces negation as its assertion, and difference is an essential feature of man's world.

Boundary space generates meaningful being and transcendence as a mode of man's existence in the world of meaningful being. In this space "each part of it manifests itself just as a part of whole which includes it; hence, that which is external to it constitutes its being, no less than that which belongs to it."¹⁷ The idea of boundary is also important in reference to time. The instant of the present is the boundary between the past and the future as well as their inseparable link exposing man to the boundless overarching totality of

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 112.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 25.

¹⁶ For more information about the assertion of individuality in the domain of negation or in the space of Dante's coordinates, see: W. A. Koniew, *Współrzędne Dantego (metoda określania człowieka w istnieniu)*, "ΣΟΦΙΑ", 2011, vol. 11, pp. 53–73.

¹⁷ S. Frank, *Reality and Man*, op. cit., p. 26.

time. Thus, transcending not only refers to dissection from the Other, but also – and to a greater extent – it refers to involvement with it. This idea is especially important for Frank as a religious philosopher. According to Frank, if a person thinks about himself as an individual, a creature standing out from the facts of objective reality and surpassing them in depth and significance, it means “that he *has* a home in another sphere of being, that he is, as it were, a representative in this world of a different and wholly real world principle.”¹⁸ This constitutes the only, but in fact, quite appropriate “evidence of God’s reality.” “The apprehension of the reality of God is, thus, immanently given in the apprehension of my own being as a person,”¹⁹ the philosopher claims.

This depth and individuality, this genuine reality opens to man during the experience of creative inspiration, when the superhuman creative impulse is mixed with human creative effort and is merged with it (this idea, expressed by Frank, is in line with the major claim of the whole of the Russian religious philosophical tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries).²⁰ Every human soul, every person is given the ability to feel vaguely, but unmistakably, this creative effort inside of himself. Developing this impulse, a person asserts his individuality. The journey to oneself as a journey to the genuine reality is, according to Frank, the realization of man’s ontological mission.

Thus, St Augustine’s *transcende te ipsum* is expressed in a new way – *transcende ad se ipsum*.

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¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 104.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 106.

²⁰ Cf. ibidem, p. 137.

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Lev Shestov: Between Scripture and Nietzscheanism

Shortly before his death in 1938 Lev Shestov stated the three sources that inspired his thought – Shakespeare, Kant and Scripture.

For some reason Shestov does not mention Friedrich Nietzsche, yet another figure that was at least as important in shaping his views as the Scripture. Shestov refers to Nietzsche in his earliest original works *Good in the Teaching of Count Tolstoy and F. Nietzsche (Philosophy and Preaching)* and *Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche (the Philosophy of Tragedy)*.

It was Nikolai Berdyaev, Shestov's friend and eternal opponent, who made the most definitive statement concerning the influence of Nietzsche on Shestov. "Nietzsche was closer to him than the Bible and he remains the chief influence on his life," he wrote. "He makes a Biblical transcribing of the Nietzschean theme, of the Nietzschean struggle with Socrates, with reason and morals in the name of 'life.'"¹ But can the Bible be a vehicle for Nietzsche's views?

Berdyaev's words merit attention, for there are similarities between his and Shestov's creative biographies. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries Russian religious philosophy experienced an upsurge which V. Zenkovsky described in his *A History of Russian Philosophy* as "a religious-philosophical renaissance." But he notes that "revolutionary-mystical elation" did not only bring the intelligentsia closer to the church tradition, but also distanced it from it.

Zenkovsky's main criterion in assessing the views of Berdyaev and Shestov is their attitude to *secularism*. Although in the West Berdyaev is often considered to be a representative of "Orthodox philosophy," Zenkovsky writes,

¹ Н. А. Бердяев, *Лев Шестов и Киркегор*, [in:] *Н. А. Бердяев о русской философии*, Свердловск 1991, vol. 2, p. 98. The English translation: N. A. Berdyaev, *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard*, trans. Fr S. Janos, [in:] http://www.berdyaev.com/berdiaev/berd_lib/1936_419.html (20.03.2014).

the rich world of patristic thought was alien to him although he showed an interest in it at a certain period. However, having assimilated some features of Orthodoxy, Berdyaev did not deem it necessary to take into account the Church tradition...²

In his quest for a new religious consciousness Berdyaev indeed differed from Shestov who sought to go back to the sources rather than move forward. For Shestov the mission of philosophy is to revive the old faith lost in the rush for the achievements of reason and progress.

In his assessment of Shestov's teaching, Zenkovsky proposes to depart from established ideas. Shestov himself, and some of his friends, he writes in *A History of Russian Philosophy*, likened their constructs to the fashionable Existential philosophy, but "with the exception of some motives Shestov's work veers away from Existentialism (in both its forms, atheistic and religious)."³ Zenkovsky strives to represent Shestov as an Orthodox philosopher and thus oppose him to the religious romantics of the early 20th century.

On the one hand, Berdyaev considers Shestov to be a religious reformer who clothes Nietzscheanism in Biblical garb. On the other hand, Zenkovsky sees Shestov as a religious conservative who goes back to Biblical foundations. But perhaps Shestov's teaching, as distinct from Berdyaev's overt reformism, is *hidden revisionism* whose danger Father Vassily (Zenkovsky) underestimated?

"If you were to ask Berdyaev," Shestov writes, "hence he knows all this, he would calmly refer you to gnosis: all this is known to him from experience – not, to be sure, natural but 'spiritual' experience."⁴ Shestov notes that for Berdyaev the existential truth remains knowledge and needs understanding, as was the case in the Gnostic heresy at the time of early Christianity.

This is a far cry from the existential truth as interpreted by Shestov who repeats Kierkegaard's words to the effect that while Greek philosophy began with "wonderment," the Existential philosophy begins with despair. "The existential philosophy," Shestov stresses,

is a philosophy *de profundis*. This philosophy does not ask, it does not inquire, but appeals, by enriching thinking with a dimension that is completely alien and incomprehensible to speculative philosophy. It awaits an answer not from our reason, not from insight – but from God, Who rules over the present as well as over the past and the future.⁵

² В. В. Зеньковский, *История русской философии*, vol. 2, part 2, Ленинград 1991, p. 80.

³ Ibidem, p. 82.

⁴ L. Shestov, *Speculation and Revelation*, trans. B. Martin, Athens, Ohio 1982, p. 237.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 249.

We are talking about faith which is capable of bringing back what is irretrievably lost. When discussing this theme Shestov constantly turns to Kierkegaard as the “father” of Existentialism.

He had never read him before, writes Berdyaev in an article titled *The Fundamental Idea of the Philosophy of Lev Shestov*, he knew him only by hearsay, and did not even consider perchance the influence of Kierkegaard on his thought. But when he read him, he became then deeply agitated, he was struck by the closeness of Kierkegaard to the fundamental theme of his life.⁶

Kierkegaard in his time had renounced his bride Regine and hankered for his lost happiness all the rest of his life. Students of Shestov’s life and work note the trauma he experienced when he lost his son during the World War I. It is impossible to give back Kierkegaard his bride and Shestov his son. That is why both desperately look at the figure, not only of Abraham, “the knight of faith,” but at the Biblical Job who managed to accomplish the inconceivable through his faith. “The patronage of Job” means the possibility to retrieve what has been lost contrary to the laws of the earthly world, i.e. by force of a miracle that only God can accomplish. But Job is a symbol of *humility* and *unselfishness*, and it is here that Shestov’s original interpretation of the Book of Job begins.

Shestov repeatedly quotes Kierkegaard’s words renouncing Hegel’s speculative philosophy in favor of “the particular thinker” Job who is first mentioned by Kierkegaard in his work *Repetition*.

In 1933–1934 Shestov wrote a major work called *Kierkegaard and Existential Philosophy: Vox Clamantis in Deserto* whose very title (*A Voice in the Wilderness*) does not suggest that Job was a model of humility and deference to God. The furious cries of despair that Job emits as he sits in ashes and scratches the scabs on his body with shards are “the voice in the wilderness.” As interpreted by Shestov, Job’s faith turns from patient obedience into *demanding protest*. To Shestov, Job’s wailing in the desert conveys not only his desperate faith in God, but also his desperate faith in himself.

Shestov is convinced that extreme suffering liberates man from the power of reason, morality and culture in general. He often uses Kierkegaard’s expression “dropping out of omnitude.” To Shestov, omnitude means the laws of logic and morality espoused by Job’s friends. But the horrors of life have plucked Job out

⁶ Н. В. Бердяев, *Лев Шестов и Киркегор*, op. cit., p. 104. The English translation: N. A. Berdyaev, *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard*, [in:] http://www.berdyaev.com/berdiaev/berd_lib/1938_439.html (20.03.2014).

of society. He has remained alone with his suffering and with God. Only his desperate egoism can turn out to be a “repetition.”

Anyone who has read Shestov’s early works will readily hear in these cries the voice of “the underground man.” But Job’s faith, like the state of Dostoyevsky’s “underground man,” remains an enigma without Nietzsche, whose work reflected the underlying processes in 19th and 20th century culture.

In 1929 Shestov wrote that “Nietzsche is far more significant than Kierkegaard,”⁷ and this despite the high praise he won from the Germans. To bolster this argument, let us trace the transformation of Shestov’s views under the influence of Nietzsche from the “philosophy of tragedy” to the “philosophy of the absurd.”

Early on in his creative biography, Shestov declared his intolerance of a life filled with “horrors” and suffering. The young writer was haunted by the image of a brick that breaks loose from a house cornice and cripples a man. The image conveys man’s dependence on chance. But if a fortuitous incident cannot be avoided it should be *justified*. By comparing *Hamlet* and *King Lear* he concludes that suffering ennobles.

Already at that early stage in his career Shestov’s views are a “philosophy of tragedy.” By turning to Shakespeare Shestov attempts to build a *cosmodicea* in which a tragic chance that ennobles a person is no longer a chance. That early work is very revealing in reconstructing his philosophical biography. In his work *Shakespeare and his Critic Brandes* Shestov is still close to the Stoics who maintained that human suffering was justified by cosmic harmony. However, there is not a trace of this idea in Shestov’s next two works that appeared for the first time under his penname.

His acquaintance with the work of Nietzsche turned Lev Shestov into a fierce opponent of Leo Tolstoy. Some of the most powerful pages in his early works, like in those of Nietzsche himself, inveigh against the pious morality of pity.

To pity a person, writes Shestov, means to admit that he can no longer be helped by other means. But why not say this openly, why not repeat after Nietzsche a hopelessly sick man must not wish to be a physician.⁸

Good is a synonym of human impotence. Its mission is to provide support for a mediocre man.

⁷ See Л. Шестов, *Киркегард и экзистенциальная философия (Глас вопиющего в пустыне)*, Москва 1992, p. 240.

⁸ L. Shestov, *Dostoevsky and Nietzsche: The Philosophy of Tragedy*, trans. S. Roberts, [in:] idem, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche*, Athens – Ohio 1978, p. 306.

At every step Shestov uses a literary device instead of serious argumentation, and this is a lesson he has learned from Nietzsche. Both consciously challenge logic with an artistic image capable of evoking an *experience*. This is one distinction of the “philosophy of tragedy” from speculative philosophy. Reflecting on the futility of the morality of pity Shestov essentially leaves a suffering individual face to face with his misery. On the one hand there is the world with its piety and morality and on the other, the suffering individual.

Let it be noted that Shestov does not link the life prospects of a suffering individual to salvation of the soul in the traditional Christian spirit. The main thrust of Shestov’s argument is that a suffering individual drops out of the familiar system of coordinates and therefore *has the right* to be egoistic. How the critique of hypocritical morality morphs into a preaching of egoism will be seen from Shestov’s analysis of the novels of Leo Tolstoy which he contrasts with the work of Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

According to Shestov, in *Anna Karenina* the false cultural norms seek to prevail over real life. The great writer sacrificed the happiness of one person in the name of rectitude and law. But their power over man, Shestov notes, is relative even in Tolstoy’s own work. Reflecting on the epilogue to *War and Peace*, Shestov writes:

The healthy instinct must show man the right way. One who allows himself to be so far tempted by the doctrine of duty and virtue, that he lets life pass him by and will not, at the right moment, defend his rights is a barren blossom.⁹

Shestov believes that Sonya in *War and Peace* is “a barren flower” because she only looks like a human being but is not a human being.” Not so Natasha Rostova and Princess Maria for whom virtue is but an external aspect of being. They *try* “to be good,” but essentially they are not. When it comes to the crunch, both heroines, so Shestov believes, do not miss their chance to “be happy.”

Let us remember that Shestov’s philosophy was a “philosophy of tragedy” from the start. *Anna Karenina* gained the right to break the law through her suffering. The interpretation of the character of Natasha Rostova, however, reveals a different and hidden meaning of Shestov’s “philosophy of tragedy.” Comparing *Karenina* and *Rostova*, Shestov declares for the first time that opposition to Good and Truth is inherent in man. Already in the work on Tolstoy the image of man assumes features of duality. Egoism is sometimes treated as inherent in man and sometimes as the result of incredible suffering.

⁹ L. Shestov, *The Good in the Teaching of Tolstoy and Nietzsche: Philosophy and Preaching*, trans. B. Martin, [in:] idem, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. 16.

A similar ambivalence marks Shestov's view of human existence which is now morbidly tragic and now, on the contrary, is vibrant with healthy life.

Tolstoy and Nietzsche, according to Shestov, valued opposite qualities in Dostoyevsky's work. "The souterrain meditations of the first part of *Crime and Punishment* were not at all alien to Nietzsche," Shestov writes.

Since he had become hopelessly sick and could no longer consider the world and men except from the depth of his souterrain existence, he accustomed himself to replace real power with meditations on power. He willingly forgave Dostoyevsky for the second part, the expiation, for the first part, the crime. Tolstoy, on the other hand, pardoned the first part for the second.¹⁰

Shestov considers *Notes from the Underground* to be a turning point in Dostoyevsky's spiritual journey when "the underground man" draws his conclusions from the experience of the "humiliated and the insulted." He was always unhappy about the "laws of nature." Therefore the "underground man" renounces the universe. He famously tells Lisa "I'll tell the world to go to hell so that I could have tea." But what does the individual have to show for him? The idea of man as the criterion of all things is carried to its logical limit. The human self is *its own measure* and no one and nothing can dictate to it.

Rodion Raskolnikov commits murder in order to affirm his romantic exclusiveness that elevates him above the common run of men. But "the underground man" is ordinary. That is why he counterposes banal physical needs to rules and the whole world. The protest is commensurate with the magnitude of the personality. A cup of hot tea stands in the centre of the empty "universe" whose name is "the underground man."

Shestov's book about Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche contains harbingers of the next stage in his evolution, that is, the "philosophy of the absurd." Features of the man wailing in the wilderness are already discernible in "the underground man." Indeed, according to Shestov, there is an "underground man" in each of Dostoyevsky's characters. Everyone blames the universe for his misery. But that is not all, because according to Shestov, there is a hidden "underground man" in *each* of us. As long as the circumstances were favorable, writes Shestov, could anyone divine "snake's teeth" of egoism in as meek and gentle a person as professor Friedrich Nietzsche?

However, it is the magnitude of Nietzsche's personality that reveals another side to his tragedy. The unique personality of Professor Nietzsche

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 50.

was engendered not by nature, but by 19th-century culture. Nietzsche himself provides a pointer to solving this mystery. In a preface to an article about Wagner he has this to say about himself:

I am just as much a child of my age as Wagner, i.e., I am a decadent. The only difference is that I recognized the fact and struggled against it. The philosopher in me struggled against it.¹¹

It is not for me to judge who prevailed in Shestov's heart determining his interpretation of Biblical faith. One thing that is clear is that his faith is an antipode of any ideals. This "faith," for all the sympathy the Very Reverend Father Zenkovsky felt for Shestov, has nothing in common with Orthodox *sobornost* or with Biblical humility. The foundation of Shestov's faith is the thirst for life and self-assertion. He considers that faith to be God's will. Within that frame of reference the world governed by laws turns out to be the creation of the devil.

In his article *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard* Nikolai Berdyaev asks: "And indeed how can there be with this eternal life the concretely living existences, the eternal life of Job, Socrates, the hapless Nietzsche and the hapless Kierkegaard, and L. Shestov himself?"¹² In the absence of eternity, the meaning of God's actions is reduced to fulfilling human wishes and dealing with earthly misfortunes. "God is the restoring of his beloved son Isaac to Abraham, of oxen and children to Job, the restoring to health of Nietzsche, Regina Olsen to Kierkegaard; God is in that of the poor youth dreaming about a princess should receive the princess, and in order that the underground man can 'drink tea...'"¹³ This traps us in a vicious circle. God's infinite powers serve merely to resolve the finite problems of life here on Earth. Berdyaev understands that such paradoxes arise because the Scripture is incompatible with Nietzscheanism, because a biblical transcription of the "philosophy of life" is impossible. One could go along with Berdyaev that Shestov took from the Bible only what he needed for his theme. "He is not a Biblical man," Berdyaev maintains. "He is a man of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries."¹⁴ It should be added that Shestov is not very helpful in fathoming the Bible, but is very helpful in understanding the evolution of

¹¹ L. Shestov, *Dostoevsky and Nietzsche: The Philosophy of Tragedy*, op. cit., p. 258.

¹² Н. А. Бердяев, *Лев Шестов и Киркегор*, op. cit., p. 99. The English translation: N. A. Berdyaev, *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard*, [in:] http://www.berdyaev.com/berdiaev/berd_lib/1936_419.html (20.03.2014).

¹³ Ibidem, p. 100.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 98.

Neo-Classical philosophy. Berdyaev is right in asserting that Shestov is the mouthpiece of the paradoxical religiosity of the 20th-century man. Only the Nietzschean denial of culture can explain the transformation the spirit of the Scripture undergoes at the hands of Lev Shestov.

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Disputes over the Noetic and Ethical-Religious Concepts of N. O. Lossky in the 1940's in Slovakia

In the history of philosophical thought in Slovakia in the 1940's, noetic issues shifted to the heart of the professional interest of the time. This happened thanks to the stay of the exiled Russian professor N. O. Lossky (1870–1965), who came during World War II from Prague to the Slovak University in Bratislava at the behest of the Slovak president Tiso. Here Lossky began teaching his concept of *intuitive realism* and *metaphysical hierarchical personalism*. During his performance at the Slovak University he settled not only the development of philosophical discourse within the dispute about “noetic realism,” but he also elaborated upon his ethical-religious concept.¹

In the beginning of this paper I briefly introduce the problem of noetic dispute and later I concentrate on explaining Lossky's ethical-religious concept.

The dispute over “noetic realism”

The dispute over noetic realism was based on two different noetic positions, one of which was represented by Igor Hrušovský (1907–1978) and the second by N. O. Lossky. Professor I. Hrušovský, advocate of critical realism and supporter of logical-positivist and structural-scientific orientation represented the counterpart to Lossky's intuitive realism or intuitive noetic position. The dispute can be monitored directly on the basis of the works of both Hrušovský

¹ This concept has covered in Slovak under title *Podmienky dokonalého dobra: Základy etiky* (*Conditions of Absolute Good: Fundamentals of Ethics*, 1944) and *Dostojevskij a jeho kresťanský svetonáhlad* (*Dostoevsky and his Christian Worldview*, 1945).

and Lossky and indirectly through the studies of the authors that were written about it in Slovak philosophy at the time of its inception (e.g. J. Dieška, Š. Hatala²), and nowadays (e.g. Bodnár, T. Münz³).

To understand this noetic dispute better, I will partially present the main features of Lossky's noetical theory. It should be noted, however, that it is a part of his universal philosophical system, which apart from noetics consists of ontology, logic, ethics, axiology, aesthetics and theodicy.

Lossky created his own type of intuitivism,⁴ which tried to get closer to the religious and philosophical principles of the Russian Orthodox mysticism. There were also seen some aspects of Bergson's intuitivism, but also the revival of the special form of platonism and neoplatonism, which was reflected in Lossky's own metaphysical conception.

Lossky's noetics is based on two basic arguments. They were clearly depicted by J. Dieška, who was Lossky's the most important follower in Slovakia. The first noetic argument says that "things of the external world exist independently in the cognitive subject, i.e. they have their own existence, regardless whether they are identified by someone or recognized."⁵ Within this thesis the second argument is related to, which says that: "in the cognition these things are the objects of our cognition themselves so that we recognize them directly, immediately, as they exist independently of our cognition."⁶

While the first argument can be considered as a kind of common noetic basis specific to various forms of philosophical realism (and so of critical and intuitive realism), however the second argument brings controversy and confrontation. In this regard, for example, J. Bodnár adds that above mentioned the second argument is "a bone of contention" because it speaks about the nature of cognition about the nature of cognitive process, and thus separates Lossky's and Hrušovský's statements.⁷

² See Š. Hatala, *Absolútne kritérium pravdy. (Zásadné stanovisko k intuitívnemu realizmu N. O. Losského)*, "Verbum", 1947, vol. II, no 3, pp. 160–165.

³ See T. Münz, *Intuitívny realizmus v kritike marxistických filozofov*, "Filozofia", 1979, vol. 34, no 3, pp. 290–305.

⁴ The base of this concept Lossky declared in his work *Обоснование интуитивизма* (1904) and developed in other works. During his stay in Slovakia he published the book *Kritika noetiky R. Carnapa z hľadiska ideálu poznania (The Critics of Carnap's Noetics from the Point of Ideal Cognition, 1944)* and very important work *Absolútne kritérium pravdy (Absolute Criterion of Truth, 1946)*.

⁵ J. Dieška, *Kritický či intuitívny realizmus*, Bratislava 1944, p. 31.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ J. Bodnár, *Intuitívny realizmus na Slovensku. (O tvorbe J. Diešku a N. O. Losského)*, [in:] *Dejiny filozofie na Slovensku v XX storočí*, eds. K. Kollár, A. Kopčok, T. Pichler, Bratislava 1998, p. 73.

Lossky's goal was to build such a noetic theory which would be purely philosophical and not dependent on non-philosophical researches, for example those which can be found in psychology, physiology, sociology, neurophysiology, and so on. Firstly cognition must be understood as a spiritual act of consciousness. Its relationship to the physical and physiological side is minor. Noetics is actually a theory of truth and its domain is the examination of the structure of consciousness, spiritual activities of consciousness and hence the cognitive process. This is why the noetics should be focused on analysing of spiritual acts, on clarifying of relationship of the subject, object, their coordination and so on.⁸

If we once again summarize Lossky's basic noetic statement of intuitive realism, we see that cognition presents a spiritual act and has a direct nature. Lossky submits that the object, which is known and which we pay our awareness and attention to, is presented in consciousness, is immanent to consciousness, but also is independent from it and transcends the subject of consciousness. It is also our cognition of the object, which is in original fully present in consciousness, and so true cognition. "Objects of outside world, if the acts of awareness and attention are focused on them, they become immanent to my consciousness, but remain transcendent to me, to the subject of consciousness, do not become my psychiatric conditions, but remain a part of the outside world."⁹ This means that Lossky does not admit any mediate cognition, and so he refers his statements to the ontological basis of his world conception as an organic whole, in which everything is intrinsically linked and everything is included, immanent.

At the centre of noetic dispute, as I have already indicated, is particularly the issue of the nature of cognition. Hrušovský, with such interpreted nature of our cognition, disagreed and he was an uncompromising critic of Lossky's noetics. He coincided with him only on the claim that there exists an external world, but denied the possibility of immediate cognition of the ontological nature and quality of the objects of the external world. He claimed that between the outside world and the cognitive abilities of the subject, a barrier exists.¹⁰

If we want to talk about direct cognition, we can do only at the level of sense perception, i.e. at the level of subjective images. Cognition of the external object is mediated by a whole chain of physical, physiological and neuro-psychological

⁸ N. O. Losskij, *Absolútne kritérium pravdy*, Turčiansky sv. Martin 1946, pp. 42–43.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

¹⁰ See I. Hrušovský, *Kritika intuitívneho realizmu. (Príspevok k teórii poznania)*, Trnava 1945 and also the article I. Hrušovský, *Losského teória pravdy*, "Philosophica Slovaca", 1946, vol. 1, pp. 204–213.

action. And this is why there cannot be discussed the object in its origin, in its ontological quality, as Lossky talked about. Let us add that Lossky's intuitive realism was certain guarantee against agnosticism, gnoseologic subjectivism and its possible outlet into solipsism, which according to Hrušovský and his critical realism in noetics is logically possible.

The main ideas of Lossky's ethical-religious concept

The starting position of Lossky's ethical-religious concept is the above-mentioned both intuitive realism and metaphysical hierarchical personalism or ideal-realism. His statement lets him belong to the people of "common sense" since, according to him, it allows him to avoid conflicts among monism, dualism and pluralism, or between materialistic and idealistic extremes and to present the place of "equal" position of ideal and material sphere of being. By the interconnectedness of these two spheres of being Lossky wants to abolish the one-sided metaphysical moralism, but also to offer the perfect *ideal of morality*. It is, however, feasible only in the "Kingdom of God" (i.e. off the ground), where, according to Lossky, not only spiritual but also physical life are subjects of conversion.¹¹ He is convinced that through the path of *moral evolution* the people can elevate to such a state, therefore they can start a journey to deification. However, human history points out that the journey to the ideal state there is no linear "progress" that there are winding roads that in the history we find as the period of decline so improvement. The achievement of above mentioned Kingdom of God, Kingdom of harmony and love becomes the ultimate ideal, the final goal, where an absolute perfection and creative implementation of absolute values are obtained.

Out of the factors mentioned it is evident that Lossky will solve all ethical problems based on the metaphysical assumption *of the absolute perfect existence of the Kingdom of God*, thus assumption, which is anchored in the Christian religion.

Lossky's ethical-religious concept as normative teonomic ethics of love

When we follow the aforementioned procedure right from the very beginning there emerges a simple finding which corresponds to Lossky's unequivocal statement that ethical theory, that he defends, "can be called Christian teonomic

¹¹ N. O. Losskij, *Podmienky dokonalého dobra. (Základy etiky)*, Turčiansky sv. Martin 1944, p. 248.

(God given) ethics of love.”¹² To describe ethics as teonomic means, according to Lossky, that the basic norms of this ethics correspond to God’s will and created order of the world. However, in the present context we come across the problem of interpretation of autonomy and heteronomy of ethics. Lossky does not admit that such ethics would have heteronymous character. He considers it autonomous in the sense of “its norms, for example [...] love your neighbour as yourself,” are binding not only because they are ruled by God, but also because their content is something valuable in itself, and therefore it deserves to be filled even from the point of view of beings, which while wandering deny the existence of God. So it is clear that teonomic ethics consists of the valuable parts of autonomous ethics, avoiding the temptation of pride, hidden in the notion of autonomy as “self-legislation;” strictly speaking, there is no legislation, because moral norms are not created by my will, but they involve a vision of objective values of what it should be. “While my freedom remains untouched: I can express norm, recognize its severity, and yet not to fulfil.”¹³

The interpretation of *obligation* is closely related with teonomic normativity. It turns out that the obligation is actually implicitly included and explicitly expressed in moral norms; therefore to admit the obligation is also a challenge for man to *create freely*. This challenge once again refers to the existence of an absolute moral ideal. Requirements of absolute ideal of perfection are revealed to us by *moral experience*, which incorporates *the voice of conscience* and – according to Lossky – is connected with various ways of *axiological experience*.

The term of axiological experience, and regarding Scheler’s emotional intuitivism, Lossky understands as “immediate perception of objective absolute values in conjunction with high emotions, intentionally directed to them.”¹⁴ While he claims, that the axiological and moral experience is accompanied by *religious experience*, “in which God is revealed as the highest value and the most dignified object of love,”¹⁵ thereby he confronts various forms of ethical relativism which refuses to recognize *the absolute moral good as a measure of morality*.

He also considers that these three forms of human experience are sufficient for practical guidance on moral observance, but the theoretical elaboration of normative teonomic ethics of love requires other sources of leadership, such as philosophical speculation (intellectual intuition) and revelation.¹⁶

¹² Ibidem, p. 56.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 57.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 59.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

Lossky is even convinced that neither objection from the side of existence of many different *codes of morality* can be the obstacle to the existence of absolute moral ideal of perfection, because different codes of morality are only the fractions of absolute perfection or the exchange of absolute ideal with incomplete ideal. They are just cognition of fragments of good and evil.¹⁷ We could add that in principle Lossky coincides with N. Hartmann's opinion, according to whom the ethics has its base in the theory of values and despite the existing pluralism of moralities it must be uniformed above them and in itself.¹⁸

The problem of moral unity and plurality of moralities

We have seen that Lossky thus accepts the existence of different moral codes, which can be observed in various historical periods, and also among certain populations or social groups which favour some values over the others and do not respect the overall ideal of perfection. Nevertheless, we can say that if their errors are only in their *incompleteness and biases* (i.e. in their partiality), so they correspond to the idea of *moral evolution*. It is unable to deny, however, that these partial codes of morality do involve the risk of disruption of relations among people.

If out of the total, harmoniously single ideal of perfection is taken its part, it is hard to refrain from partial disruption of ideal. They lie in the disruption of the values hierarchy, in rejecting of some positive values, even in considering some negative values to be positive, i.e. putting evil in place for good.¹⁹

According to Lossky, as an example there may perhaps serve the interpretation of such a code of morality by which one of the literary figures portrayed in L. N. Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* was governed. It is the well-known figure Vronsky, who is happy, because he is governed by rules which guided him what he should and should not do, although it was apparently "broken" code of conduct, which was violation of the overall ideal of perfection.

Lossky (although he accepts the existence of numerous moral codes) but he is an advocate of *ethical absolutism* in terms of the existence of *moral unity*, which "may provide the unity of action of all human beings and a common system of values,"²⁰ and thus the possibility of *absolute ethics* development.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 79.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 80.

²⁰ Ibidem.

Differences of various moral codes, according to Lossky, can be understood as grades of uplifting to the common goal, to the threshold of the Kingdom of God.

Conclusion

We can conclude that Lossky's philosophy of intuitive realism, which represents the foundation of his extensive lifetime work, overstepped the borders of noetics and gave the basis to his ethical-religious concept. In the time of Lossky's stay in Slovakia he obtained followers²¹ and contributed to the development of philosophical thinking in Slovakia.

If we wanted to express a wider range of objections which were discovered against Lossky's philosophical system, we would have to repeatedly return to the noetical dispute. However, within the ethical-religious concept which is rooted in the Christian religious doctrine, there in particular should be noted the objections that emerged in the context of souls' reincarnation and thus he raised the criticism also from the traditional theological thinking.

On the other hand, from a philosophical point of view we could doubt the justification to call Lossky's ethical system teonomic ethics, as this identification associates the absolutism and identification of his teaching with religious teaching (or with God's will). Lossky alone comments on such a possible reproach in advance by stating that the right ethical system cannot be other than teonomic (which means that in conscience seeking the right path, which corresponds to God's will), but that does not mean that ethical system, which is drawn up by human thinking, would truly reflect God's will.

Although Lossky, as a Christian philosopher, was welcome in the newly created wartime Slovak State, given his reputation as an Orthodox Christian philosopher, the Slovak Roman Catholicism accepted him with a certain reserve. However, the negative approach to Lossky's philosophy was fully manifested three years after the Second World War (i.e. after the establishment of the Communist regime in February 1948), when his works became prohibited in Slovakia and so interest in his philosophy could only be publicly declared after the Velvet Revolution in November 1989.

²¹ Apart from J. Dieška (who later emigrated to the USA) also P. Gula, J. Papin and M. Chladný-Hanoš.

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Vladimir Lossky's Understanding of the Image of God and its Possible Consequences for a Concept of Person¹

1. Philological viewpoint and presentation of the problem

Let us focus our attention on the fact that the prefixes of the words *ὑπόστασις* and *substantia*, namely the prepositions *ὑπό-* and *sub-*, as well as their roots *-στασις* and *-stantia*, could be considered equivalent in Greek (*resp.* in Latin). The word *substantia* (*resp. subsistentia*) would be philologically seen as a precise translation of the word *ὑπόστασις*.² Both substantives originate from the verb *ἵστημι* (*resp. sistere* or *stare*). In this case, the two different Latin verbs correspond to the two voices, active and passive, of the same Greek verb. The meaning of these words is ascribed easily to the Sanskrit root STHA,

¹ Proofreading of the German text: Anna Moik-Stötzer, translation from German: Magdalena Mayrl.

² Cf. Thomae Aquinatis, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, lib. 1 d. 23 q. 1 a. 1 arg. 2 and ad 2: “Praeterea, non subsistit nisi illud quod habet in se esse completum. Sed esse completum non invenitur nisi in particulari; quia universalia non habent esse praeter particularia nisi in anima, quod est esse incompletum. Cum igitur *particulare in genere substantiae dicatur hypostasis, vel substantia prima, videtur quod subsistentia sit idem quod substantia.*” – “Ad secundum dicendum, quod subsistere duo dicit, scilicet esse, et determinatum modum essendi; et esse simpliciter non est nisi individuorum; sed determinatio essendi, est ex natura vel quidditate generis vel speciei; et ideo quamvis genera et species non subsistent nisi *in individuis, tamen eorum proprie subsistere est, et subsistentiae dicuntur*; quamvis et particulare dicatur, sed posterius; sicut et species substantiae dicuntur, sed secundae”, [in:] <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/> (12.01.2014).

which simply means “to stand, to rest, to be situated.” Hence *ὑπόστασις* and *substantia* (resp. *subsistentia*) could be interpreted as “that, what-stands-below,” “that, what-is-situated-under,” “that, what-rest-on-the-ground.” If we translate together with Christoph Cardinal Schönborn – *στασις* as “that, what has a firm standing,”³ we get the formula: “a firm, understanding ground of something.”

A historian of ideas would probably point out one difficulty. He would say that the notions behind the names *ὑπόστασις* and *substantia* were not identical in Christian literature.⁴ When editing the Polish translation of Augustine’s *On the Trinity*, Jan Maria Szymusiak SJ wrote a very interesting epilogue. Among others things one could read:

In Alexandria the representatives of East and West came to an understanding for the first time. Due to his long stay in the West – in Trier, Rome, in Gaul – Athanasius had mastered the Latin language perfectly. The Latin vocabulary, which expressed the Dogma of “God’s *Essence*⁵ in three *Persons*,” did not correspond with the Greek vocabulary. One would notice that by using an own terminology everyone understood the same truth, in fact the one defined at the Council of Nicaea, namely that Christ, the Son of God is God in the same degree as the Father, and that also the Holy Spirit is of the same divine nature as the Father and the Son, although all Three are one single God.⁶

Let us quote together with Fr Szymusiak the words from the Laudation, which Gregory of Nazianzus wrote in honor of Athanasius:

I add yet something that in our times rich in dispute shall be of great benefit. Let Athanasius’ act be a lesson! [...] If the topic of discussion were very important arguments worth to consider, one could take them into consideration. However,

³ Cf. Ch. Schönborn, *God’s Human Face. The Christ-Icon*, San Francisco 1998, p. 20. Nota bene: The English expression “a specific standing” is not exactly up to the German original “fester Stand.” Cf. Christoph Schönborn Kardinal, *Die Christus-Ikone. Eine theologische Hinführung von Christoph Kardinal Schönborn*, Wien 1984, 1998², p. 32.

⁴ There are possible exceptions as well: “Others (St Gregory of Nazianzus, for example) reserve the term “hypostasis” for individuals of a reasonable nature, exactly as Boethius does in his definition of person: *substantia individua rationalis naturae* (and let us note that *substantia* here is a literal translation of *ὑπόστασις*.)” V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, trans. the members of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, New York 1974, p. 116.

⁵ This and any other italics come from me [P.S.].

⁶ J. M. Szymusiak, *Posłowie*, [in:] Św. Augustyn, *O Trójcy Świętej*, trans. M. Stokowska, Kraków 1996, pp. 530–531.

one discusses little words that express the same thought differently. At our place [Greeks] it is spoken piously about *one Essence* [οὐσία as *essentia* – P.S.] and about *three Hypostases* [ὑπόστασεις – P.S.] – the first word expresses *one divine Nature*, the second – *triple properties* [ιδιότητας, therefore more exact translated: “that, which belongs to each of the three individually” – P.S.]. This was exactly the opinion in Italy, but because of the poorness of the language and lack of vocabulary, the word *hypostasis* [*substance/ὑπόστασις* – P.S.] could not be distinguished from the word *essence* [οὐσία – P.S.] and the notion of *three persons* [πρόσωπα – P.S.] was introduced to not take on the notion of the three *essences* [οὐσία as *substantia* – P.S.]. What has happened? – Something very amusing had it not been so unfortunate. A difference in faith appeared where there had only been a controversy on one sound. The proponents of three Persons were called Sabellians, the proponents of three Hypostases Arians: ghosts evoked through the spirit of debate. What came next? – Some dissensions had been added, as usually happens in controversies like that, and some syllables caused the danger of schism of the whole world. Athanasius saw that and, being a real man of God and a great guide of souls, he thought he should not allow such an improper and imprudent rupture in wisdom. He decided to apply his own mode of treatment on this disease. What did he do? – He precisely examined the meaning of the formulas of both sides with great goodness and benevolence in the controversy, and after he could discern that their convictions coincided and their teachings had been faithful to the convictions, he allowed each of them to use their own words, but concerning reality, he brought them together.⁷

It is important to emphasize the opinion of Athanasius, namely that the expression “person” was introduced to the description of the Trinity, because the word “substance,” which philologically corresponds with the Greek word “hypostasis,” can also signify “essence” in Latin. From what has been written above it is easy to conclude Athanasius considered the Greek notion of “hypostasis” equivalent to the Latin notion of “person.” One may also say that it was an attempt to bring into agreement “difference” with an “identity” in the Trinity without taking into account the personal relation, which is introduced through the correspondence existing between the expressions of *persona* and *πρόσωπον*.⁸

⁷ Ibidem, p. 531.

⁸ Cf. G. Greshake, *Der Dreieine Gott. Eine trinitarische Theologie*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2007, pp. 81–84. This is the place to say that *πρόσωπον* is hardly translatable with *persona*. Although one might understand *πρόσωπον* as “something, what-stands-under,” is a face (*resp.* a role) always the face or the role of somebody, who stands deeper as his face or his role. Christophe Cardinal Schönborn quotes Cyril’s of Alexandrien (PG 69, 132AB) Words: “Rightly can we understand the “time of the Father’s counte-

2. Lossky's understanding of image and concept of person⁹

God is in his essence unknowable, hence also his image which reflects in man the divine unknowable fullness preserves the feature of unknowability. "This is the reason – writes Lossky – why it is impossible to define what constitutes the divine image in man."¹⁰ In each instant it has to do with all the infinite goods of God. When man will have them in totality there will still be a difference left: in God they are uncreated whereas in man they are created. Nevertheless, in defining the image one can point to a formal aspect: the becoming alike with the image of God is linked to the exclusion of submission to nature and coercion of nature. It is thus about the notion of virtue which is related to the experience of freedom.

2.1. Juxtaposition of the notion of person and nature

The freedom of the human person is understood as the image of God in man. The notion of person derived from the truth of the Holy Trinity contains the freedom of the person towards nature. Let us remember that Lossky also derives from the Christological dogma the relation of the notion of person to the notion of nature.¹¹ Since the will belongs to the order of nature, only such

nance" as the time of the Incarnation, for the Son, after all, is the face (*prosôpon*) and the image of the Father." Christoph Schönborn Kardinal, *Die Christus-Ikone*, op. cit., p. 83. The Son shows us the Father's Countenance, because he is the Image of the Father. Being the image of the Father he has the countenance of the Father, but he is not Father's person.

⁹ From the books of Lossky mentioned in the bibliography only the following texts have been considering in this study: *Image and Likeness*, [in:] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. the members of the Fellowship of St Albans and St Sergius, Cambridge 1991, pp. 114–134, *The Theological Notion of the Human Person*, [in:] idem, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, op. cit., pp. 111–123, *The Theology of the Image*, [in:] idem, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, op. cit., pp. 125–139, *La théologie de L'Image e la transformation déificatrice*, [in:] idem, *Théologie négative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart*, Paris 1960, pp. 358–369, *L'analogie dans la "transformation en la même Image"*, [in:] idem, *Théologie négative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart*, op. cit., pp. 369–379.

¹⁰ V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, op. cit., p. 118.

¹¹ Cf. P. Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie*, Neuchatel – Paris 1959, p. 72: "Le dogme christologique voit dans la volonté une fonction de la nature. C'est pourquoi l'ascétisme aspire avant tout au renoncement à la volonté propre, à l'affranchissement à la volonté propre, à l'affranchissement de toute nécessité venant du monde et de la nature. Mais c'est s'accomplir la liberté qui, elle, relève de la personne; elle la libère de tout limitation individuelle et naturelle et la rend 'catholique,' dilatée infiniment, 'omnicontenante.'" See also, p. 74: "Le dogme christologique de l'unité de deux natures en Christ se précise dans le dogme de l'unité de deux volontés, et postule comme son implication, l'unité de deux libertés. Il

a person conforms to the notion of a person who is free from her will. "Display of self-will" expresses individual nature and is therefore not to be identified with freedom. Freedom of the person – despite of common understanding – is not an individual freedom; one could also say no isolated, monadic freedom. What is individual belongs to the field of nature and not to the field of person. So-called individual freedom is an apparent freedom: since it belongs to the level of nature it is determined by nature and set by the law of natural necessity.¹²

When a human being sees in another one the image of God – despite the individual nature of the other and the limitations of their own nature – he discovers the nature common to all people and realizes in this way his person. To my own experience of freedom, one could say, does not only belong the appearance of the other on the horizon but also the accordance of his and my personal freedom. This further means that it has to come to an accordance of his and my will which is only possible if we both have set up our private will to the will of God in accordance.

2.2. Individuality of singularized nature and uniqueness of the person in relation to common nature

Putting individuality on the level of nature and not on the level of the person¹³ seems therefore to be the key to the above mentioned concept. Nature is "individual" not the person.¹⁴ So what is person, if not individu-

faut éviter toute confusion entre le terme psychologique de volonté et le terme métaphysique de liberté. La liberté est le fondement métaphysique de la volonté. La volonté est encore liée à la nature, elle est soumise aux nécessités et aux buts immédiats. La liberté relève de l'esprit, de la personne. Quand elle s'élève à son sommet, elle ne désire librement que la vérité et le bien. Dans le plérôme futur, à l'image de la liberté divine, à ce qu'elle désirera, correspondront le bien et la vérité; c'est le sens suprême que vise l'identification paradoxale chez Kierkegaard, de la subjectivité et de la vérité, et qui démontre que la vérité est l'acte de la liberté."

¹² Cf. V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, op. cit., p. 122.

¹³ Cf. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, op. cit., p. 114: "In Trinitarian theology (which is theology par excellence, *teologia* in the true sense of the word for the Fathers of the first centuries) the notion of hypostasis is neither that of an individual of the species 'Divinity' nor that of an individual substance of divine nature."

¹⁴ Cf. J. Maritain, *Christlicher Humanismus*, Heidelberg 1950, pp. 24–25 [after Ch. Kard. Schönborn, *Der Mensch als Abbild Gottes*, Augsburg 2008, pp. 66–67]: "Aber was ist heute der Mensch für das rationalistische und naturalistische Denken geworden? Der Schwerpunkt des menschlichen Wesens hat sich so tief gesenkt, dass es, genau genommen, keine Persönlichkeit mehr für uns gibt, sondern nur die heillose Bewegung von vielgestaltigen Larven der Unterwelt des Instinkts und Begehrens – 'Achronta movebo,' sagt Freud selbst, – und dass alle wohlbewahrte Würde unseres persönlichen Bewusstseins wie eine lügnerische Maske erscheint. Schließlich ist

al?¹⁵ Is she not unique? Lossky, following Gregory of Nyssa, finds that individual beings (*resp.* individuals) are hypostases that belong to the lower level of being. Person by contrast belongs to the spiritual being. Spiritual beings are God, angels and man. The individual characteristics are common to all mankind and belong to his nature, though man as a person is unique. We read:

When we wish to define, “to characterize” a person, we gather together individual characteristics, “traits of character” which are to be met with elsewhere in other individuals, and which because they belong to nature are never absolutely “personal.” Finally, we admit that what is most dear to us in someone, what makes him himself, remains indefinable, for there is nothing in nature which properly pertains to the person, which is always unique and incomparable.¹⁶

dann der Mensch nur der Schauplatz, wo sich eine vorwiegend sexuelle Begierde und ein Urtrieb zum Tode begegnen und bekämpfen [...]. [Wir] wohnen [...] hier einer Zerstreuung, einer endgültigen Zersetzung bei. Dies hindert aber das menschliche Wesen keineswegs, mehr als je zuvor die unumschränkte Herrschaft zu beanspruchen. Aber auch *die individuelle Person* weiß nicht mehr, wohin sie gehört, und sieht sich nunmehr in Auflösung und Zersetzung begriffen. Sie ist reif zur Abdankung (und dennoch: welch neues Aufblühen überall da, wo sie sich abzudanken weigert und weigern wird), *sie ist reif zur Abdankung zugunsten des Kollektivmenschen*, jener großen historischen Gestalt der Menschheit, die Hegel zum Inhalt seiner Theologie erhoben hat. Während sie für ihn im Staat mit seiner vollkommenen Rechtsstruktur bestand, sollte sie dann für Marx in der kommunistischen Gesellschaft mit ihrem immanenten Dynamismus bestehen.”

You could try to prove if Lossky had known Maritain’s text of 1936 while writing his text in 1944. That is for sure: the French intellectual *contra* poses the individual person to the collective person. To the courageous thinking Russian émigré the notion of “individual person” is itself-contradictory. Nature is individual; person on the contrary is incomparable and unique. To my mind, the person is also rather a hypostasis of “being-ness” in communion than a collective person. Due to the ideological power relations of a limited amount of individuals on the majority of society, the uniqueness of the persons in the collective person has to be despised. In this point Christian humanism opposed Marxism. In a more subtle point, Kierkegaard opposed Hegel.

¹⁵ Cf. The Rabbinic text from the book: Christoph Kardinal Schönborn, *Der Mensch als Abbild Gottes*, op. cit., p. 156: “The starting point is God, not man. In the way man was created and in the form that the Creator gave him, two principles find expression – that of *human unity* and that of the *individual worth of each man*. Hence man was created *a single individual* [...] and for the sake of peace among men, that one should not say to his fellow: My father was greater than yours [...] and to declare the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, for a man stamps many coins with one seal, and they are all identical, but the King of kings stamped every man with the seal of the first man, and non is identical with his fellow. Therefore it is the duty of every one to say: For my sake the world was created” (M. Sanhedrin, IV, 5).

¹⁶ V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, op. cit., p. 121.

We should make a remark concerning the indefinability of the person. What is dearest to me in a person, what “makes her herself” I am not capable to define, although I experience “it.” The describable (*περιγραφή* – *perigraphê*), that which has been written (*resp.* drawn) is the character (*χαρακτήρ* – *charactêr*) which belongs, so to speak, to the image and forms the image. Nonetheless “what” an “I” as person is, thus “who” as a personal “I” is, eludes from all description, all painting, all photography and all recording with cameras.¹⁷

I may identify man as an individual by his individual traits, which means to recognize him by his distinctive features. I can perceive a person due to these and not other natural traits but the nature of the person herself remains a mystery to me.¹⁸ You might say: Since the human person¹⁹ reflects the unnamable essence of God, she also preserves the “mark” of being inexpressible.²⁰

Experiencing hypostasis as an individual dismembers nature and takes it to pieces. However the hypostases as persons do not part nature and do not

¹⁷ Cf. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, op. cit., pp. 118–119: “We understand why Richard of Saint-Victor rejected Boethius’ definition, remarking with finesse that substance answers the question *quid*, person answers the question *quis*. Now, to the question *quis* one answers with a proper noun which alone can designate the person (*De Trinitate*, IV, 7; PL 196, cols. 934–935). Hence the new definition (for the divine persons): *persona est divinae naturae incommunicabilis existentia*.”

¹⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 129–130: “This God reveals Himself as transcendent to every image which could make known His nature, but He does not refuse personal relationship, living intercourse with men, with a people; He speaks to them and they reply, in a series of concrete situations which unfold as sacred history. Nevertheless the depths of His nature remain forbidden to all enquiry.”

¹⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 137–138: “Man is not merely an individual of a particular nature, included in the generic relationship of human nature to God the Creator of the whole cosmos, but he is also – he is chiefly – a person, not reducible to the common (or even individualized) attributes of the nature which he shares with other human individuals. Personhood belongs to every human being by virtue of a singular and unique relation to God who created him ‘in His image.’ This personal element in anthropology, discovered by Christian thought, does not indicate, in itself, a relationship of participation, much less a ‘kinship’ [*συγγένεια* – P.S.] with God, but rather an analogy: like the personal God, in whose image he is created, man is not only ‘nature.’ This bestows on him liberty in regard to himself, taken as an individual of a particular nature.”

²⁰ Cf. P. Evdokimov, *L’Orthodoxie*, op. cit., p. 67: “Seul l’intuition mystique le [le ‘moi’] découvre, car elle part de Dieu et pénètre son ‘image’ dans l’homme; le symbole du cœur le désigne. ‘Qui peut connaître le cœur?’ demande Jérémie (17, 9–10), et il répond aussitôt: ‘Dieu sonde les cœurs et les reins.’ Saint Grégoire de Nysse exprime bien ce mystère: ‘Notre nature “spirituelle” existe selon l’image du Créateur, elle ressemble à ce qui est au-dessus d’elle, dans l’incognoscibilité de soi-même elle manifeste l’empreinte de l’inaccessibilité’ (*De opificio hominis*, PG, 44, 155). Saint Pierre parle de l’*homo cordis absconditus* – ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος – de l’homme caché du cœur, cela veut dire que c’est dans la profondeur du cœur que se trouve le “moi” humain. Au *Deus absconditus* répond l’*homo absconditus*, à la théologie apophatique correspond l’anthropologie apophatique. (Voir B. Vycheslavtsev, *L’image de Dieu*, in *Revue Voie*, N. 49 (en russe)).”

lead to a row of separated natures. Lossky can state this because he takes the notion of the triune God of Christian faith as his starting point. Augustine's thinking had been moving from the analysis of the image of God within man to the concept of God; Gregory of Nyssa, on whom Lossky comments, started from the concept of God found in the Bible and in the tradition to discover that which corresponds in man to the image of God.²¹ When we read Lossky: "The Trinity is not three Gods, but one God,"²² it imposes an anthropological consequence on us: "the true human community is not x-men but man who is the image of God." You have to admit that such wording might raise some concerns. However, Lossky argues:

If in fact the multiplication of human persons does divide the nature, splitting it up into many individuals, it is only because we know of no other generation than that which takes place after sin, in human nature which has lost its likeness to the divine nature. As we have already seen, St Gregory of Nyssa, and St Maximus, regard the creation of Eve as itself an act wrought by God in His foresight of sin and its consequences for mankind. However, Eve taken from Adam's nature, "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh," the new human person, completed the nature of Adam, was one nature, "one flesh" with him. It was only as a consequence of sin that these two first human persons became two separate natures; two individuals, with exterior relationships between them – the desire of the woman being to her husband, and he exercising rule over her (Gen. III, 16).²³

It is to be questioned that on the side of Lossky, sexuality itself points to the brokenness of nature. It is the point for him that the human persons become strangers to each other after sin; a single nature is split into many individuals who distinguish from each other on that which belongs to nature, for example different desires. Man, created in the image of God as man and woman, originally had one nature because common desire (*resp.* common will) was inherent in him. When man and woman wanted what God wanted they were one human, one nature.

²¹ Cf. V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, op. cit., p. 114–115. "St. Augustine takes as his starting point the image of God in man, and *attempts to work out an idea of God*, by trying to discover in Him that which we find in the soul created in His image. The method he employs is one of psychological analogies applied to the knowledge of God, to theology. On the other hand, St. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, starts with what revelation tells us of God in order to discover what it is in man which corresponds to the divine image. This is a theological method applied to knowledge of man, to anthropology. The first way seeks to know God by starting from man created in His image; the second wishes to define the true nature of man by starting from the idea of God in whose image man has been created."

²² *Ibidem*, p. 123.

²³ *Ibidem*.

They were free because their natures were not torn and divided. Every human had his volitional faculty but none of the two wanted anything according to his/her own will but they willed according to what the other wanted. Why? Simply because they willed what God willed. Because of sin, man reduced himself to a single, own nature and saw himself as part of the whole, as an element of the cosmos. What did he win in having, as microcosm,²⁴ all elements that form the earth, while losing full communion with other people, being lonely and not only lack God but also being separated from other people? Man who has given up his one nature becomes part of the whole, an element in the amount of nature. Person means, one would say, per definition not part of the whole but rises above the cosmos.²⁵ Person is a whole because what is personal is not parted in her.²⁶

Lossky's words are meaningful:

The nature is the content of the person, the person the existence of the nature. A person who asserts himself as an individual, and shuts himself up in the limits of his particular nature, far from realizing himself fully becomes impoverished. It is only in renouncing its own possession and giving itself freely, in ceasing to exist for itself that the person finds full expression in the one nature common to all. In giving up its own special good, it expands infinitely, and is enriched by everything which belongs to all. The person becomes the perfect image of God by acquiring that likeness which is the perfection of the nature common to all men. The distinction between persons and nature reproduces the order of the divine life expressed by the doctrine of the Trinity, in mankind. It is the foundation of all Christian anthropology, of all evangelical living, for, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says, Christianity is an "imitation of the nature of God."²⁷

2.3. Attempt at an interpreting summary

Let us try to decode the synthesis that seemingly hides behind Lossky's text. Person as hypostasis refers to the spirit, to the soul and to the body if we assume

²⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 114.

²⁵ Cf. Ch. Kard. Schönborn, *Der Mensch als Abbild Gottes*, op. cit., p. 46–50. The text gives a brief overview on the authors who are concerned with man seen as microcosm and with the notion of human dignity that stays on the sideline. In-between we find the famous text of Gregory of Nyssa that is also interesting for Lossky. The meaning of the edition of Cardinal Schönborn would be presented briefly as following: Man does not outgrow the cosmos because the cosmos was made for him but above all because he is the image of the creator of the cosmos.

²⁶ See V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, op. cit., p. 123: "Man now has a double character: as an individual nature, he is a part of a whole, one of the elements which make up the universe; but as a person, he is in no sense *a part*: he contains *all* in himself."

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 123–124.

the trichotomic division of man or to the soul and the body at the dichotomic division. Hence the hypostasis reveals itself in the spirit, soul and body or in the soul and in the body. The three (*resp.* the two) exist in it and through it.

It [the Hypostasis] is the image of God, the constant principle in the nature which, being dynamic and changing, is always inclined by the will towards an external end. We may say that the image is a divine seal, imprinted on the nature and putting it into a personal relationship with God.²⁸

Let us highlight that in the quoted text the notion of uniqueness of the personal being appears, i.e. as individuality belongs to the order of nature, uniqueness is part of the order of person. This text seems to be the key to understanding of Lossky's metaphysical intuition. He sees hypostasis (*resp.* person) as existence of nature.²⁹ Hence, as result, it arises that the hypostasis (*resp.* person) gives existence to the spirit, soul and body [after the trichotomic division] and at the same time the hypostasis (*resp.* person) simply is the image of God. This image is quasi passed on to the nature, thus the spirit, the soul and the body, by the hypostasis (*resp.* person). In other words, the human nature is the image of God because the human hypostasis is his image. Moreover, the hypostasis (*resp.* person) is a principle of nature which means a principle of being and action. Let us draw our attention to a possible interpretation: if we change the words hypostasis (*resp.* person) into "existence"³⁰ and nature into "essence" in the above written sentences, we get a text that draws closer to the Tomistic schema. Lossky indeed searches for such words and terms that make it possible to get from the existential-metaphysical language to the essential description of the mystery of encounter that takes place between divine and human persons.³¹ One could dare to claim that, according to Lossky, the total

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 127.

²⁹ Cf. ibidem, p. 123: "The nature is the content of the person, the person *the existence* of the nature." Although the French original reads: "La nature est le contenu de la personne, la personne est *l'existence* de la nature" (V. Lossky, *Essai sur la Théologie Mystique de l'Église d'Orient*, Paris 1944, p. 119), I would translate here "the being of nature" and not "existence of nature." In this case, it seems to me that Lossky was influenced by Gilson's metaphysical interpretation for no reason.

³⁰ Cf. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, op. cit., p. 133: "This personal God is no mere Existence, devoid of nature; but He hides the depths of His Being until the decisive moment, only making Himself known to His elect by His authority."

³¹ Cf. ibidem, pp. 121–122: "Fr. von Balthasar [...] compared, as we have seen, the 'new ontological categories' of hypostasis or person and the existential *esse* which Thomas Aquinas discovered beyond the Aristotelian order of substantiality – the presence of existence which, as Gilson says, 'transcends the concept because it transcends essence.' We believe Gilson is right in saying that only a Christian metaphysician could go so

hypostasis meant that which according to St Thomas Aquinas was *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. It is quasi a hypostatic (resp. in the person focused) act of being. Such interpretation is not far from the metaphysical meaning of the text of Exodus: "I am who I am." If we apply the word "I" into the depth of the divine hypostasis, which gives being to the "I" that is situated in the depths of the human hypostasis, we can understand the human "I" as image of the divine "I." We so put ourselves close to the thinking of Meister Eckhart. It needs to be emphasized that we talk about the "I" that "is" which means that it is "part" of its essence to give "itself to the You" as to "another I." Interestingly, Meister Eckhart saw the difference between the "I" as individual and the "being I." In German Homily 79 we read:

The masters say that all creatures can say "I," for the word is common property, but the word *sum* "am" can only properly be spoken by God alone. *Sum* denotes one thing that contains all goodness in itself: but it is denied to all creatures that any one of them should have everything so as to give man complete satisfaction.³²

far in the analysis of the concrete structure of created beings. But faced with Fr. von Balthasar's comparison one asks: *Did the real distinction between essence and existence though it finds at the root of each individual being the act of existing, which places him in his own existence – attain at the same time the root of personal being?* Is the nonconceptualizable character of existence of the same order as that of the person, or does this new ontological order, discovered by Thomas Aquinas, still fail to reach the personal? It is certain that there is a close link between the two, at least in Thomas' thought. Answering the question *Utrum in Christo sit tantum unum esse* (*Sent.* III, d. 6, q. 2, a. 2; III, q. 17, a. 2), Thomas affirms the unity of the existence of the God-Man in speaking of the unicity of His hypostasis. But will he push this comparison between the existential and the personal any further, so as to affirm three existences in God? Richard of Saint-Victor did this by speaking of three divine hypostases; but he did not reform the notion of human person. Thomas Aquinas reconstructed the notion of individual substances, finding in them the multiple creative energy which actualizes all that exists; but this new ontological category applies to all created beings and not only to human or angelic persons. At the same time, the God of Thomas Aquinas is one sole existence, identical to its essence: pure Act or *Ipsum Esse subsistens*. This forces us to correct one of Fr. von Balthasar's remarks. In the notion of the created hypostasis, Maximus the Confessor may have reached the new domain of that which cannot be conceptualized because it cannot be reduced to its essence; but one will not find in the Thomistic distinction between essence and existence – a distinction which penetrates to the existential depths of *individual* beings – the ontological solution of the mystery of the human person. Thomas Aquinas' natural theology does not reach this solution; and he cannot be reproached for this fact, because such was not his task." Cf. also L. B. Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit*, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1969, pp. 208–222. Puntel also was suggesting that Thomas had not enough worked up the notions we are interesting in.

³² Meister Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, vol. II, trans. M. O'C. Walshe, London – Dulverton 1981, p. 306. Cf. also Meister Eckhart, *Predigt 79. Laudate caeli et exultet terra. Ego sum lux mundi*, 365, 9 – 366, 3, [in:] idem, *Die Deutschen Werke*, vol. 3: *Predigten*

3. Summarizing proposition

Following the whole series of Meister Eckhart's texts one may regard "I" as substance.³³ The personal "I" of God forms the original hypostasis (*resp.* substance). As personal center and *Principium* (*resp.* *grunt*, mhd.) of everything, It is the underlying solid ground in the hypostases of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The human "I" is located in the ground of the human hypostasis. This "I" is in-hypostatized into the spirit, into the soul and into the body in one way or another. When you look at man on the part of substance (*resp.* hypostasis) you "see" the "I." If you look at him on the part of the other nine categories of Aristotle you get sight of the spirit, the soul and the body in their surrounding world. Had the "I" been individual, it would have been part of the human nature and therefore belonging to his spirit (*resp.* spiritual soul) (e.g. to the memory, to the conscience and to the will) or to his soul (*resp.* *psyche*) and to his body. However, it is a personal center.

Substance and relation are the most important categories according to Meister Eckhart.³⁴ To my mind, it concerns the concept of Eckhart of *isticheit*.³⁵ For translation I recommend starting from the Latin word *iste*. The indicating pronoun *iste, ista, istud* means: "yours." It points to something that refers to the person whom we address with "You." The pronoun *istic*³⁶ also has the same

(60–86), trans. J. Quint, Stuttgart, 1976, 1999², pp. 365–366: "Die meister sprechent: alle crêatûren mugen wol sprechen 'ich,' und daz wort ist gemeine; aleine daz wort '*sum*,' 'bin,' daz enmac nieman eigenliche gesprechen wan got aleine. '*Sum*' ist als vil gesprochen als ein dinc, daz *allez guot* inne treget, und daz ist allen crêatûren versaget, daz deheiniu allez daz habe, daz den menschen genzliche getroesten mûge."

³³ Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Expositio libri Exodi*. N. 14, LW II; 20, 3–8, [in:] idem, *Expositio libri Exodi*. *Expositio libri Sapientiae*, *Expositio Cantici Canticorum cap. 1*, 6, trans. H. Fischer, J. Koch, K. Weiß, Stuttgart 1992, p. 20: "Li ego pronomen est primae personae. Discretivum pronomen meram *substantiam* significat; meram, inquam, sine omni accidente, sine omni alieno, *substantiam* sine qualitate, sine forma hac aut illa, sine hoc aut illo. Haec autem deo et ipso soli congruunt, qui est super accidens, super speciem, super genus. Ipsi, inquam, soli. Propter quod in Psalmo ait: 'singulariter sum ego.'"

³⁴ Cf. ibidem, LW II; 3,3 – 3,7: "Habes etiam ibidem plura de nominibus, quibus dues nominatur in scriptura, a philosophis, a sanctis et doctoribus, et quomodo *sola substantia et relatio* secundum genus suum admittuntur in divinis, et quomodo affirmations sunt propriae in divinis, negations autem impropriae."

³⁵ Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, op. cit., p. 38: "As regards the other sense: where the text says "I," that means in the first place God's *is-ness*, the fact that God alone is." Cf. Predigt 77, *Ecce mitto angelum meum*, DW III; 339, 4–6: "Und alsô meinert daz wort "*ich*" die *isticheit* götlicher wârheit, wan ez ist ein bewîsung eines '*istes*.' Darumbe beîset ez, daze er aleine *ist*."

³⁶ Fr Morard OP interprets the notion of *isticheit* differently than me. He writes for example: "Danach bedeutet hier '*istic*,' dass ebenfalls von '*ist*' augenscheinlich abzuleiten wäre, so viel als gegenwärtig, anwesend, innewohnend mit der sichtlichen Nebenbedeutung

meaning. It has the ability as well to join the "I" with a "You," namely through the category of relation and having. It already appears in Augustine's dialogue *On music* in a very interesting expression. There the disciple says to his master: *totus istic sum*.³⁷ To be translated: I am there where you are; I hear you; I am all ears, I make myself available to you; I am all yours. One may also say in Latin: *ego totus tuus sum*.

Once Meister Eckhart refers the "I" to the *istichheit* of divine truth, it means that the hypostasis is not individual but an "I" in direction towards (*resp.* for) "You," a hypostatic relation, so to speak, which expresses a personal communion of having. The original experience of hypostasis is therefore always an experience of a You and my I at the same time. To have experience of the I at its source you also have to experience a You and be met by a You. Hence it means that the underlying firm ground, which is in the beginning of the universe and the foundation of the universe, is the three-one-in-hypostasized *esse*, the triune God. *Esse*³⁸ *est deus* says Meister Eckhart. In the depth of being you discover the personal, hypostatic (*resp.* substantial) relation of "I – You." Everything that is situated above, outside or beside this hypostatic relation is in fact not casual but accidental and temporary.

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einer Innigkeit, die an Indentität grenzt, ja zur Identität wird, wie die im Fragment ausgesprochene Folgerung zeigt, dass 'denne göttliche nature min nature' ist. Deshalb ist Gott seinen Geschöpfen *istiger=onniger* als sie es sich selber sind." Meinrad Stéphane Morard O.P., *Ist, istic, istikeit bei Meister Eckhart*, "Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie", 1956, vol. 3, p. 177.

³⁷ Augustinus Hipponensis, *De musica*, [in:] <http://www.augustinus.it/> (11.01.2014): "Magister – Intende ergo et aurem in sonum, et in plausum oculos: non enim audiri, sed videri opus est plaudentem manum, et animadverti acriter quanta temporis mora in levatione, quanta in positione sit. Discipulus – *Totus istic sum*, quantum valeo."

³⁸ Cf. V. Lossky, *Théologie négative et connaissance de Dieu chez Maître Eckhart*, op. cit., p. 341: "'Être' dans le sens propre de ce mot serait donc 'être-Dieu,' c'est-à-dire posséder le même principe formel d'esse qui sert de prédicat dans l'affirmation réflexive du sujet divin: *Ego sum qui sum*. S'il en est ainsi, on ne trahira pas la tradition de Boèce ni la pensée de Maître Eckhart en *identifiant la forme divine d'esse avec la Divinité commune aux trois personnes*."

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The Problem of the Creation of a New Culture in Russian Scholars' Works during the 1920–1930's (A. Meyer, A. Gorsky, N. Setnitsky, M. Prishvin)

In the 1920's a special community of philosophers devoted to maintaining the tradition of Russian religious philosophy and its conception of cultural creation and aims emerged in Russia.

In the discourse of A. Meyer, N. Fyodorov, A. Gorsky and N. Setnitsky, the concept of the ideal *Ecclesia* or *Civitas Dei* can be seen. In his philosophical diaries, M. Prishvin is engaged in a dialogue with the ideas expressed by Fyodorov, Gorsky and Meyer concerning the creation of the New World. He ponders on the tasks that religious creativity, science and arts are confronted with in their pursuit of building a New World. In the works of these thinkers, we can see an effort to bring the knowledge of the Grace of Heavens into everyday life and turn the culture back to purposes of religious creation.

In A. Meyer's works, the humanistic concept of the happiness here on Earth is confronted with the idea of the creation of the ecclesial community. This community does not coincide with a social and natural entity. The philosopher believes that the spirit of individualistic self-validation of a human reigns in culture. According to Meyer, the ideal of the culture is a Superman. As far as the ways of coming into being of personality in the field of religious creative activity are concerned, these are not individualization and holding onto your own self but the response to the Other (i.e. to the other selves). The person opens to others and is shaped through addressing the Thou. The *Ecclesia* does not come into being through the ethnographical unanimity of people or through such a cultural formation as a state, he says. Sometimes *Ecclesia* even comes into conflict with the unanimity of the state and the nation when they

exclude themselves from the genuine community.¹ The ecclesial unanimity has no boundaries in time or space. The type of bonds between the people in it are completely different. The *Ecclesia* comes into being not in this or that special period. It exists as a historical cohesion that embraces the past and future. Not only are people living at the present moment its members but their ancestors and descendants also. The communal or ecclesial bond is the one that unites people of different centuries. The *Ecclesia* is the unity of successive generations.²

Meyer draws parallels between the ecclesial community and “communist reign of truth, fraternal love and fair joy.” Both of these ideals are opposed to the “humanistic ideal of happiness here on the Earth” by him. The difference between it and the communist reign of truth is often ignored.³ But they cannot be reconciled because the only thing the humanistic ideal requires is the domination over the forces of nature. The others suppose the overcoming of the evil as an inherent part of human nature.⁴

However, the creation of *Ecclesia*, Meyer believes, does not go apart from the social life of the man. Meyer speaks about the opposition between the negation of the world and the participation, i.e. the creative transformation of the natural and social world. The freedom of the soul is gained, he says, not by means of ignoring the Cosmos, but by means of participation and fulfillment of creative concepts that lead to the Cosmos and by means of the overcoming the evil that tainted the Cosmos. Actually, the social unity that includes man is not ignored but transformed and together with the soul. These creative capacities of the soul should and must be revealed in the world.⁵

In the works by Gorsky and Setnitsky⁶ the purpose of the religious creative activity of person in the world is defined as the impact on it. This implies the creative cultivation and regulation of the nature and bringing the grace into the whole world by the man according to the will of the God. The idea of human activity leading to the transformation of the world is evolved by means of

¹ А. А. Мейер, *Философские сочинения*, Paris 1982, p. 203.

² Ibidem, p. 204.

³ See ibidem, pp. 70–71.

⁴ See ibidem, p. 71.

⁵ See ibidem, p. 421.

⁶ Gorsky and Setnitsky developed the ideas of Fyodorov in their works. In 1920s and 1930s some of their books appear in Kharbin: А. К. Горский, *Огромный очерк*, Харбин 1924; А. К. Горский, Н. А. Сетницкий, *Смертобожничество*, Харбин 1926; А. К. Горский, *Николай Федоров и современность*, vol. 1–4, Харбин 1933; А. К. Горский, *Перед лицом смерти. Лев Толстой и Н. Ф. Федоров*, Харбин 1928; А. К. Горский, *Рай на земле. К идеологии творчества Достоевского*. Ф. М. Достоевский и Н. Ф. Федоров, Харбин 1929; Н. А. Сетницкий, *Капиталистический строй в изображении Н. Федорова*, Харбин 1926.

reasoning over the onomatodoxy (*имяславие*) tradition. The onomatodoxy, Gorsky and Setnitsky suppose, should become the transformation of the world by the force of the God's Name (*имядействие*).⁷

In Prishvin's diaries of the 1920's, the human creative activity in the world should be seen as a part of the polemics with the Soviet state culture conception of the 1920's. His conception of the new culture capitalizes on the ideas of philosophical personalism and cosmism developed in Meyer, Gorsky and Setnitsky's works.

The ideal of the cultural creation of the human being is elaborated by Prishvin. In the 1920's he wrote about the ideal commune as a peculiar kind of union in the world where people are connected with special bonds. Commune means an interaction between the man and cosmos. For Prishvin, culture is the *labor aimed at the conjunction* of fathers and children, the living and the dead. Prishvin makes an opposition between progress and the idea of *gaining the world* as collecting of past, present and future together.

For example, in the note made on 20.12.1922 Prishvin compares the revolutionary ideology of the Soviet state with Nikolai Fyodorov's Common Task philosophy. The latter is regarded as being based on love and conjunction and the former, in contrast, as based on the rebellion and breaking of bonds.

At the same time, Prishvin believes it is Fyodorov's doctrine that contains the concept of the ideal commune. It is important for Prishvin that the new culture should not be built on the basis of present-day reality negation. The means is the amendment and fulfillment of the distorted idea. Fyodorov's doctrine, Prishvin says, and "our" communism are the same, but Common Task philosophy is directed not into the future but into the past. As far as communism is concerned, we work for the happiness and prosperity of our children but with Common Task philosophy we work for our fathers beatitude, Prishvin believes. The first is enforced with the hatred of the past, the second with love and bereavement. The first is based on the idea of progress (the youth craves the best; moving forward, the barbarity); the second is based on bonds of love to the fathers (the father resurrects in the son; culture, the labor of the conjunction).⁸ The condition of true creation is the organic nature of it. The creator should work in awareness of the integrity and the wholeness of the world's origins. He should feel the connection between the living and the dead

⁷ Н. А. Сетницкий, *Из истории философско-эстетической мысли 1920–1930-х гг.*, Москва 2003, p. 117.

⁸ See М. М. Пришвин, *Дневники 1920–1922*, Москва 1995, p. 228.

and himself. This is the condition of the common life feeling, Prishvin writes in his diary for 1930.⁹

In Prishvin's conception, the way to the new culture supposes the counter motion of two ideas, i.e. the Common Task idea and Catholic idea. Our conception of Common Task is not the "task," he says.

It is the sign of the times. As opposed to the Catholic idea, it is material and barbarically simple. This is the bone to be chewed on for so long. At the same time, this bone is our national significance. Without it, we are but a colony of Europe. We are the last of the Mohicans, and two paths lie before us. We can surrender and become the colony or to resolve (*рассасывать*) the Bolshevism out in the philosophical direction of the Common Task [...] until it meets the Catholic idea.¹⁰

We should add in the conclusion that the many of the problems of the 1920's, with its collision of positivism, the secular view of the world and the endeavors of reasoning on the ways of new community building within the framework of religious creative activity are of immediate interest in our days. The phenomenon of desecularization in modern Russia can be analyzed in the connection with *Новый Град* (Holy City, or the *Ecclesia* of Creative Personalities) concept and the ways leading to it as it was delivered in works by S. Bulgakov, A. Meyer, G. Fedotov, A. Gorsky, N. Setnitsky and others. The question of action in full responsibility of the person (compare the idea of the responsibility and philosophy of an action developed by M. Bakhtin) is especially important. Also, attention should be paid to the personalistic aspect of the creative activity seen from the point of view of religion in these philosophers' works. At the same time, there is another important perspective, i.e. the dialogue between the Russian Orthodoxy tradition and the personalistic idea of the responsible creative activity of the person in the world, the transformation of the world by means of cultural practices, the introduction of the religious ideals and religious motivation into the culture.

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⁹ See M. M. Пришвин, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 8: *Дневники 1905–1954 года*, Москва 1986, p. 215.

¹⁰ М. М. Пришвин, *Дневники 1928–1929*, Москва 2004, pp. 153–154.

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Theological Perspectives

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Russian Religious Philosophy and “the Case of Patriarch Nikon”

The history of Russian statehood is inextricably connected with the history of the Russian Orthodox Church which forms the basis of Russian culture and the supporting pillar of the people’s spiritual life. The current reassessment of the role of the Church in the life of society, determined by changes in the spiritual and moral compass, explains the timeliness of this topic. One of the historical events which influenced not only church life, but also the subsequent development of the whole country, was the confrontation between the secular and the spiritual power in the second half of the 17th century. Patriarch Nikon, a unique personality of that era, attracted and continues to attract the steady interest and ambivalent estimations of historians, philosophers and theologians.

The first to interpret and assess the opinions and activity of patriarch Nikon was the well-known philosopher and religious thinker Vladimir Sergeyeovich Solovyov, son of Sergey Mikhailovich Solovyov, the famous historian and author of *The History of Russia from Ancient Times*.

After analyzing the relations between State and Church in historico-philosophical terms, Vladimir Solovyov gave a very negative assessment of the activities of Nikon,¹ the sixth all-Russia Patriarch. In his opinion, the issue of the reasons and circumstances of the conflict between the Tsar and the Patriarch which ended with Nikon’s deposition and exile “was the first argument about power in Russia, an echo of the universal Western European conflict between the Popes and the Emperors.” Vladimir Solovyov believed that even though Patriarch Nikon “did not change over to Latinity, he still unconsciously adopted Latinity’s main fallacy.” The historian accused Nikon of

¹ В. С. Соловьев, *Великий спор и христианская политика*, [in:] idem, *Собрание сочинений*, Москва 1992, vol. 3, pp. 227–242.

detracting from the Church’s authority: “isolated the spiritual power in Russia, set it as something separate, outside of people and state, and this inevitably led to aloof and adversary relations between them,” and also of despotism and religious violence against Old Believers: “the successors of the deposed Patriarch followed in his steps, increasing the bloody persecution of the dissenters.” In his opinion, the Patriarch was extraordinarily power-hungry:

Competing and quarrelling with the Tsar was major life’s task for Patriarch Nikon. The Patriarch began to be addressed as “great prince,” like the Tsar; he intervened into military and diplomatic business and all the details of management.²

One particular opponent of Vladimir Solovyov in his assessment of Patriarch Nikon’s activity was G. V. Florovsky.³ In the opinion of this philosopher archpriest, Nikon’s name is “no longer a name but a sign or symbol” and “remains a pretext for dispute and acrimony.”⁴

The author questioned the accusations of papism directed towards Nikon: “Behind Nikon’s great shade the ghost of papism is hiding.” This is hardly true; the reality is probably quite the opposite. What we see in Nikon’s case is more the advance of the “Empire.” And

Nikon was right, when in his Refutation [Razorenje] he accused Tsar Aleksei and his government of attacking the freedom and independence of the Church. Such encroachment could be detected in the Code [Ulozhenie] which Nikon considered diabolical and the false law of the Antichrist.⁵

G. V. Florovsky also disagreed with accusations of Nikon being “latin:”

Nikon found his conception of the priesthood in patristic teaching, especially in that of Chrysostom. Apparently he wished to repeat Chrysostom in life. Perhaps he did not always express this idea successfully or cautiously and on occasion used “western definitions,” but he did not exceed the limits of patristic opinion by asserting that the “priesthood” is higher than the “tsardom.” On this point he was opposed not only by the Greeks, those “Asiatic emigrants and sycophants from Athos,” who defended tsardom against priesthood. He was attacked as well by the Old Ritualists [Staroobriadtsy], the

² Ibidem, pp. 230–234.

³ G. Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, trans. R. L. Nichols, [in:] http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/florovsky_ways_chap3.html (25.03.2014).

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem.

partisans of Russian tradition, for whom the “Kingdom of God” was achieved within the tsardom rather than within the Church. Therein lies the theme of the Schism: not “old ritual” but the “Kingdom.”⁶

The author emphasized that accusing the Patriarch of religious violence was untenable: he was not the author of the reform.

The “reform” had been devised and decided upon at court. Nikon was brought in on a going concern; he was introduced and initiated into previously prepared plans.⁷

In Florovsky’s opinion, the misfortunes in the spiritual development of Russia in the 17th century were caused by derogation from the patristic tradition, therefore, the dissent was not the reason for the disintegration of the unity between Church and State, but only its consequence.⁸

G. V. Florovsky noted that

Nikon belongs to that strange class of people who possess no personality but only a temperament. In place of a personality they offer only an idea or program. [...] Not only did he lack a sense of history, but he often failed to exercise ordinary tact and circumspection. He had a will to history, a great presence of mind or “commanding vision” which explains how he could become a great historical figure, despite the fact that he was not a great man.⁹

Such was G. V. Florovsky’s ambivalent assessment of Patriarch Nikon’s ideas and activities.

Patriarch Nikon’s views about the relationship between State and Church, about the role of the spiritual power and the place of Man in the state structure do not just expand the idea of the historical context of state-church relationship in the past; they can also help assert a new perception with regards their interaction.

The constantly expanding source base for the study allows us to notice a particular bias of the assessment of Nikon’s activities given by Vladimir Solovyov and confirms some of the conjectures made by the archpriest G. V. Florovsky.

The position of Vladimir Solovyov can probably be explained to a large extent by the existing historiography tradition, founded by his father, the historian

⁶ Ibidem.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ See *ibidem*.

⁹ Ibidem.

S. M. Solovyov, one of the first researchers who worked with the original archive documents of Nikon’s “case.” As a representative of the statism school of Russian historiography, he assessed Nikon’s activities from the position of state interests, helping to create the stereotypically negative view of the exiled Patriarch as the one most to blame for his conflict with the Tsar.¹⁰ However, already N. A. Gibbenet, who in the 19th century published materials from the archive of the Privy Prikaz, noted the bias that the famous historian showed in his selection of archival materials: “A lot was missed, a lot left unsaid; and some things reported wrongly...” At the same time the researcher noted that “there are documents in Patriarch Nikon’s case which were never published [...] which can restore the famous hierarch to a better memory.”¹¹

Modern studies usually refrain from past clichés in the assessment of the reasons for Nikon’s deposition and from an unambiguous interpretation of the conflict between the Tsar and the Patriarch. The turning point in the study and interpretation of the views, ideas and acts of the Patriarch was the publication of Nikon’s writings.¹² As a man well educated for his time, he left a large epistolary legacy – about a hundred different letters, many messages addressed to the Tsar, the Eastern patriarchs and other contemporaries. A comprehensive analysis of Nikon’s published writings and the documents of the Privy Prikaz and Ambassadors’ Prikaz, newly introduced for academic use, allowed the tracing of the confrontation of the spiritual and secular power, strengthened towards the middle of the 17th century.¹³ The process of the absolutization of the Tsar’s power determined the pattern of the Church’s further subordination to the State and the loss of noticeable independence and privileges it had

¹⁰ See С. М. Соловьев, *История России с древнейших времен*, Москва 1991, Book VI, pp. 268–271, 330–332; Book VII, pp. 116–118.

¹¹ See Н. А. Гиббенет, *Историческое исследование дела патриарха Никона*, vol. 1, Санкт-Петербург 1882, p. IV; vol. 2, Санкт-Петербург 1884, pp. V, VI.

¹² See Н. В. Воробьева, *Историко-канонические и богословские воззрения патриарха Никона*, Омск 2008; прот. Л. Лебедев, *Патриарх Никон*, “Богословские труды”, 1982, no 23, pp. 154–199; С. В. Лобачев, *Патриарх Никон*, Санкт-Петербург 2003; С. Н. Кистерев, *Эпоха патриарха Никона как этап в истории русского просвещения в представлении Н. Ф. Каптерева*, [in:] *Шестые Каптеревские чтения*, ed. М. В. Бибииков, Москва 2008, pp. 139–144; В. С. Румянцова, *Патриарх Никон и духовная культура в России XVII века*, Москва 2010; С. К. Севастьянова, *Эпистолярное наследие патриарха Никона. Переписка с современниками: исследование и тексты*, Москва 2007; *Патриарх Никон. Труды*, ed. В. В. Шмидт, Москва 2004.

¹³ See Российский государственный архив древних актов (РГАДА), фонд 27, дело 140, часть 1, 5–7, 9, 10; фонд 27, дело 140а, часть 1–4; фонд 27, дело 140б; фонд 142, опись 1; фонд 135, отдел III, раздел I; фонд 188, опись 1, часть 2; фонд 1895, опись 8, 9; фонд 1441, опись 1, 5, 6.

possessed until then. As G. V. Florovsky put it vividly, this was the “attack of the Empire,” which led to the protest from the Patriarch expressed through his open criticism of the Council Code of 1649. Such an openly negative assessment of this code of laws was a brave political gesture, since a critical comment about the Code was seen in the 17th century as “the ruler’s business,” that was equal to a political crime and obstruction of the State order. The issue of the conflict between the Tsar and the Patriarch is connected to the work *Objection or Devastation of humble Nikon, by the grace of God the Patriarch...* It is in this work that Nikon, relying upon canon law and his experience gathered in managing the priesthood, gave a full and extremely negative assessment of the Code of Laws which defined the relationship between Church and State.¹⁴ According to the opinion of modern researchers, in his consideration of canonical issues of relations between church and state, Nikon relied on the ideas of the symphony of the State and Church power, borrowed from ancient Byzantine law. He created an original theory of an Orthodox Tsar who in his private life followed Orthodox teachings and the rules of the Church.¹⁵

Comparison between the principles of the Council Code of 1649 and the facts reflected in Nikon’s writings allows us to draw the following conclusions. The chapters of the Council Code concerning the Church: I – “On blasphemous persons and on Church malcontents,” XI – “Judgment on peasants,” XII – “On judgment for Patriarch’s Prikaz people, and house servants, and peasants,” XIII – “On monastic prikaz,” XVII – “On ancestral domains,” XIX – “On tradespeople”¹⁶ determined the legal basis for future relations between the secular power and the Church. The Council Code, being a secular Code of Law, began to regulate the religious teaching sphere, the material and court life of the Church. The State’s encroachment of the Church’s rights in the sphere of management, judgment and property relations brought a decisive and justified protest from Nikon.

Nikon’s messages to the Tsar reflected the system of his ideas about the interrelations of the secular and spiritual powers, about the role of the Tsar as the head of State and the patriarch as the head of Church.¹⁷ The idea of

¹⁴ See В. С. Румянцева, *Патриарх Никон и Соборное Уложение 1649 г.*, [in:] *Реформы в России: XVI–XIX вв.*, ed. А. В. Демкин, Москва 1992, pp. 89–101.

¹⁵ See прот. Л. Лебедев, *Патриарх Никон*, op. cit.; *Патриарх Никон. Труды*, op. cit.; Н. В. Воробьева, *Историко-канонические и богословские воззрения патриарха Никона*, op. cit.; В. С. Румянцева, *Патриарх Никон и духовная культура в России XVII века*, op. cit.

¹⁶ See М. Н. Тихомиров, П. П. Епифанов, *Соборное Уложение 1649 года*, Москва 1961.

¹⁷ See С. К. Севастьянова, *Эпистолярное наследие патриарха Никона*, op. cit., pp. 410, 412.

those interrelations, according to Nikon, was that each of the powers fulfilled the duties inherent to it, providing that the spiritual power was the essential one.¹⁸ Nikon also named the chief reason for his conflict with the Tsar – the interference of the secular power in the Church’s business.¹⁹ In this way, modern research supports G. V. Florovsky’s conclusions that “Nikon was right, when in his Refutation [Razorenje] he accused Tsar Aleksei and his government of attacking the freedom and independence of the Church.”²⁰

What is the extent of Nikon’s guilt in the tragedy of the Great Schism of the Russian Orthodox Church, in the persecutions of the Old Believers? Was Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov right to pin the responsibility for “bloody persecution” and “religious violence towards Old Believers” on the deposed Patriarch?

According to the order existing at the middle of the 17th century, the Church management was under the close surveillance of the State power: the Tsar appointed and deposed patriarchs, called Church councils, directed their activities, sometimes personally issuing Church laws.²¹ A striking example of the Tsar’s influence on Church management is the Church career of Nikon himself, who in a short time rose from a hegumen to Patriarch, and was then deposed for his attempt to change the situation of the Church disadvantaged by secular laws.

One of the results of the reform of the Church sacraments implemented by Nikon at the request of the Tsar was the Great Schism of the Russian Orthodox Church. The condemnation of the followers of the old sacraments as non-orthodox and heretical, which was implemented by the councils of 1656 and 1666, was finalized by the Great Moscow Council of 1667. The Council condemned and deposed Patriarch Nikon, at the same time approving his reform, and everybody who had not accepted the Council’s decisions was anathematized as heretic disobedient to the Church. The opinion of modern researchers is that the Great Schism and the mass persecutions following it began after Nikon was dismissed from his patriarchal pulpit, so the blame for these falls more on the Tsar as the originator of the reform than on Nikon.²²

Returning to the issue of interrelations between the State, society and Church, it is difficult to disagree with G. V. Florovsky’s opinion that Nikon’s

¹⁸ See *ibidem*, pp. 402, 251, 252.

¹⁹ See *ibidem*, pp. 391, 399, 401.

²⁰ G. Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology*, *op. cit.*

²¹ Н. Ф. Каптерев, *Царь и церковные московские соборы XVI и XVII столетий*, “Богословский вестник”, 1906, no 10, pp. 326–360; no 11, pp. 467–502; no 12, pp. 631–682.

²² See С. В. Лобачев, *Патриарх Никон*, *op. cit.*

name in Russia was, and is, a sort of a “sign or symbol” of the conflict between the secular and spiritual power, the tragedy of the schism and other trials. However, the accumulated experience of the theoretical interpretation of the State-Church relations, at the origins of which were Russian religious philosophers V. S. Solovyov and G. V. Florovsky, allows us to find models and forms which would help in the consolidation of the modern Russian society and its spiritual rebirth. V. S. Solovyov said the following words, still of immediate interest to us, in the late 19th century: “Existing in the outer environment of the civil society and state, the church cannot isolate itself and separate from this environment, but must influence it with its spiritual strength, must attract state and society to itself and gradually make them like itself, implementing its principle of love and agreement in all the areas of human life.”²³

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²³ В. С. Соловьев, *Великий спор и христианская политика*, op. cit., p. 227.

- Румянцева В. С., *Патриарх Никон и духовная культура в России XVII века*, Москва 2010.
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Yuri F. Samarin as a Commentator on the Theological Works of Alexei S. Khomiakov

Yuri F. Samarin (1819–1876), a prominent politician at the time of the Great Reforms, a Slavophile and the first publisher of A. S. Khomiakov's theological works, needs no introduction. His name was known as early as in the 1840's after he brilliantly defended his thesis on Stefan Yavorsky and Feofan Prokopovich. The thesis was the first to form the view, still popular today, that Russian theology had departed from original Orthodox doctrine and was in thrall to western theories in the 17th century. The dispute between Stefan Yavorsky and Feofan Prokopovich was presented by Yu. F. Samarin as a dispute between representatives of Catholic and Protestant schools in Russian theology. He announced the name of the Orthodox representative over twenty years later when he published Alexei S. Khomiakov's theological works referring to him as "Doctor of the Church" in his famous Introduction to the works.¹

During the interceding twenty years, Samarin was mainly occupied with social and political activities around the state of Russia's Baltic provinces, the liberation of the serfs, and the Polish Question. It was the Polish insurrection in 1863 that likely urged Samarin to think about religious problems and the relations between Western and Eastern Christianity again. Khomiakov was dead by this time, and Samarin went on to become his late friend's ideological successor. To give Samarin his due, he did his best to make Khomiakov's theological works accessible to both Russian and European readers. He translated Khomiakov's polemical tracts from French into Russian. In 1867, he also published Khomiakov in Prague, including the famous Introduction mentioned previously. Finally, thanks to his acquaintance with Baroness Edith F. Rahden, Samarin had the opportunity to translate the Introduction into

¹ See Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Предисловие*, [in:] А. С. Хомяков, *Полное собрание сочинений в 8 томах*, vol. 2, Москва 1886, p. XXXVI.

German and publish it in Berlin. This was followed by one of Khomiakov's major works, *The Church is One*.

The Introduction, which gives a general idea of Khomyakov's body of work, has been quite widely studied. A major addition to it is the less famous correspondence between Samarin and Baroness Rahden that specifies the vocabulary and the ideas of Khomyakov's tract, eventually allowing for the introduction of necessary corrections into the understanding and development of Khomyakov's thought. The most important of these observations are given below.

Firstly, the correspondence clearly shows Samarin as somebody with a concrete understanding of Khomyakov's thought – more than that of a mere interpreter. His comments are often qualified with remarks such as: "I do not think I am far from the author's intention,"² "in order to convey the idea better I would say..."³ "the author implies,"⁴ "That is what the author means,"⁵ etc.

Secondly, among many curious remarks there is one that is small but significant in terms of its message: "I have no criticism to make of *Selbstoffenbarung*,"⁶ but consider whether *Erscheinung*⁷ would not be more exact in the sense which Kant gave the word *Erscheinung*, when opposing it to the idea of essence (*das Ding an sich*⁸).⁹ The extract from Khomiakov's tract that Samarin was translating speaks of a correlation between the visible and invisible Churches, which thus, as Samarin believed, should be understood as Kant saw it.¹⁰

² *The correspondence of Iu. Samarin and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, Waterloo – Ont 1974, p. 133.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 136.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Self-revelation (German).

⁷ Phenomenon, appearance (German).

⁸ Thing-in-itself (German).

⁹ *The correspondence of Iu. Samarin and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁰ "Sie [die Kirche] trägt in sich den ewig gegenwärtigen Christus, und die Gnade des heiligen Geistes in ihrer ganzen lebensfülle, jedoch nicht in der ganzen Fülle ihrer Erscheinung" (A. S. Chomjakoff, *Versuch einer katechetischen Darstellung der Lehre von der Kirche*, Berlin 1870, p. 16). Compare: "Она имеет в себе пребывающего Христа и благодать Духа Святого во всей их жизненной полноте, но не в полноте их проявлений" (А. С. Хомяков, *Церковь одна*, [in] idem, *Полное собрание сочинений*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 3). The English translation: "She has abiding within her Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit in all their living fullness, but not in the fullness of their manifestation." A. Khomiakov, *The Church is One (Mr. Khomiakov's Essay on The Church)*, [in:] *Russian and the English Church During the Last Fifty Years*, ed. W. J. Birkbeck, vol. 1, London 1895, p. 194. Samarin was known to be a Hegelian. However, it was Kant who was repeatedly mentioned in "theological" fragments of his letters to Rahden (e.g.

With this in mind, it is interesting to note another letter by Samarín to Baroness Rahden in which he explains how ideas of the visible and infallible Churches should be correlated. According to Samarín, Protestants make the mistake of relating one to the other: “Nothing of what is *visible* in the Church is *infallible* in itself (*an sich*) and nothing of what in the Church is *infallible* can be seen by sight.” One shouldn’t leave *an sich* unnoted. When the quoted text is compared with the remark given above, it is clear that they both have the same meanings: “The Infallible” Church is the invisible Church and relates to the visible Church in the same way as *Ding an sich* (thing-in-itself) relates to *Erscheinung* (appearance, phenomenon). This relation implies that if the thing-in-itself is related to its phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) and is manifested, its appearance (*Erscheinung*) cannot definitely mean the presence of the thing-in-itself – the latter both may be or may not be behind it.

This is the way in which Samarín explains the doctrine of the Church:

The words of the Scripture “The Spirit of God blows where it wills” do not mean that it is itself only on condition that it not show itself; nor do they mean that everything that is accessible to the senses is to the same degree a direct manifestation of the Spirit; they mean, on the contrary, that the Spirit does manifest itself, and that it does so in complete liberty – or, in other words, that every form, every action, every word can at his discretion be its organ. Why then, to come back to the Church, should we suppose that it cannot be but invisible, that is to say, deprived of the faculty to *one* palpable and visible form to the exclusion of all others?¹¹

However, a logical question arises of how one can distinguish a phenomenon representing the thing-in-itself from the same phenomenon that is empty and that has nothing behind it. Samarín believes there are no objective criteria and only an inner sense of truth can be of help here:

The Spirit of God is not an abstraction: it exists and manifests himself, it speaks and acts – seek it in good faith, seek it always and you will be able to perceive it; but if, wearying from your exertions, you hope by an act of exterior submission to still the cry of your conscience with years for the whole of your being to be impregnated with truth, the Spirit of God will escape you and you will find yourself face to face with an idol.¹²

a letter dated 3 April 1869 in *The correspondence of Iu. Samarín and Baroness Rahden*, op. cit., p. 104). Hegel is not mentioned a single time.

¹¹ *The correspondence of Iu. Samarín and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., pp. 145–146.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 147.

Finally, it could be noted that the correspondents were searching for a satisfactory German translation of the Slavonic word *обличение* (*oblicheniye*) in the Epistle of St Paul to the Hebrews: “Вера есть чаемых извещение, вещей обличение невидимых” (“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence of things* not seen,” Heb 11:1).

Rahden used the Lutheran traditional translation, with *Zeugniss* as the equivalent. Samarin did not agree: *Zeugniss*¹³ does not convey the meaning of *обличение*... The root of the word *обличение* is *лик* (“image, form”). *Обличение* – noun, formed from the verb, makes the process organic by which what is invisible by its essence acquires for human intelligence the certitude of a visible object, becomes accessible to contemplation.¹⁴

In response, Rahden offered several options that she came across in various translations of the extract into different European languages,¹⁵ eventually arriving at her own:

Ist nicht der Glaube eine innere Veranschaulichung (visualisation) des Unsichtbaren? gleichwie die sichtbare Kirche nicht eine sichtbare Gemeinschaft von Christen ist, sondern der Geist Gottes u s.w.¹⁶

However, Samarin did not find the word suitable: “If I were convinced that everyone would understand *Veranschaulichung* as you interpret it, I should not have criticism, but being in doubt I would prefer *Versichtbaren des Unsichtbaren*¹⁷.”¹⁸ Hence he prefers “confidence of things” (*Versichtbaren*) to “evidence” (*Zeugniss*).

If “evidence” connotes external objectivity, “confidence,” on the contrary, underlines the subjective aspect of faith that allows us to perceive the presence of the thing-in-itself in the phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) of an empty sign.

With this in mind, a more detailed comparison of Rahden’s translation with the original can be made. The translation is very accurate, and as a rule renders the words in accordance with their original usage. For example, *Erscheinung*, proposed by Samarin instead of *Selbstoffenbarung*, is the equivalent of the Russian word *проявление*. Rahden almost always translates it this way. There

¹³ Evidence (German).

¹⁴ *The correspondence of Iu. Samarin and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., p. 136.

¹⁵ See *ibidem*, pp. 139–141.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 140–141 (“Is not inner faith visualization (*Veranschaulichung*) of the Invisible? Likewise the Visible Church is not the Visible Christian community, but the Spirit of God etc.” (German)).

¹⁷ Confidence of things not seen (German).

¹⁸ *The correspondence of Iu. Samarin and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., p. 149.

are only two deviations from Khomyakov's text. In the first such instance, the translation omits the word *проявление* and on the whole conveys Khomyakov's idea rather loosely.¹⁹ However, Rahden just uses the variant proposed by Samarín.²⁰

The second case is of greater interest, as Rahden (upon Samarín's tacit agreement) adds the term *Erscheinung* for clarification in those instances where the word *проявление* is not used by Khomyakov. The phrase: "the works of those, who it (the Church) is composed of"²¹ is translated by Rahden as follows: "die Werke der Individuen, aus denen sie in ihrer sichtbaren *Erscheinung* (italics mine – P.Kh.) besteht,"²² i.e. "the works of those, who it is composed of in its visible *appearance* (*Erscheinung*)."

Leaving aside the question of whether this understanding of the Church can be considered Orthodox (Samarín himself, being fully convinced of his views, did not doubt that "the great majority of our theologians, if they were called upon to judge me, would find me tainted with heresy"²³), it is important to consider whether Samarín's interpretation can be taken to correspond to Khomyakov's thought.²⁴

If the work *The Church is One* is viewed from this position, one cannot but admit that the opposition of the Church-phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) and Church-thing-in-itself may be instructive in a number of ways.

First, the Church ostensibly remains the thing-in-itself for those on the outside. A case in point is the interpretation of *Filioque*. Upon separating from the Church, the West lost its understanding of the mysteries of the Trinity and the relationship within it (*Ding an sich*) and made appearance (*Erscheinung*) a dogma.

¹⁹ Khomiakov's text: "ибо Господь Иисус Христос знает Свое достояние, и Церковь, в которой живёт Он, знает внутренним знанием и не может не знать своих проявлений" (А. С. Хомяков, *Полное собрание сочинений*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 8), was translated as: "Denn Christus kennt das Seine, und die Kirche in der Er lebt, ist sich, kraft einer inneren Erkenntnis, die ihr nie fehlen kann, alles Dessen, worin sich ihr Wesen offenbart, vollkommen bewusst" (*Versuch einer katechetischen Darstellung der Lehre von der Kirche*, op. cit., p. 13). The English translation: A. Khomiakov, *The Church is One*, op. cit., p. 200: "Christ knows His own inheritance, and the Church in which He lives knows by inward knowledge, and cannot help knowing, her own manifestations."

²⁰ See *The correspondence of Iu. Samarín and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., p. 135.

²¹ А.С. Хомяков. *Полное собрание сочинений*, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 12.

²² *Versuch einer katechetischen Darstellung der Lehre von der Kirche*, op. cit., p. 18.

²³ *The correspondence of Iu. Samarín and Baroness Rahden (1861–1876)*, op. cit., p. 146.

²⁴ The question is hardly ever asked by researchers. For example, setting out Khomiakov's theory on the Church Bernhard Plank in *Katholicet und Sobornost'* uses Samarín's definition of the Church from the Introduction without providing any comment. See B. Plank, *Katholicität und Sobornost'*, Würzburg 1960, p. 59.

Communities of Christians which had broken away from the Holy Church could no longer confess (inasmuch as they now could not comprehend with the Spirit) the procession of the Holy Spirit, in the Godhead itself, from the Father only; but from that time they were obliged to confess only the external mission of the Spirit into all creation, a mission which comes to pass, not only from the Father, but also through the Son.²⁵

However, it appears that this perception is more than a visual aberration developed by the unworthy. Rather the concept can be expressed via a *ratio*: “the appearance (*Erscheinung*)” is indicative of “the thing-in-itself,” but is not the same – the “thing-in-itself” is behind “the appearance (*Erscheinung*).”

“The Christian also knows, by means of the faith, that the Church upon earth, although it is invisible, is always clothed in a visible form.”²⁶ But: “The Visible Church is not the visible society of Christians.”²⁷ Or: “the true Christian knows by faith that the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church [...] will remain on earth invisible to fleshly eyes, or to the understanding which is wise according to the flesh, among the visible society of Christians.”²⁸ However:

The believer, while with the eyes of the body and of reason he sees the Church in her outward manifestations only, by the Spirit takes knowledge of her in her sacraments and prayers and works well pleasing to God. Wherefore he does not confuse her with the society which bears the name of Christians.²⁹

The same idea is conspicuous in all these quotes: the Church *is not* a society of Christians. Whatever the idea opposes – the Church’s scientific and theological definitions or, for instance, Chaadayev’s ideas – it differs from them all in one important aspect. It is not about the structure of the Church and – more importantly – it is not about the Church’s foundation on earth being understood to have been given by the *living word of God*. As Khomyakov sees it, the Church is not attached to the earth by anything essential. It is neither a society of Christians, nor Christ’s kingdom, nor a temple founded on the rock of faith – Peter’s confession. It is, rather, “a unity of the grace of God, living in

²⁵ A. Khomiakoff, *The Church is One*, op. cit., p. 203. Cf. idem, *On the Western Confessions of Faith*, [in:] http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/khomiakov_church.aspx (02.01.2014): “Both Romanism and Protestantism have been plunged wholly (without suspecting it) into that logical antinomy into which every living thing falls as long as it sees things only from the logical point of view.”

²⁶ A. Khomiakov, *The Church is One*, op. cit., p. 205.

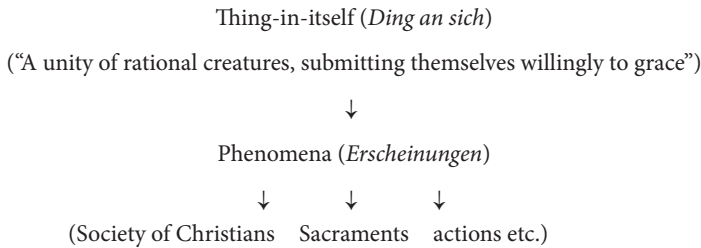
²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 204.

²⁹ Ibidem.

a multitude of rational creatures, submitting themselves willingly to grace.”³⁰
Ding an sich.³¹

It is this “thing-in-itself” behind the appearance (*Erscheinung*) that God’s grace opens to the Church’s true inner members.³² The Structure of the Church, as Khomiakov sees it, may be presented as follows



The opportunity to see “the thing-in-itself” behind phenomena and to become familiar with it presents itself thanks to God’s grace. This explains the clarification Samaritani made of Rahden’s translation: the Church’s true *Selbstoffenbarung* (self-revelation) may not necessarily be *Erscheinung* (appearance, phenomenon). Equally, the essential role that Khomyakov ascribes to the grace of God (“his obedience itself is of grace”³³) should make up for the narrowness of Kant’s epistemology and allow for the advancement of a thesis about the beneficial power of love which overcomes the opposition of appearance or phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) and the thing-in-itself. However, this approach eventually leads Khomyakov to problems which he never managed to resolve, the most significant of these being whether the perception of the thing-in-itself inspired by love can ever be accompanied by the lack of love in the appearances (*Erscheinungen*).

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 193.

³¹ In light of this, it is perhaps easier to understand Khomyakov’s Eucharist theory in *The Church is One*, with its insistence that the sacrament does exist: “But this Sacrament is in the Church and not for the outside world, not for fire, not for irrational creatures, not for corruption, and not for the man who has not heard the law of Christ in the Church itself” (ibidem, pp. 207–208). In other words, the Eucharist bread and wine (as “phenomena”) manifest their relation to the “thing-in-itself” perceived by believers during the Sacrament only and remain inaccessible to the “outside world” and “elements” that have to do with an “empty” phenomenon.

³² “All the signs of the Church, whether inward or outward, are recognized only by herself, and by those whom grace calls to be members of her” (ibidem, p. 195).

³³ Ibidem, p. 221.

Much later, Samarin attempts to resolve this problem. However, consideration of these issues is beyond the scope of this study, whose original objective – clarifying the meaning of Khomyakov’s tract prompted by Samarin’s interpretation – has been achieved. Thanks to Samarin, it can be argued that Khomyakov’s *The Church is One* is one of the first attempts to place Kant’s philosophy in the service of Orthodox theology. A considered appraisal of the achievements and failures of this approach may become an object of further studies.

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Homo Liturgus and *Homo Religiosus*: Philosophical Parallels Between the Theoretical Positions of P. Florensky and M. Eliade

A certain number of approaches to the studies of religious phenomena which are methodologically and meaningfully close to the Western phenomenology of religion emerged and were developed in Russian philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A considerable study of the phenomenology of religious consciousness emerges in the works of Vladimir Solovyov. It is a reflexive description of the experiences, stages and particular qualities of spiritual life which go hand in hand with the works of F. Heiler and G. van de Leeuw, 20th century religious phenomenologists.

The justification of intersubjective speculations about the sacred is one of the central issues in the debates about the Western phenomenology of religion. This is also described from the perspective of conciliarity and religious consciousness by the brothers S. N. Trubetskoy and E. N. Trubetskoy, making their ideas similar to those of R. Otto and F. Heiler.

The unique nature of phenomenological thinking was reflected upon significantly in the conception of V. V. Rozanov. He was the first to introduce a concept of “sacred” in the Russian philosophy (it had previously been defined as “divine” and “absolute” before).

P. Florensky’s philosophical heritage developed the ideas of Solovyov, of the Trubetskoy brothers and of V. V. Rozanov, as well as a combination of phenomenological methods and research techniques about the matter of faith, the usage of intentionality, of intersubjectivity and about the sacred.

P. Florensky does not question the reality of spiritualistic phenomena, but seeks to clarify the true meaning of religious consciousness and religious cult. Religious consciousness was determined by P. Florensky as possessing a proper i.e. divine essence in the act of perception, unlike the secular one (diabolical). The concept of cult becomes the central point in the construction of his philosophical anthropology, and the basis of perceiving the human essence.

In general, P. Florensky's philosophical anthropology is a kind of synthesis of church and occult philosophical views on the one hand, and of different sciences on the other hand. It is an attempt to construct some kind of holistic and esoteric science about human nature.

Florensky stated the main principles of anthropological philosophy in several works written between 1908–1922: *At the Watersheds of Thought; Cult, Religion and Culture; Iconostasis*. The main place among them is occupied by *Philosophy of the Cult*. Florensky conceptualized the human essence from two perspectives – as *homo faber* and *homo liturgus*. The man as a business entity, *homo faber*, is perceived as a man producing tools. The economic life of humanity is defined as “self-projection,”¹ as the extension of the human body into the Universe, a gradual submission of the Universe to the man.

The earthly form of human existence realizes a *practical* activity creating tools and machines and a *theoretical one* creating concepts and terms yet Florensky also specifies a third activity, the liturgical one, that generates shrines.

Referring to the Bible, P. Florensky indicates that the power over creations was granted to mankind by God (who ordered Adam to give names to the creatures, denoting his power over them). Therefore, the aim of the historical process must be the return of a special sanctified power over the world, power through love, to humanity. That power is possible through “theurgy” and sanctification of human corporalness and material world elements.

This sanctification can be achieved in sacral (by a cult), liturgical activities.

All the relics of life, thoughts and deeds of the Christian ascend to the church cult and to its basis and center, the Divine Eucharist. Everything that becomes secular in a culture comes from a cult: philosophy, science, forms of public organization, art. The cult and its sacred area as a basis (the sacrament of Holy Communion) becomes the only basis for a living thought, research and the public²

¹ П. Флоренский, *Собрание сочинений. Философия культа (Опыт православной антропологии)*, Москва 2004, pp. 133–134.

² Ibidem, p. 135.

– P. Florensky notes in *Philosophy of the Cult*. Florensky underlines that the religious activity constitutes the authentic human essence. He calls the human as a subject of religious life *homo liturgus*.

In *The Pillar and the Ground of the Truth* we find a development of the theme. P. Florensky represents here the Orthodox cult as a living organism, where all is related to everything, all is reflected in other beings and others are reflected in themselves. The aim of a cult is to connect the earthly and the celestial, to raise man from being worldly to being heavenly.

P. Florensky perceives worship as the foundation and source of all other types of human activity: worldview (philosophy and science), housekeeping, art. As they drift away from the cult and become secularized and diminished, they lose their general significance and revolt not only against God, but also against the person.

There is an ontological disintegration of man when the empirical personality (where human consciousness is concentrated) loses his eternal “root” and becomes “the phenomenon without noumenon,” a pure subjectivity, losing an objective reality while existing. The blind pressure of internal chaos destroys the “reasonable personal idea of a man.”³ A man, whose life is dissociated from a cult, loses internal unity and harmony.

The authentic essence of man, as P. Florensky concluded, is achieved in a religious cult, where a balance is established between the spontaneous “ousia” and reasonable “hypostasis” of man, and all the empirical entity is illuminated by “the energy of God’s image.”⁴

This deification of the empirical composition of a man is perceived by P. Florensky in the psychological sense, as establishing a holistic “balance,” harmony of the human personality and a claim of living duality – that is a genuine human and world being.

Man in Florensky’s anthropology possesses a simultaneously given and prescribed ultimate goal of being divinized. He is an actual infinity because he possesses the image of God (superempirical, perfect, originally deified eternal “root”). He is potentially infinite in being similar to God.

The similarity to God is in the deification of the whole empirical composition of a man, in transformation and in empowering him with the God Image. The deification of the empirical personality is a vital spiritual self-disclosure, it is the introduction to Eternity as “superfinite” limit of perfection, and this is a gradual unfolding of the highest, super empirical and transpersonal reality, the sacred.

³ Н. К. Бонецкая, “*Homo faber*” и “*homo liturgus*”, “Вопросы философии”, 2010, no 3, pp. 90–110.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

Thus, in a religious cult we can see an “encounter” of “transcendent with the immanent,” “conditional with unconditional,” “worldly with celestial” as well as the establishment of a vital harmonious interaction between “essence” and “hypostasis.”⁵ A man is a living unity of all these realities and therefore a religious cult is his vital necessity, a condition of his existence.

P. Florensky considers cult activity in the context of the theory of mutual similarity of man and the world, and gives it a cosmic, universal importance. By claiming and transforming his own genesis, a man claims and transforms the genesis of the world.

Therefore, giving great importance to the human mission of being a *homo faber*, the one who produces tools, Florensky still considers the liturgical activity, being *homo liturgus*, to be the supreme purpose of a human. This understanding of the ratio between the sacred and the worldly in the essence of the human existence by P. Florensky prefigures in many ways and runs parallel to the Western tradition of phenomenological religious studies presented in the concept of *homo religiosus* by M. Eliade.

The subject of M. Eliade’s research is religious experience, the experience of the sacred. By analyzing the diversity of mythological subjects and contents of the world religions, M. Eliade emphasizes the importance of the religious experience. The religious experience creates a special perception of the world, as the manifestation of the divine. The transcendent beginning sets the meaning, significance and reality of space and time and lays the foundations for the formation of the entire culture. M. Eliade wrote that religion does not simply mean the belief in Gods or in spirits. It is the experience of a reality and the source of reality experience.

In his preface to *La nostalgie des origines: méthodologie et histoire des religions* M. Eliade notices:

The sacred is an element in the structure of consciousness, not a stage in a history of consciousness. [...] The experience of the sacred, by disclosing being, meaning and truth in an unknown, chaotic, and fearful world, prepared a way for systematic thought.⁶

Thus, according to M. Eliade, the essence of a human being is constituted by the religious experience.

From an ontological and anthropological perspective, M. Eliade concludes that the *Homo religiosus* is a man whose experience of the sacred becomes the

⁵ Cf. P. Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth. An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, trans. B. Jakim, Princeton–Oxford 2004, p. 363.

⁶ M. Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, Chicago 1969, pp. ii–iii.

manner of existence. A man cannot live but in a sacred world, because only this world participates in his being and it truly exists. The concept of *homo religiosus* can be comprehended from the standpoint of the religious existentialism, as the monk Barlaam (Gorokhov) mentions.⁷

Religion solves the existential questions of human existence (as well as world existence) in the context of man's connection to the Divine Being or the Sacral. The Divine Being is not just an object of human thought. It is a living source, and a person needs communication and a union with it to solve their existential problems. From M. Eliade's perspective, the existential crisis that league modern man can be overcome only if a person acknowledges himself as a *homo religiosus*. Similar speculations can be traced also in P. Florensky's philosophy.

Thus, M. Eliade's concept of *homo religiosus* is close to P. Florensky's concept of a man as *homo liturgus*: "Liturgical activity is central; it is an activity directly expressing the intimacy of the human being, it is mainly human in character, since a man is *homo liturgus*."⁸

Sacred reality in P. Florensky's and M. Eliade's perception is also practically identical and associated with the timeless, eternal, unchangeable, self-identical and non-flowing being of Parmenides. The sacred is perceived as a meeting of the immanent with the transcendent and it comes as a forward basis for structuring human existence. "The border of the cult – is the boundary of being. A cult gives birth to the world in the minds,"⁹ P. Florensky wrote. "To be – or, rather, to become – a man means to be religious,"¹⁰ M. Eliade concludes.

The similarities indicated, however, do not mean borrowing and do not abolish substantial differences (the latter is a separate considerable theme intact in this article) and, in particular, the fact that M. Eliade, unlike P. Florensky, interprets the concept of religion extremely broadly, going beyond Christianity.

In general, the Russian religious tradition was established before the European one and remained unknown in the West for a long time. The similarities indicated in this article are, on the whole, the result of the common origins of the religious philosophy – the increase in antipositivism, the growing influence of theories such as philosophy of life, philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology, as well as the awareness of the failure of reductionism and evolutionism in religious studies.

⁷ Иеромонах Варлаам (Горохов), *Религиоведческая концепция М. Элиаде в свете православного богословия*, [in:] <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/291485.html> (09.12.2013).

⁸ П. Флоренский, *Лекция 2. Культ, религия и культура*, [in:] idem, *Из богословского наследия*, "Богословские труды", 1977, no 17, p. 93.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 90.

¹⁰ M. Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, op. cit., p. iii.

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Eschatology and the Religious Meaning of Culture in Russian Philosophy of the 20th Century

The problem of culture justification, of revealing the true religious meaning of creativity in the sphere of establishing cultural values was one of the central ones in Russian religious philosophy at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The works by V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov, G. Fedotov are remarkable for their aim at finding ways of reacquiring lost Christian cultural origins and their careful attention to the religious meaning of cultural heritage. According to A. Men, their works are especially notable for their deep understanding of the nature of culture in Russian religious-philosophical thought. At the same time, the works of the Russian philosophers are marked by an especially eschatological tension.

There are a number of reasons for such an attention to the issue of the connection between eschatology and culture in the Russian religious-philosophical thought of the 20th century. Partially it is due to the sociocultural situation of the contemporary period. The acute cultural crisis, the collapse of traditional values and institutions, the historic catastrophes of the 20th century have sharpened the attention of both Russian and European philosophers to the issue of the interconnection between eschatology and culture. But it is the desire to preserve the values of Christian spiritual heritage in the new historical context which has served for V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov and G. Fedotov as the main reason for resorting to this topic. Conceiving such a conception of eschatology and culture that would not only be consistent with Christian historical experience and social practice but also would meet the challenges of contemporary civilization, has become a crucial problem remains relevant to this day.

For Russian religious philosophers and for a number of European philosophers of the 20th century, the analysis of culture in its tragedy (the threat of losing the results of man's activities) has caused it to be observed from

eschatological point of view. But the conception of *eschaton* in the context of contemporary world cannot be a duplicate of eschatological ideas dating back to early Christianity. The new social experience of Christianity and Christian culture of the past centuries have their inevitable impact on eschatological conceptions and demand a new interpretation of the ageless eschatological theme.

From the point of view of Russian religious philosophers, such a new interpretation of eschatology should be based on a reconsideration of the role of a personality and the results of his or her creative activities. The realization of an eschatological scenario depends on the efforts of man's spirit. "The coming of Kingdom of God depends on man's efforts, deeds and struggle. It is theanthropic by nature."¹ Following V. Solovyov, the theme of theanthropism has become one of the main ones in the works by N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov and G. Fedotov. Its interpretation goes back to the notion of synergy, the synthesis of the divine goodness and man's free will. It links the thoughts of Russian religious philosophers about culture and eschatology with the themes of freedom, creativity and personal responsibility in society.

G. Fedotov holds a special place among other Russian religious philosophers of the 20th century who had considered the problems of culture. According to A. Men, philosophy of culture was his "axial" theme. Fedotov constantly touched upon the issue of the link between eschatology and culture in his works. The most detailed view on this problem was expressed by the author in his essay called *Эсхатология и культура* (*Eschatology and Culture*), which was first published in the "Новый Град" ("New City") journal (1938, no 13) and was later included in the posthumous compilation of his articles. In this work, his addressing of the problem of the link between eschatology and culture reflected the late period in his consideration of the central theme – the justification of cultural and social creativity based upon the values and ideals of the Christian tradition. The essay contains an interpretation of Christian eschatology which comes from the need for cultural creativity aiming at the fulfillment of eschatological prophecies. The end of the eschatological drama, according to G. Fedotov, necessarily holds the fruits of cultural creativity. Here the philosopher's views are very close to the ideas of N. Berdyaev and P. Teilhard de Chardin (which are considered in more detail in one of my other works).² Fedotov wrote:

¹ Г. Федотов, *Эсхатология и культура*, "Новый Град", 1938, no 13, p. 47.

² See D. Gusev, *Ideas of Active-Creative Eschatology in the Dialogue between Russian and European Philosophical Thoughts of the 20th Century: Nikolai Berdyaev and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, [in:] *Russian Thought in Europe. Reception, Polemics, Development*, eds. T. Obolevitch, T. Homa, J. Bremer, Kraków 2013, pp. 347–363.

Man's personality is the supreme thing of the world. And if it irrevocably dies, what is the world of its creations, its imprints crystallized in culture is worth for?³

“No one lifts his little finger to do the smallest task unless moved, however obscurely, by the conviction that he is contributing infinitesimally (at least indirectly) to the building of something definitive – that is to say, to your work, my God...,” wrote Teilhard de Chardin about the value of creativity in the context of eschatology.⁴ G. Fedotov's credo considering culture is the necessity to combine cultural creation, personal creative activity, with eschatological anticipation. That is why the Russian religious thinker resorted to Christian eschatology in his research.

G. Fedotov wrote that two radical trends prevailed in interpreting culture and eschatology. The first one is the conception of endless determinate progress secularized in European consciousness. The second is the conception of extra-cultural (culture-negating) eschatology of radical religious sects, based on a literal interpretation of apocalyptic prophesies. According to G. Fedotov, both the idea of culture without eschatology in the framework of the endless progress of humanity and the idea of extra-cultural eschatology which negates the importance of personality and culture are inconsistent with Christian experience of Revelation and history.

For the philosopher, the idea of determinate progress means the negation of the importance of moral choice freedom for a personality in the history of mankind. To recognize the endlessness of progress would mean the negation of the purpose of history (as it necessarily presupposes the finiteness of the historical process and asserts that there will be the fact of *eschaton* in the future). In his criticism of the endless progress conception, the philosopher makes reference to the tradition whose origin goes back to Saint Augustine and his teaching of the two cities. Here is Fyodorov's main conclusion: “History is man's world, not the world of nature and not the divine world, and freedom reigns in it.”⁵ History is interpreted by G. Fedotov as a tragic mystery, a tragedy whose main character is a personality who determines the direction of historical process. Man was not abandoned by God but divine energy may determine the historical process only when mankind is totally deified, which would mean *eschaton*. As O. Ivonina said: “The quintessence of Fedotov's Christian historiosophy is an understanding of man's history as a universal

³ Г. Федотов, *Эсхатология и культура*, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴ P. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu. An Essay on the Interior Life*, trans. W. Collins, New York 1960, p. 56.

⁵ Г. Федотов, *Правда побежденных*, “Современные записки”, 1933, no 1, p. 366.

process of man's freedom manifestation."⁶ G. Fedotov emphasized the moral and spiritual content of freedom, whose essence is the creative link between a personality and God. History's outcome depends on every action, every choice made by a single person. The inner world of a personality, which reveals itself through words or action, inevitably changes social existence. G. Fedotov considers freedom to be one of the elements of Christian culture in which the value of a personality and the value of the society as a free unity of personalities are asserted. So, the philosopher's view of *eschaton* is based on the priority of freedom, and, first of all, the moral and spiritual freedom of a personality.

Such an eschatology, which negates importance of creativity and culture (passive eschatology, as N. Berdyaev has said), corrupts the moral sphere of a personality's life and paralyzes a man's social will. This is an eschatology of fatalism, fear and hopelessness. Bulgakov expressed a similar idea in writing about destructive character of eschatology as a program of historical practice. Eschatology as the inner disposition of a personality, on the contrary, has a high value.

G. Fedotov emphasized the importance of active-creative interpretation of eschatological anticipation in Christianity. Tense eschatological anticipation, recognition of dire threat of nonexistence may become a catalyst for a personality's creative activity. "Awareness of death may become a source [...] of constant experience broadening,"⁷ as the philosopher wrote. In other words, the fact of the awareness of death should necessarily have an influence on man's life arrangement in the context of its potential and realization of creative activity. In a similar way, in eschatological context the awareness of inevitable demise of culture should have an influence on the arrangement of one's social life and underpin man's high social responsibility. Such an understanding, according to G. Fedotov, in the fullest possible manner reveals the essence of Christian attitude to the service of the people and Christian eschatology's nature.

In his analysis of Christian eschatology, G. Fedotov thoroughly considered two of its elements: the nature of time and the form of the eschatological finale. Consideration of the eschatological nature of time has led Fedotov to the conclusion that not only the existence of a personality that stands in the face of death is catastrophically fragile, but the existence of the world culture and its values is equally frail. "Death and eschatology determine the spiritual attitude: awareness of relativity, fragility, perishability of any human work and the thirst for absolute perfection which can't be satiated by culture," wrote

⁶ О. И. Ивонина *Время свободы. Проблема направленности истории в христианской исторической мысли России XIX – середины XX века*, Новосибирск 2000, p. 288.

⁷ Г. Федотов, *Эсхатология и культура*, op. cit., p. 50.

the philosopher. Thinking about time in an eschatological context caused G. Fedotov to recognize the dual nature of eschatological anticipation. From the psychological point of view, it is expressed through hope and expectation of the transfiguring of existence on the one hand and through the fear of catastrophic demise on the other. Such a duality inevitably follows from personal freedom and thus makes the history of mankind unpredictable. Man himself determines his attitude to the issue of eschatological finale. It is to a considerable extent influenced by an understanding of the *eschaton's* form.

The eschatological finale, the second element in the analysis of Christian eschatology conducted by G. Fedotov, may either be tragic or optimistic in its character. The philosopher developed Fyodorov's idea about the conditional meaning of eschatological prophecies:

A prophecy is not an assertion of inevitability. It is not a chain of iron regularities leading into the future.⁸

Eschatology implies both the threat of a catastrophe, the existence's demise and also hope for the world's transfiguration and the coming of Kingdom of God. The cultural activity of a personality is more characteristic of the optimistic variant of eschatology inspired by N. Fyodorov's ideas, although its pessimistic variant is not totally excluded.

The third variant of eschatology which combines the ideas of death and apocatastasis, the expectation of universal absolution, is rejected by G. Fyodorov and considered "theologically faulty." The choice is limited by the pessimistic eschatology allowing for the demise of history, culture and most of mankind, and the eschatology of conditional prophecies implying the possibility of the world's transfiguration and assigning the eternal meaning to creativity in the sphere of culture. A similar view of *eschaton* was expressed by P. Teilhard de Chardin.

So, neither culture without eschatology, nor eschatology without culture can be consistent with Christian tradition and social experience. They also cannot help to face the challenges of the present time. Such an interpretation of the indispensable and essential links between eschatology and culture is grounded by an understanding of the Church's social nature and cultural nature of its activity in the society. In relation to the latter, G. Fedotov uses the ideas conceived in Russian philosophical thought by N. Fyodorov – the ideas of the "common task" as the inevitable aim of universal salvation and especially the idea of the conditional character of eschatological prophecies.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 48.

G. Fedotov formulated a new interpretation of tragic eschatology which includes cultural creativity as a theantropic process and the synergy of the divine will and man's activity. This is what the philosopher wrote about such a variant of *eschaton*:

Resurrection and transfiguration, the fruits of all the man's efforts, creative deeds ruined by the tragedy of the mortal time – they return in it. Nothing of genuine value will be lost in such a world. Culture will resurrect in glory just as a dead body. Then all our fragmentary achievements, all our approximations of truth, all our imperfect luck will find their place composed, as if stones, in the walls of the Eternal City. This thought reconciles one with the tragedy in time and may inspire to a deed, not only personal, but also social.⁹

In his works, the philosopher again and again returned to the most important problems of culture's existence. Are the cultural values of mankind eternal? What is the true meaning of cultural creativity? What is the role of culture in the fulfillment of eschatological prophecies? How is returning to the roots of Christian culture possible in contemporary society? G. Fedotov negates both culture, which is taken out of eschatological context (culture based on the idea of determinate progress), and such an eschatology, which denies culture and deprecates the results of the cultural creativity of a personality. Such a solution to the problems of cultural existence in the context of eschatology is not random. Here his ideas are close to those of V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev and S. Bulgakov. Solovyov's ideas of theanthropism, theocracy, theurgy which reveal the role of man in eschatology had a great influence on G. Fedotov's philosophy of culture. The philosopher has fully accepted V. Solovyov's teaching of theanthropism, in which he is close to N. Berdyaev and S. Bulgakov. Fedotov also developed the problem of synergy, of the link between the divine goodness and human will connected with the problem of creativity.

G. Fedotov's thoughts are close to N. Berdyaev's ideas about culture's tragedy and the fundamental impossibility to fully embody the ideal in history and culture of mankind. At the same time, G. Fedotov does not agree with N. Berdyaev's drawing of a sharp contrast between a creative act and its results. While N. Berdyaev looked upon creativity as a possibility to draw man closer to God by revealing God's image in a personality, G. Fedotov placed an emphasis on the interpretation of creativity as a result of the synergy of the divine goodness and man's free will, which grounded the justification of cultural creativity in an eschatological context.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 55.

G. Fedotov's ideas were close to S. Bulgakov's thoughts in his understanding of culture's religious essence. Culture as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon unites rational elements (economy, politics, science, technology) and irrational ones (spiritual world), while the philosopher emphasizes the latter. The philosopher was primarily interested in spiritual culture, in the research of deep interaction of culture and religious faith, which is needed to understand personality, and also in the concrete historical manifestation of common Christian ideal in Russian culture. G. Fedotov, just as S. Bulgakov, spoke about the religious, sacral meaning of culture. The philosopher considers the cult as a basis of culture, and for European culture (including the Russian one) such a basis is Christianity. It follows that the consolidation around the single dominant form of the Church was viewed by G. Fedotov as an opportunity to enter the new era of Christian culture. The philosopher also shared S. Bulgakov's understanding of asceticism as the essence of true cultural creativity.

The problem of the connection between Christianity and culture, between culture and eschatology raised by Fedotov has much in common not only with the ideas of Russian religious philosophers, but also with the thoughts of the Catholic and Protestant philosophers of the 20th century (C. Dawson, P. Tillich, P. Teilhard de Chardin, G. Marcel). Considering culture as a sphere of man's self-realization G. Fedotov avoided the extremities of both anthropocentric humanism and radical theocentrism. Among other things, Fedotov criticized many of the propositions of K. Barth's theocentric theology.

The key thought of the Russian philosopher is surprisingly in tune with the ideas about culture and eschatology of P. Teilhard de Chardin. The philosopher wrote:

Nothing of genuine value will be lost in such a world. Culture will resurrect in glory just as a dead body. Then all our fragmentary achievements, all our approximations of truth, all our imperfect luck will find their place composed, as if stones, in the walls of the Eternal City. This thought reconciles one with the tragedy in time and may inspire to a deed, not only personal, but also social.¹⁰

Just as P. Teilhard de Chardin, Fedotov wrote about the need for maximal exertion of all the efforts of a personality in his or her creative actions. Teilhard de Chardin's eschatology requires the highest level of social activity and self-discipline from a personality. This is how the Russian philosopher expressed this thought in his credo:

¹⁰ Ibidem.

Live in such a way as if you were to die today, and at the same time do it so as if you were immortal. And here is the maxim of cultural activity: work in such a way as if history would never end, and at the same time do it so as if it would end today.¹¹

In his studies of culture, G. Fedotov paid special attention to the problem of its crisis in the 20th century. The break with Christianity and Christian basis of life he considered as its main cause. Holding with the idea about the crisis of his contemporary culture, the thinker advocated the necessity of taking an active and socially responsible position in preserving its values. Many of G. Fedotov's ideas are in tune with those of J. Huizinga, the Dutch philosopher. Both of them looked upon the crisis of European culture rather optimistically and believed that it was possible to overcome it. Allowing for the dehumanization of the contemporary civilization which is hostile towards Christianity and the inhumanity of its main forms (technology, art, government, etc.), G. Fedotov saw the way to the salvation of culture in returning to its Christian basis. Thus, the ideas of G. Fedotov and other Russian religious philosophers (V. Solovyov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov), considering the link between culture and eschatology are really valuable not only for revealing the peculiarities of Russian religious and philosophical thought of the 20th century and its connection with European philosophy, but also for the pursuit of new ways to overcome the crisis phenomena of the contemporary culture and society.

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The Torah Lost and Regained: Contemporary Russian Thought in Search of its Biblical Roots

Globalization has brought nations and cultures into closer contact; the challenges of the 21st century are relevant to all of us. In the context of multi-religious and multicultural societies, with rapid transformations in the fields of culture, economics, politics, etc., we need to examine our own attitudes regarding our responsibilities to the larger world. Change is constant, yet the manner in which we engage with it will define our future. As my specialization is not philosophy but rather the history of culture in relation to Judaism and Christianity, in this paper I will attempt: 1. to present the search for biblical values in contemporary Russian thought; 2. to argue that the idea of “the Torah lost” does not fully represent the Russian thought of the 20th century; and 3. to show that religion was understood by Russian religious philosophy at the beginning of the previous century as relationship with God.

It is not cultural traditions or philosophies, but human beings that meet and share, ignore or enrich one another, clash and fight. That is why the recent publication of the collection of articles entitled *The Philosophy of the Law of the Pentateuch* (2012)¹ may be considered to be a special event for Russia today. Its more than thirty authors represent the intellectual elite of modern Russia which is seeking new values and a new orientation. This publication reflects the return of at least some part of Russian society to biblical sources and Christian values. The volume is divided into three main parts: papers written specially for this publication (pp. 31–392), materials presented at the round table organized by the Interdisciplinary Center for the Philosophy of

¹ *Философия права Пятикнижия*, eds. А. А. Гусейнов, Е. Б. Рашковский, Москва 2012.

Law on 24.04.2012 (pp. 395–512), and materials presented by the Moscow Lawyers Club under the title *Bible and Constitution*, previously published in 1998 (pp. 515–572). The first part consists of fourteen articles and deals mainly with the philosophy of law, justice, right and authority, and analyzes the influence of the Torah of Moses on the different European philosophical and legal doctrines. The second part presents the different opinions of several prominent scholars on such issues as law, rights, the state and other matters, which are connected with the authors' understanding of the contemporary status of the Russian Federation as a constitutional state.² The Interdisciplinary Center for the Philosophy of Law (ICPL) is the research-educational association founded by the Institute of Philosophy and the Institute for State and Law of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Moscow – St Petersburg Philosophical Club in liaison with the judges of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation. At the core of the ICPL's conviction is the understanding of the philosophical comprehension of law in the country of Russia primarily as one of the main components of the higher values system of human existence.³ This publication is designed not just for a narrow circle of specialists but rather for a wider audience, and offers a discourse and language which is understandable for the public, and therefore could be shared with the wider world. It is important to start a discourse about God/Torah in relationship to the world using language the world will understand and hopefully grasp as relevant and meaningful.

The Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses) traditionally refers to the Hebrew term Torah⁴ or the Law of Moses. The Torah was understood as God's instruction or direction – the teaching of God to make known His way, and a summary of His precepts and commandments.⁵ Although Vladimir Sorokin, one of the authors of the publication mentioned above whose views are of special interest for this paper, points out that the term “torah” means exactly “law” or “legislation,” he adds that it might be understood as a way of following the divine law as well.⁶ Sorokin underlines that the Torah as a legal norm for ancient Israel was the spiritual and ethical norm as well. Torah was the spiritual

² П. Д. Баренбойм, *Библейский момент философии права*, [in:] *Философия права Пятикнижия*, op. cit., pp. 101–165. See *ibidem*, pp. 399–415.

³ *Философия права Пятикнижия*, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴ תּוֹרָה – Hebrew: 1. “direction,” “instruction” (asked of God in a given situation); 2. “law” (an established instruction) – derived from the root ירה – “to instruct,” “to teach.” See W. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Leiden 1988, pp. 388, 144.

⁵ Ps 1:119, and others.

⁶ В. В. Сорокин, *Тора: пространство правовое и пространство духовное*, [in:] *Философия права Пятикнижия*, op. cit., pp. 178–219.

foundation of the covenant with God that allowed Israelites to see in another an equal person and even more, to see the absolute value of another person (with the same value as themselves). According to his opinion, the organic unity of the Torah's three aspects (spiritual, ethical and legal) defines the measure of a person's freedom and responsibility at the same time. Thus it is the system of values that unifies the spiritual-ethical life of an individual and public ethics, and therefore the appropriate legislation. Sorokin considers the greatest values from the Torah's perspective to be: the relationships between an individual with God and the human being's faithfulness to God, human life and freedom, and justice (which is related to relationships with other human beings). These relationships he defines as "the internal Torah" and "the external Torah." If the inner being of a person is constructed according to the first (the internal Torah), then all of his/her outward life is regulated by the second one (the external Torah). There is nothing about spiritual experience or an encounter with God in Sorokin's presentation of the Torah; however it may be defined as *ortho-pathy* (or experiencing the Divine), when the author is speaking about the relationship between an individual and God, and *ortho-praxy*, which is the result of this revelational experience. Referring to Nikolai Berdyaev, Sorokin left the article's frames set by himself, but it is important for us to keep in mind that for Berdyaev, one of the most outstanding Russian thinkers, "the God of the Bible is not the Absolute, there is dramatic life and motion in Him, there is a relation to another man and the world."⁷ Sorokin sums up his article with a call to contemporary Russian society to seek "the Torah that we have lost" and challenges us to make the Torah the foundation for the state legal system that will answer all the needs of our society. The authors of the volume are in agreement with Abdusalam Guseinov regarding the understanding of law as one of humanity's spiritual sources and, although some statements and conclusions presented in the volume might be challenged, the central idea of this publication demonstrates the growing interest of contemporary Russian scholars in the biblical roots of the philosophy of law. The limitations of the paper format do not allow us to analyze each article in detail, however it is important to notice that all three parts of the volume are worth reading and hopefully this publication will inspire further research.

⁷ Quoted from K. Duda, *Jews and the implications of Judaism in the life and thought of Nikolai Berdyaev*, [in:] *The Influence of Jewish Culture on the Intellectual Heritage of Central and Eastern Europe*, eds. T. Obolevitch, J. Bremer, Kraków 2011, pp. 181–193.

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The challenge of postmodernity for our societies is comparable with the challenge of Hellenism for Jewish traditional religious views in late antiquity. The two tendencies present among Jews since the 5th century BCE were first, a search for cosmopolitanism – a society is drawn to mix with other societies (intermarriages helped to spread Judaism and not everyone considered this a negative development) and second, a tendency to separatism (the idea of preserving “the holy remnant”); these are well-known facts. After the three Jewish revolts against the Romans,⁸ the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, which was at the center of Jewish religious life, the nation’s history seemed to come to an end. A major national tragedy called for a new orientation, which became possible through the development of a new hermeneutics, which in its turn led to the formation of a theology (Rabbinic Judaism). In their deconstructed world, Jewish scholars (the sages of the Mishnah and Talmud) were creative in placing the Torah in its new context as a cornerstone: what was later known as *normative Judaism* (the new religion) started with Scriptural interpretation. Rather than the law in a strict sense, the concept of *torah* denotes direction, teaching and guidance that mean wisdom.⁹ From biblical times onwards, the concept of Torah changed constantly throughout Jewish history, beginning in the early rabbinical period, turning into the foundational symbol¹⁰ of Jewish culture. It actively related to and interacted with the cultural context of its time, continually receiving new interpretations. In a sense, the same was true for emerging Christianity – Jesus Himself was the first exegete and had been teaching His disciples the new (as we call it nowadays, the Christological) interpretation of Scripture. Jesus Christ

⁸ The great revolt in 66–73 CE, the revolt of the diaspora in 115–117 CE and the Bar-Kokhba revolt in 133–135 CE.

⁹ “See, I have imparted to you laws and rules, as the Lord my God has commanded me, for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. Observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, ‘Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people’” (Deut 4:5–6, NJPSV). The Jewish communities in the post-exilic era considered the realms of God’s law and of wisdom to be identical for various complex reasons. See E. J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from ben Sira to Paul: A Traditional Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, Tübingen 1985.

¹⁰ As an ideal construction, a symbol keeps in itself in a hidden form all possible manifestations of an object and creates a perspective for its endless unfolding (A. Losev). See A. Ф. Лосев, *Символ*, [in:] *Философская энциклопедия*, eds. Ф. В. Константинов et al., vol. 5, Москва 1970, p. 10.

presented Himself as the New Torah (Mt 5; Gal 6:2),¹¹ the end of the old Torah era and the new revelation for the fullness of time (Rom 10:4; Gal 4:4). Biblical interpretation – making God’s truth relevant to our world(s) and seeking Him above all – has been the way of faithful ministry for many prominent figures in the course of history. Thus the different approaches of Jewish and Christian exegesis (newly developed traditions of scholarship) met the needs of contemporary societies by bridging the gap between the traditional (literal) biblical meaning and the systems of philosophical categories not only in late antiquity but in our time as well.

Through the ages these different traditions of interpretation have been building their fences around the main body of the same sacred text, confronting each other in seeking the truth, and developing their own worldviews in dialogue. Let us turn to the analysis of the Russian thought of the 20th century presented by Mikhail Aksenov-Meerson in his *Contemplation of the Holy Trinity... The Love Paradigm in Russian Trinitarian Philosophy*.¹² This is the version of the development of the Trinitarian paradigm in which the Russian-American scholar has managed to bring together the traditions of the Church Fathers, German classical philosophy and the personalism of Russian religious thought of the Silver Age. His approach is an example of the recent turn of contemporary theological thought to a personalistic perception of religious experience. In a sense, it is the same trajectory that is expressed in *The Philosophy of Law of the Pentateuch* discussed earlier in this paper. The understanding of the philosophy of law as one of the most important components of humanity’s system of higher values reveals the growing interest in anthropology among the Russian scholars whose articles are presented in this volume. The spiritual foundations for humanity’s coexistence are seen in a person’s search for inner harmony, in the idea of justice and freedom that is central to Judeo-Christian culture and to which Russian culture belongs as well.¹³ However, the deeper spiritual meaning of the covenantal idea, the concept of the holiness of the Almighty and the requirement of holiness from His covenant partner(s) expressed clearly in the Torah as a way of knowing God through personal experience was lost for probably the majority of the Russian intellectual elite.

¹¹ G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1927, pp. 269–270.

¹² М. Аксенов-Меерсон (Протоиерей Михаил), *Созерцанием Троицы Святой... Парадигма Любви в русской философии троичности*, Киев 2007.

¹³ Е. Б. Рашковский, *Библейский луч (вместо введения)*, [in:] *Философия права Пятикнижия*, op. cit., pp. 11–28; В. И. Лафитский, *Этюды о книгах Ветхого Завета*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 289–319; and others.

Although Aksenov-Meerson does not mention the concept of the Torah while writing about the relationship between God and Israel presented in the Old Testament in terms of covenant, as well as in the New Testament (between Christ and the Church), he proves the achievements of the Russian religious philosophy of 20th century by careful analysis of the issues of interpersonal relationships. Like Israel, humans are formed in love and summoned to obedience. The commandment to observe the demands of the Torah was for Israel the main condition of the covenantal relationship with the Almighty.¹⁴ Contemporary biblical scholarship has had to admit that through the centuries in the interpretive trajectory from the apostle Paul and by way of Augustine, Luther and others, the Torah has been grossly reduced to “law.”¹⁵ This is the reason for a very strong statement made by Walter Brueggemann, one of the most prominent American Old Testament scholars of our time, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*: “Christians have much to unlearn and relearn about the Torah.”¹⁶ The exploration of the richness of Torah’s symbolism reflected in Jewish and Christian cultures and of the ways of it influenced Russian religious philosophy will help us to envision the interaction between Eastern and Western Christianity more clearly for the sake of a better understanding of ourselves.¹⁷

The personal relationships with God and with other people, the interpersonal and communicative memory presented in the Torah as a divine law, and justice and authority began to obtain universal affirmation. This is also seen in the growing attention of contemporary Russian scholars to such themes as covenant, covenantal relationships, communion with God, *theosis* etc.¹⁸ The new trinitarian thinking, that is a further development of the concept of God, and according to Jürgen Moltmann already began with Karl Barth,¹⁹ can be worked out and enriched through the theology of covenant.

¹⁴ See Ex 19:8, 20, 24:3–8; Deut 6:1 – 11: 32 and elsewhere.

¹⁵ W. C. Kaiser, *The Theology of the Law of God*, in *The Christian and the “Old” Testament*, Pasadena 1998, pp. 68–79.

¹⁶ W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament. Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*, Minneapolis 1997, p. 578.

¹⁷ O. Zaprometova, *The Symbol of Torah as Wisdom and Light Reflected in Eastern European Culture*, [in:] *The Influence of Jewish Culture on the Intellectual Heritage of Central and Eastern Europe*, op. cit., pp. 137–146; eadem, *Раввинистические мотивы в софиологических идеях русской религиозной философии*, [in:] *Софиология*, ed. B. H. Порус, Москва 2010, pp. 233–240.

¹⁸ See just two examples: Е. Зайцев, *Учение В. Лосского о теозисе*, Москва 2007; игумен Петр (Мещеринов), *Проблемы воцерковления*, [in:] http://azbyka.ru/dictionary/10/problemu_vocerkovlenija_meshherinov.shtml (13.01.2014).

¹⁹ J. Moltmann, *Sun of Righteousness, Arise! God’s Future for Humanity and the Earth*, London 2010, pp. 149–150, 240–241.

Aksenov-Meerson proves that the Russian thought of the 20th century entered the sphere of anthropology in the search for personhood as an image of God, which in turn led it out of the hiding place of traditional Patristic dogmas into the open space which is always an arena of different philosophical and ideological struggles.²⁰ It is a well-known fact that texts in general perform at least two major functions, namely the adequate conveying of meaning and the creation of new meanings. Throughout late antiquity, the development of fundamental religious concepts, such as the Torah for Judaism and the Trinity for Christianity, became major symbols which transferred the text of the ancient culture with its plot patterns and its traditions, from one cultural level to another. Now one may notice how the Torah, rediscovered in its fullness of meanings (relational, covenantal, anthropological, personalistic, etc.), is becoming the new unifying symbol for our contemporary world, transferring the text of Holy Scripture (the ancient biblical culture) to a new cultural level with new meanings. The new concept introduced by Aksenov-Meerson which he defined as the *Trinitarian love paradigm* might be considered as one such possibility. His research testifies that, at least for the most famous representatives of Russian thought of the 20th century, in a sense the Torah was never lost even during the recent darkest years of the history of Russia.

* * *

The examples from Russian religious philosophy analyzed earlier provide us with the proof that at the beginning of the previous century religion was understood as a religious experience.²¹ Dmitriy Merezhkovsky (1865–1941) who represented two movements of the religious-philosophical renaissance of his time, symbolism and the “new religious thinking,” was neither a philosopher nor a theologian. He crossed the boundary of the traditional Russian understanding of Christianity, although he stated that there is no salvation outside the Church,²² and, as was emphasized by Aksenov-Meerson, placed the doctrine of the Trinity at the core of his humanistic and personalistic worldview.²³ Merezhkovsky expressed his concern that the Church had to raise

²⁰ М. Аксенов-Меерсон (Протоиерей Михаил), *Созерцанием Троицы Святой*, op. cit., p. 289.

²¹ O. Zaprometova, *The Conceptualization of Religious Experience: From Solovyov to Moltmann*, [in:] *Russian Thought in Europe: Reception, Polemics, Development*, eds. T. Obolevitch, T. Noma, J. Bremer, Kraków 2013, pp. 257–275.

²² Д. Мережковский, *Тайна трех*, Москва 1999, p. 589.

²³ М. Аксенов-Меерсон (Протоиерей Михаил), *Созерцанием Троицы Святой*, op. cit., p. 170.

its voice but kept silent before the First World War and he called his readers to build the coming and the unseen Ecumenical Unified Church: the salvation of the world. This independent thinker pictured the divine tragedy of God in Christ as an expression of the Lord's love: the universal principle embracing all of history. Aksenov-Meerson emphasizes that relationships of love are crucial for the *love paradigm*, the new concept he offered to contemporary theological thought. The relationships defined by Sorokin as "the internal" and "the external" Torah are at the core of the *law of Christ*.²⁴ There is a challenge for us to show how the Torah, whose core is defined in terms of love by the two well-known commandments (*love the Lord* and *love your neighbor*²⁵), fits into the new trinitarian thinking.

Moltmann, one of the most influential Western theologians of today, considers that Merezhkovsky and Berdyaev were the leading preachers of the teaching on the "divine tragedy" among Russian religious philosophers.²⁶ Merezhkovsky underlined that to bring the future Church into existence, to make it "seen" will depend "on all of us – on you and me."²⁷ His trilogy under the general title *The Mystery of the Three* was designed to become his main creation and his last word on the most important subject which was united by one idea: the way of following the covenant and the aspiration for the kingdom of the Holy Spirit. In this Merezhkovsky anticipated the search of the contemporary world for spirituality with its growing interest in religious experiences²⁸ and the Holy Spirit, which "was said to be the Cinderella of Western theology."²⁹

The representatives of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church define its urgent task in terms of taking people not just into church life, but rather into the historical, traditional, evangelical, national and European culture.³⁰ The search for a more solid and constructive dialogue between followers of

²⁴ See Mt 5; Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21. The two parts of the Holy Scripture are united by the idea of the covenant. Through Christ, the covenant with Israel was perfected, and the promises of God to Abraham and his seed (the children of Israel) are fulfilled. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus revealed the deeper meaning of the Torah, declaring that He has come to fulfill it (Mt 5:17).

²⁵ Deut 6:5; Mt 22:36–40; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27.

²⁶ J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, San Francisco 1981, p. 25.

²⁷ Д. Мережковский, *Тайна трех*, op. cit., p. 590.

²⁸ See C. Shantz, *Opening the Black Box: New Prospects for Analyzing Religious Experience*, [in:] *EXPERIENTIA*, vol. 2: *Linking Text and Experience*, eds. C. Shantz, R. A. Werline, Atlanta 2012, pp. 1–15.

²⁹ J. Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, Minneapolis 1994, p. 1.

³⁰ Игумен Петр (Мещеринов), *Проблемы воцерковления*, op. cit.

the Eastern and Western Christian traditions is one of mankind's most urgent tasks, especially in the light of changing cultural contexts and globalization. There is a need to remind ourselves that no Christian tradition is sufficient in itself. We have to explore ways of enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation. The value of the Torah rediscovered as an experience of the closeness of God is, for a secularized society seeking spirituality, infinitely greater than mere philosophical proofs of God's existence.

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Literary Perspectives

Anthropological Ideas of Old Russian Culture

Were human beings treated by Russian culture in an exceptional manner? One may answer this question by means of studying the human phenomenon as presented in the national culture, and the entire set of concepts related to it. In particular, this study may grant us an opportunity to outline various patterns by which the anthropological ideas of the East and West would penetrate the Russian cultural milieu, and to evaluate the ways by which these were assimilated in Russia.

The Eastern Christian mindset is dominated by the idea of *obraz*,¹ usually (and roughly) translated as “image,” although its meaning is extensive. *Obraz* is the sinew of this worldview; it is its “structural principle to guarantee the entire system.” Such an important role is determined, first, by the predilection for vivid and figurative reasoning (so characteristic a feature of the Russian mentality), and second, by the Christian concept of image. For a medieval mind, any human being was God’s creation, and thus an image of a human was shaped not only by the observation of life; it was theological contemplation on God’s essence and the way in which God interacted with man and the world. The human image that prevailed in the Russian culture of the 11th – 17th centuries has its roots in various sources. Among them was the oral tradition, which was undoubtedly shaped by Slavic mythology. Written texts came from Bulgaria, Byzantium, Western Europe, and from the East as well. Figurative art comprised icon and fresco painting, and book miniatures.

It was characteristic for Russian culture that the sublation of contradiction between the levels of ecclesiastical theology and everyday routine activities settled into a distinctive shape. The imagery of the structures of everyday social

¹ See G. B. Ladner, *The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy*, “Dumbarton Oaks Papers”, 1953, no 7, pp. 1–34.

life were sanctified. An ascetic attitude permeated through various spheres of human life (labour, economy, family) and consecrated them.²

In general, Russian culture would incline towards the justification (or even exculpation) of nature. It was thought that humans are kind and harmonious by their nature, and thus able to improve themselves and be transformed.

In the domain of the Church, this promoted the spread of coenobitic monasteries, which were deeply involved in economic activities. For the State, this idea meant that the monarch was to be venerated as the medium between the realms of things celestial and mundane. In anthropology, this “justification of nature” and “consecration of life” tendencies encouraged the establishment and further spread of pneumatological and cardiognostic interest in the culture of Ancient and Old Russia.³ A consistent monotheistic policy, which was so characteristic for the entire area of Byzantine influence, enriched Russian culture with *sobornost*, with the idea of the symphony between the nation and the state powers, the Church and state. On the anthropological level, it proclaimed the unity of body and soul, of word and deed and so forth. Thus the contradiction between the “seen” and “unseen” in the cogitation of an individual was sublated in the holistic worldview of the Eastern Christianity, which linked the human being and the Universe by means of their common share in the Divine Grace. The perception of the world as constitutionally united was followed with the formation of sophiocratic view of political life. This concept was an amalgamation of the Christian idea of Sophia the Divine Wisdom with ancient pre-Christian ideas and the pagan attitude to the prince’s power as a magical one. The first shoots of sophiocracy are found in the very first Russian literary texts, and its propagation became particularly active after the fall of Constantinople, when the timely idea of *translatio imperii* would project the function of the Byzantine Emperor onto the Russian monarchs.

By the end of the 15th century, the image of the human being had already taken on its unique features. It was recognized in three of the most important contexts: the meaning of life, Utopia, and ethics. The Ancient Russian Utopia was hardly a fruit of theory; rather it should be attributed to the sphere of figured thinking, and therefore utopism is mainly crystallized in the works of visual arts.⁴ Apart from literary texts it can be grasped in architecture, painting, and even gardening (the layout of monastic gardens and later those belonging

² See Т. В. Чумакова, *Закон, правда, милость и благодать в древнерусской культуре*, “Религиоведение”, 2010, no 4, pp. 26–35.

³ See V. M. Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*, Michigan 2002, pp. 11–13.

⁴ See S. L. Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Utopian Patterns in Early Secular Russian Literature and Culture*, Stanford 1991, pp. 1–41.

to the Tsar and merchants). Many cultural phenomena in the Middle Ages were flavored with this sort of utopianism, and even a geographical treatise, if translated into Russian, might assume bright Utopian features entirely foreign to the original (*On the Islands of Moluccas*).

Ethicism was equally important for the Old Russian culture. Men of letters would perceive the problem of Good and Evil not only as a study in ethics and anthropology, but as that of historiosophy as well. From the very beginnings of the Russian literature one can find the idea of three stages in social life, namely the “custom” (associated with polytheistic “paganism”), “law” (monotheism) and “grace” (Christianity). The ethical system of the Old Russian culture was considerably stable, yet over different periods of time the interest in different areas of it may be varied. For instance, from the late 15th century the issue of morality and power was extremely important. It became predominant in the writings of Iosif Volotsky,⁵ Tsar Ivan the Terrible⁶ and Fedor Karpov.⁷ Ethics began to grow into a freestanding branch of philosophy from the late 15th century with the works of Andrei Kurbsky and the translations of John Damascene.⁸ Yet the most serious moves in this direction were to be taken only in the 17th century due to the major influence of the staff and graduates of Kiev Mohyla Academy,⁹ and the graduates of the western universities and colleges, e.g. Kirill Tranquillion Stavrovetsky, Epiphany Slavinetsky, Symeon Polotsky, Stephan Yavorsky and others. Thus Old Russian tradition determined the way in which the issue was treated by the later Russian philosophy of 19th – 20th centuries.

An analysis of the ethical concepts which we find in the Old Russian literary texts shows that it was morality in particular that formed the context of Old Russian culture. Legalism was interpreted within this context; it brought forth a civilization which placed justice and rightfulness ahead of law and legality. It is not accidental therefore that the issue of Truth would be dominant in Russian thought for many centuries. The anthropological ideas of Old Russia were formulated under various influences, which

⁵ See D. Goldfrank, *Old and New Perspectives on Iosif Volotsky's Monastic Rules*, “Slavic Review”, 1975, vol. 34, pp. 279–301.

⁶ See Т. В. Чумакова, *Образ человека в произведениях Ивана Грозного и его современников*, [in:] *Человек вчера и сегодня. Междисциплинарные исследования*, ed. М. Н. Киселева, Issue 2, Москва 2008, pp. 195–210.

⁷ See W. F. Ryan, *Aristotle in Old Russian Literature*, “The Modern Language Review”, 1968, vol. 63, no 3, p. 652.

⁸ See E. Weiher, *Die dialectik des Johannes von Damaskus in kirchenslavischer Uebersetzung*, Wiesbaden 1960.

⁹ See P. Lewin, *The Staging of Plays at the Kiev Mohyla Academy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, “Harvard Ukrainian Studies”, 1981, vol. 5, no 3, pp. 320–334.

included a fair share of classical Greco-Roman philosophy. One should bear in mind, however, that the classical tradition entered Russia indirectly and the vision of antiquity was refracted. Most of the earliest texts came from Bulgaria. Education there was organized in a “monasterial” model, which rejected classical education, renounced the classical school-type study of philosophy and theology, and instead insisted that wisdom should be passed on individually from the teacher to the disciple; last but not least, it was dominated by instructive religious literature. This type of education was adopted in Russia and, as a result, this country developed a particular type of culture, which differed both from Byzantine and Western European ones. It was almost self-sufficient, aimed inside (rather than outside), and inclined towards the intuitive, “heart-oriented” figurative way of cognition, which held intellect to be suspect. It explains why this culture had no deep interest in the activities which called for the rational-type approach (e.g. theology or alchemy) and resorted to them only if that was demanded by the practicalities of life, for instance, anti-heretical polemics, economy, medicine, and politics. This culture needed no universities, and the Ancient Russian monastic schools we know of were aimed at meeting the practical needs, first of all, to produce literate scribes who knew languages. For this precise reason Russian students were sent to Europe from the 15th century, so that in due course they could serve as diplomats and interpreters

Indeed, the reception of Greek and Roman culture in Russia was influenced by the particular idea of philosophy as “wisdom,” and the ways by which the ancient classical tradition reached Russia were complicated. Knowledge of the classics was first of all indirect. Old Russian literary men used either the existing Slavic/Slavonic adaptations, or some commentaries to Latin translations, or collections of sayings. In the West, the demand for dogmatic theology promoted the study of Aristotle. In Russia, on the contrary, there were no dogmatic challenges up to the 16th century. The works of the ancient authors (Aristotle,¹⁰ Plato, Epictetus, Epicurus¹¹) appealed to a tiny circle of learned readers, and even those few read the Latin translations rather than the Greek originals. The choice of books was narrow as well. Natural philosophy attracted readers, as practical philosophy (e.g., morals and law) did. However, neither logic nor metaphysics intrigued Old

¹⁰ See W. F. Ryan, *Aristotle in Old Russian Literature*, op. cit., pp. 650–658; idem, *The Old Russian Version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian “Secreta Secretorum”*, “The Slavonic and East European Review”, 1975, vol. 56, no 2, pp. 242–260.

¹¹ See М. М. Шахнович, *Сад Эпикура: Философия религии Эпикура и эпикурейская традиция в истории европейской культуры*, Санкт-Петербург 2002, pp. 202–213.

Russian readers too much. The advance of anthropology, in turn, was directly linked to the development of medicine. The mere appearance of medical professionals in Russia is of utter importance, as it marks the shift in the attitudes to health and illness. The latter was appreciated in a twofold way. On one hand, a disease was explained in terms of the ancient humoralism, on the other, it was a manifestation of sin, of inevitable death and corporal decay. The body, as well as the soul, was treated by the clergy, or – in a less officiated manner – by sorcerers. Since the time of Renaissance, the idea of a body as an instrument of life entered the minds, and the affairs of the soul now were administered by the monks, while those of the body became the professionals' prerogative. Medical specialists of that time (15th – 16th cent.) had to know medicine (as we would understand it), but they were expected to be well-trained in astrology, mathematics, herbs and stones. Of course, there were few medics in Russia and their patients belonged to the royal family and top layers of nobility. Yet the books which they brought to Muscovy (treatises in anatomy, herbals, *Lucidarius*, etc.) were translated and circulated in many copies, which stimulated anthropological interests.

Pedagogical anthropology was known in the Old Russian culture as well. In the 17th century Russian understanding of the education implied “spiritual” development. Manner and demeanor were little considered, as Ivan Khvorostinin's *On the Kingdom of Heaven and the Upbringing of the Children* clearly testifies. It is assumed that Europe owes the idea of civility to Erasmus and to his treatise *De civilitate morum puerilium*¹² (*A handbook of Manners for Children*). This fully applies to Russia, where *De civilitate* was immensely popular even late in the 18th century. This treatise was translated under the title *Grazhdanstvo obychaev detskikh* (*The Urbanity of Children's Customs*) in the 17th century and was accepted as a manual of secular manners. It was translated again in 1706 under the title *A Little Golden Book on Making One's Manners Apt*. In 1717 the first edition of *The Honest Mirror of the Young*, loosely based on the text of Erasmus, appeared in order to facilitate the assumption of Western behavior and ethos by the members of Russian elite. The meaning of one's outer manners was becoming increasingly important, and this was a novelty in Russia. Later the issue of polite manners (which were gradually more and more important for a person to have) as opposed to the “inner condition” of a person was in the center of popular opposition in the Russian literature in 18th – 20th centuries. The philosophical understanding of the

¹² See D. Erasmus, *On Good Manners for Boys* (*De civilitate morum puerilium*), trans. B. McGregor, [in:] idem, *Literary and Educational Writings*, vol. 3, Toronto 1985, pp. 273–289.

human essence underwent considerable changes in the Russian culture of late 16th – early 17th century. This development cannot be reduced to mere novelty in the sphere of religious or political ideas. It was a time when the outline of the entire culture was altered, the period known as the change of *episteme* (M. Foucault). Cultural categories now meant more than they had previously done, their hidden symbolic meaning could now hardly be verbalized. The focus of culture was moved (M. Herskovits). In order to explain this, scholars frequently appeal to the idea of “secularization” or “strengthening of the secular element,” however, it is not impossible that the process took the opposite direction, namely, the secular sphere was sanctified. Hardly occasionally, in this particular period (17th century) the first Russian saint was canonized for her social ministry. It was Uliania Osorgina, whose life is described in detail by her son. *Zhitie (Vita) of Uliania Osorgina*¹³ tells us about the life of an average, plain woman who sensed, ever since her childhood, a desire for an ascetic life, but devoted herself to the world. *Vita* describes a woman who is free and independent to choose her own way. Seemingly in contradiction with that, day and night she took care of her family and of all those who needed her care and support, and so far as regular and frequent churchgoing would demand her distraction from home duties, she was unable to attend church frequently. She lived an incredibly hard life, full of labour, worries, illnesses and suffering and yet at the threshold of death she was kind and cheerful. Due to her humility and extreme poverty she did not take monastic vows even on her deathbed. Uliania became venerated as a saint fairly early on despite the skepticism which the official church demonstrated towards this uncanny cult of an energetic, ever-busy woman who preferred a secular ministry to the monastic life.¹⁴

In this paper we have outlined some major issues of the Old Russian tradition. They were not homogenous, neither did uniform terminology exist. It is difficult to outline major trends as well, for no tradition of education in the humanities existed up until the unification of Ukraine with Russia. It was in Ukraine that Kievo Mohyla Collegium taught the Jesuit curriculum, and this particular influence was responsible for the later development of the Russian religious anthropology under the strongest influence of the Western philosophy and theology in 18th–19th centuries.

¹³ *Повесть об Ульянии Осорьиной*, [in:] *Памятники литературы Древней Руси. XVII век*, eds. Д. С. Лихачев et al., Book 1, Москва 1988, pp. 98–104.

¹⁴ See Т. В. Чумакова, *Традиции женской святости в русской культуре XI–XVII вв.*, “Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Серия 6”, 2004, no 4, pp. 24–31.

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The Interference of Christian and Heathen Ceremonies in the Business Documentation of Kievan Rus and Traditional Ukrainian Culture

It is well known that the origin and development of Christianity experienced considerable oppression during its formation. At the same time, the drive to the Christian faith was accompanied by violence. So, for example, the christening of Rus by Vladimir (Volodymyr) entailed the annihilation of pagan idols and heathen temples. According to the *Ioachim Chronicle*, the christening of Novgorod land was accomplished by force: “Putyata (tysyatskiy) christened them by sword and Dobrynya (posadnyk) – by fire.” On other Rus lands the introductions of Christianity proceeded until the 12th century.¹

Despite all these forcible methods of the introduction of Christianity, the culture of the East Slavs (in particular Ukrainians) easily absorbed a Christian moral. It is worth noting that the new faith found support among the princely elite first. In the conditions of the association of the Slavic tribes and the formation of the strong Russian state, Christianity met the requirements of state religion well: the one God as though personified in the figure of the prince (supreme ruler) and supporting his indivisible absolute power. Perhaps for this reason, Vladimir the Great, who was aiming to create such religion, collected heathen gods (Perun, Horus, Dajbog, Stribog, Simargl, Mokosh) in one pantheon at first, but repudiated this idea later and implemented Christianity. But Ruthenians also worshiped other gods, which were dedicated to the natural phenomena and to family values, in any case. There is, for example, Svarog – the great god of skyfire and light, the father of all gods; Kolyada, Yarilo, Kupaylo are sun gods of the winter solstice, vernal equinox and summer

¹ Крещение. Огнем и мечом, [in:] <http://partizandr.ru/kreshhenie-ognem-i-mechom> (31.03.2014).

solstice; Veles (Volos) is the god of welfare, riches, he is a protector of trade and cattle-breeding; Dana – the goddess of water, she is the embodiment of womanhood and feminine essence; Svitovyd is the god of sky, celestial light; Lado and Lada – the divine family, symbol of harmony of the Earth and Space; Lel (Polel) is the god of love and marriage; Rid and Rojanytsya are gods of human fate; Marena – the goddess of spring and magic, later is the goddess of death; and also many other gods: documents of 11th century (for example, *The Word of Devout Christian*) gives such a list: “They believe in Perun, and in Horus, and in Sima, and in Regl, and in Vili and lots of other gods.”²

So, East Slavic polytheism reflects folk mythological notions well, but didn't satisfy the requirements of princely power in the period of its consolidation.

Entering into intergovernmental relationships with their neighbours, the Kiyevan princes got to know about Christianity, adopting in a civilized manner the religious space of Ruthenians freely enough. It is known that before Volodymyr's governing prince Askold, prince Igor, his wife princess Olga and some of their boyars were also Christian. Among the princely elite, Christian and heathen customs did not clash with each other, they coexisted peacefully for a long time.

The tolerant coexistence of heathen customs and Christian laws is represented in the annalistic agreements of Rus with Byzantium. Thus, in the agreement dated to 907, the representatives of both contractual parts swear each in their own way: Cesare (Cesarevitch) Leon and Oleksandr kissed the cross, and

Oleg and his retinue adopted the oath by the Russian law. They swore on their weapons, by their God Perun and the God Volos – the god of cattle.³

In the agreement of 911, religion acquired an ethno-national tinge. If the representative of Rus is named Ruthenian (Ruthenians), then the opponents of Oleg are named Greeks or Christians, so these two notions for the compilers of agreement are synonyms: “if Christian will kill Ruthenian or Ruthenian will kill Christian,”⁴ “if a captive from both countries is arrested by both Ruthenians or Greeks,” “about captivity by Ruthenians those, who often arrive from some country to Rus and who was sold in Christians, and also about captive Christians, who often arrives to Rus from other country,” “on

² Quoted after: А. Пономарьов, *Українська етнографія: курс лекцій*, [in:] <http://etno.uaweb.org/book2/lecture21.html> (31.03.2014).

³ *Літопис руський: за іпатським списком*, trans. Л. Є. Махновця, Київ 1989, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

confirmation and inviolability of peace that must be between us Ruthenians and you – Christians, this peaceful agreement was accomplished by us.”⁵

In the moment of the signing of the agreement in 945, there were already lots of Christians in the embassy of Oleg. This was validated in a chronicle and an agreement:

We, Ruthenians, all those who were christened, swore on Saint Illya Church and Honest Cross in a cathedral church. And let those Ruthenians who were not christened to put their shields and swords, bare and hoops, and other weapon and swear. [...] And christened Ruthenians swore in the church of saint Illya that is above stream.⁶

Identification of Christians and Greeks is almost absent: the terms “Grecian,” “a man of our kingdom,” “people of our kingdom” are used. Only in one place, where speech goes about murder, Greeks are named Christians: “And if the Christian will kill Ruthenian or Ruthenian will kill Christian,”⁷ but this article, obviously, fetched up at the agreement 945 from a previous agreement.

The analysis of the texts of agreements from 911 and 945 (the most complete and detailed) testifies to the gradual penetration in office work of Christian attribute and language formulations. This occurred, obviously, under the influence of Greek texts. So, for example, in the agreement of 911 the Greek emperor Leo, Oleksandr and Konstantin are “great rulers by God’s will,”⁸ and in the agreement of 945 Caesar Roman, Konstantin and Stefan are “rulers devoted to Christian faith.”⁹ When writing agreements Ruthenians also used “Christian” formulas. Oleg, for example, “wants more than others to save and witness friendship by the will of God” and swears on his own weapon.¹⁰ And in the agreement of 945 the reasons of discord of the previous peace are explained by the actions of “hostile devil who hates good.”¹¹ In the conditions of heathen world view it would be impossible.

Later the language formulas of religious character are used more often in the deeds and other business texts. Indeed, only in papers which were signed by higher public servants. For example, the testaments of prince Vladimir, son of Vasyl, grandchild of Roman begin with the prayer: “In the name of God and

⁵ Ibidem, p. 21.

⁶ Ibidem, pp. 29–30.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 28.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 20.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 26.

¹⁰ See ibidem, p. 20.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 26.

his son and holy spirit; by prayers of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary and angels.”¹² In the 15th century the deeds of Great Princes begin with such words “By God’s favor I’m, Great Prince...” or “In the name of God and his son and holy spirit.”¹³ At the same time in private correspondence, judicial acts and deeds of officials of a lower level a religious constituent is absent.

Christianity had an influence on the formation of legal mutual relations also. Church inserts new concepts (in the Christian understanding) in the basis of state life. So, for example, in *Russian Pravda* we don’t see any mention of judicial duels, which were typical for the heathen traditions of many people, where the God of Fate decides everything. Under the influence of Christian morality, blood vengeance (repayment of death with death) was abolished. We can see that in the agreements of the Rus with the Greeks (10th century) such forms of punishment were usual: “if the Christian will kill Ruthenian or Ruthenian will kill Christian, let the relatives detain the murderer, and let them kill him.”¹⁴ This custom is fixed in *Russian Pravda* of Yaroslav the Wise. But after his death, the Yaroslavovychi princes abolished blood vengeance. They substituted it for financial compensation.

Thus, Christianity as a monopolistic religion that supports one ruler entered the life of the ruling elite easily enough and forced out polytheism and heathen superstitions. Christianity entered the life and world view of ordinary Ukrainian people in an absolutely different way. It is considered that heathen polytheism is a religion for simple people, who encapsulate ideas about good and evil, the forces of nature and family welfare in their mythological superstitions.

Despite all of the rude methods of inputting Christianity, Orthodox traditions became a part of the cultural discourse of Ukrainians. But the pre-Christian world view of our ancestors did not disappear however, but was subjected to interference and influence, forming a so-called dualism of world view. So, old agricultural and other calendar holidays were timed to the days of the church calendar. This is why in the modern calendar, the rites and celebrations of Christian holidays are accompanied by heathen ceremonies.

So, for example, on the day of the Apostle Andrew First-called (Andriy Pervozvannyi, on December, 14), one of the twelve apostles, who, according to the legend, prophesied the arising of Kyiv on Dnepr’s hills, turned into a holiday when young people tell fortunes and play around with Kalyta

¹² Ibidem, p. 439.

¹³ *Українські грамоти XV ст.*, Київ 1965, pp. 35, 37–38, 46–47, 50, 54, 56, 59, 61, 66, 70, 77, 80, 83–84, 88 etc.

¹⁴ *Літопис руський*, op. cit., p. 28.

(ritual bread). Games with Kalyta are the remnants of the old worship of the sun that contradicts faith in one God, and fortunetelling was denied at all by Orthodoxy and considered a pursuit of witches. The analogical situation is with the celebration of Catherine the Great Martyr (on December, 7), who is the guardian of girlish fate (it was the responsibility of Lada in the heathen pantheon). On this day, girls tell their fortunes with regards their intended husbands.

Winter Christmastides in the traditional folk imagination are related to Kolyada – god of the winter solstice and birth of new life – as a new sun is arising from darkness. Therefore the Christmas carols and sowing carry in itself old elements of magic, word and action, oriented to the growing of a good harvest, welfare in housekeeping, harmony in the family. Actually, all of the January holidays are heathen: *diduh* in a red corner, barley *kutya* (boiled rice with raisins and honey) on the table, a sheepskin on a bench, etc. With the inputting of Christianity in folk consciousness, the birth of the new sun and new life merged with Christmas, and such Christian elements were included in traditions of celebrating: to go to the church in the morning, to pray before supper, the singers of Christmas carols sing “Son of God Was Born.” The Christian calendar holiday of God Candlemas (on February, 15) in honour of the Virgin Mary bringing Jesus Christ to the Jerusalem temple on the 40th day after his birth and the meeting of old Simeon with the child of God; this day was timed to fir the heathen folk holiday of Gromnica, when winter meets summer and engages in competition with each other. In parallel with the pre-Christian festive gatherings devoted to the attempts to “send winter away,” they sanctify water and candles in church; water becomes healthy and the candle guards against fear.

The spring cycle of holidays is also filled with the heathen ceremonies; they are related to the revival of every living thing, the return of birds from warm lands and the funeral repast of the dead ancestors. Folk games, dances, songs of the spring cycle (spring songs, carols, dancing and singing in the ring) have to induce all living things to the revival. Christian saints who are revered in spring also “care” of vegetation and housekeeping. So, people prayed to Saint Prokop (on March, 12), if they wanted to grow a rich harvest of flax and hemp, Yavdoha (on March, 14) symbolizes arrival of spring, Saint Fedot (on March, 15) cares of motley grass, Gerasim (on March, 18) the guardian of birds, Saint Oleksa (on March, 30) is a patron of bees, Saint Archangel Gabriel (on April, 8) cares for sowing, gives rain, Saint George (Yurij, on May, 6) is a patron of the cattle-breeding and agriculture, Yeremiya, (on May, 14) is known as a guardian of vegetation, Saint Irina (on May, 18) – the patron of farming and planting, Ivan Dovgyi (on May, 21) takes cares of water-melon cultivation whilst Saint Apostle Simon the Zealot (Simon Zlotnyk, on May, 23) is the patron of healthy herbs.

Christian and folk events are closely interwoven and coincide with the main spring holidays. So Annunciation (on April, 7) after Christian orders is devoted to biblical history, when the archangel Gabriel informed Mary about her innocent pregnancy. In the folk imagination, the earth “opens” for the growing of any plant on this day. Therefore, the origin of life (nature or Rescuer) coincides in time. Easter – the day of Jesus Christ resurrection – coincides with the old pre-Christian holiday of spring coming: like Jesus was resurrected so the nature becomes alive after a winter. Since old times the heathen ceremonies of cleansing with the help of fire and water were accomplished on Easter (in some regions of Ukraine the custom of pouring water on passers-by has been retained until today), main ceremonial food – *paskha* and *pysanka* are symbolize the sun and the revival of new life. Christian extraneous features of the celebrating of the Easter holiday were reduced to the sanctifying of Easter food in church, and also to the keeping of Lent, which is preceded to Easter. Seven days later a funeral week comes; it is the celebration in honor of the dead relatives: since time immemorial Ukrainians have believed that our ancestors pave the way for an opportune spring. Christianity joined this event, sending liturgies and requiems.

Summer holidays are timed to fit the summer solstice and also to the celebration in honor of the cult of the nature. The most meaningful holidays of summer cycle are Ascension Day, Pentecost (Whitsunday) and Ivan Kupala.

On Ascension Day (on the 40th day after Easter) Jesus Christ was raised high up to the sky. Church worship and sermons cannot replace the pre-Christian motives of grain-growers traditions. Family meals on the field are typical of this day; it looks like a sacrifice of bread, pastry and other food. Christian stratification can be seen in the baking of ceremonial pastry. It looks like a short flight of stairs, which helped Jesus to rise up to the sky.

Whitsunday (7 weeks after Easter), on the Christian calendar, sanctified to the Trinity, that combines God-Father, God-Son, God-Holy Spirit. However, this day is firmly bound with spring-summer transition in the folk imagination. The second name of this holiday – Zelena Nedilja (Green Sunday), because nature is in blossom this time of the year and women decorate their dwellings with green branches and flowers. All of the customs of Whitsunday celebrations (games and dances round “oak,” for example) are connected with sending spring off and meeting summer.

Since the Christianization period, the Ivan Kupala holiday has been combined with the birthday of John the Baptist and celebrated on July 7th. The rites of the Ivan Kupala celebration are rich in legends, songs, beliefs and fall at the peak of bloom of nature. It is an old heathen holiday which is connected, in fact, with the summer solstice and combines the sunny masculine origin with the female aquatic one. We can see it in the process of organization of the holiday near

water with a burning fire, in the rolling of a flaming wheel into the river, and in the braiding of kupalas garlands and laying them on the water. One of the main heathen ceremonies is the jumping of loving couples through the fire. It symbolizes, from one side, the clearing with the help of the fire, and from other is a checking of young people for mutual trust and support. The same idea is performed in other customs – the searching for fern blossom: the process of search for this magic flower envisages the common overcoming of difficulties, cooperation and mutual help; all of these skills are very important during a possible life together. In addition, since old times, people believed that the celebration of this sunny summer holiday would give them power, health and welfare.

It is considered that the Harvester holiday (when all work in the field is completely finished) was solely heathen. It was like a sacrifice to the field deity that lives in the last sheaf by the folk belief. People left some virgin ears on a field as a victim; then braided a grandfather beard from it (other names are beard of Perun, beard of Spas, grandfather); and then they carried home the last haystack, singing ceremonial songs about the farmer's toil and the great field's spirit. This sheaf was saved until the new harvest season as a sacred thing; it was considered that owing to this, the field's spirit would give a good harvest next year.

Other summer holidays (for example, Makoviy, Spas, Panteleymon) also contain the remains and pieces of old traditions making victims of natural phenomena in exchange for a good harvest.

An autumn rite is also filled with an agricultural attribute. Practically all of the dates are timed to the Christian Saints and demand the implementation of certain requirements from peasants. For example, it was necessary to complete all of the sowing of winter-crops before Ivan Boguslav (on October, 9); on the holiday of Sergiy Kapustik (on October, 20) it was good to cut a cabbage – it will be delicious and will last longer; by the day of Saint Yuhym (on October, 28) bee-keepers must prepare their bees for the winter cold.

The main autumn holiday is Pokrov (Protection) of Our Most Holy Lady (on October, 14). It is a Christian tradition that appeared as a gratitude for protection of Tsargrad (Constantinople) by Our Lady. According to this legend, Our Lady covered the habitants of Tsargrad with her coverlet and saved them all. However, the cult of Pokrov developed in Ukraine because it coincides in time with the worship of the pre-Christian goddess of earth. On Pokrov, according to the folk imagination, the soil became "covered" and ready for rest, thus digging and sowing it after Pokrova holiday was considered a great sin. This holiday is a transition from autumn to winter, that is why people had to prepare their dwellings to Pokrov also: to whitewash the house, to make it warmer with the help of hay and leaves, etc. Besides, people believed that Pokrov helped to create a happy marriage and that is why the period of marriages begins from Pokrov.

The Christian mysteries have a considerably greater value in family rites. For example, the ceremony of the christening of new-born children and wedding ceremonies have a large significance in modern Ukrainian society. The funeral rites also cannot be conducted without a priest. However, family traditions retain some elements of heathen ceremonies. For example, they catch a pin on baby's clothing as protection from an evil eye, they set the just-married pair on a sheepskin, because it is a symbol of welfare and riches, they put some money in the coffin of a dead person because he needs to pay the crossing of the river to paradise, etc.

Thus, the tolerance and indulgence preached by Christianity rests upon the beneficial spirit of East Slavic paganism, and created the higher moral, prophetic ideals and culture of Ukrainians that helped to produce the forms of new normative-business relations and gave impetus to the formation of new values and ideals.

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Russian Literature in the Context of the Medieval Hesychast Tradition (In the Case of the Story *On the Edge of The World* by N. S. Leskov)¹

In social science, the term hesychasm means a contemplative, solitary form of life accepted in Eastern Christian Monasticism, a psychosomatic method of creating a “smart” Jesus prayer, a theological system, and “political” hesychasm of the 14th century.² Hesychasm can be interpreted as a “reactionary philosophical (mystical) and socio-political movement in the Byzantine Empire”³ and has been called a “vivifying force” that reached the depths of society.⁴

In Greek, “Hesychasm” means tranquillity, quietness, peace, silence, and stillness. In the context of this article it will refer to the worldview basis of the Orthodox tradition resting on the conceptual inconsistency of the material and the spiritual. In the 4th – 6th centuries, Palestinian and Syrian hermits overcame the dualism of existence with asceticism and spiritual endeavours.⁵ The rigours of Siberia, the locale of Leskov’s story, required the missionaries to preach the Orthodoxy *silently*, by deeds, not words.

The story *On the Edge of the World* (December 1875 – January 1876) starts with a dialogue in the house of an old Orthodox archbishop (a former Bishop of Irkutsk), who later becomes the narrator. In its core idea, the first (introductory)

¹ Transl. by V. Ivoninsky.

² И. Ф. Мейендорф, *О византийском исихазме и его роли в культурном и историческом развитии Восточной Европы в XIV веке*, “Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы”, 1976, vol. 29, pp. 292–295.

³ *Православие: Словарь атеиста*, ed. Н. С. Гордиенко, Москва 1988, p. 96.

⁴ И. М. Концевич, *Стяжание Духа святого в путях Древней Руси*, Москва 1993; С. С. Хоружий, *Диптих безмолвия*, Москва 1992.

⁵ А. Е. Петров, *Византийский исихазм и традиции русского православия в XIV столетии*, [in:] *Древняя Русь: пересечение традиций*, ed. В. В. Мильков, Москва 1997, p. 396.

chapter does not compare the Western and Eastern missionary traditions, as it might seem at first sight, but compares the two ways in which the philosophical and theological thoughts that are represented in the opposition “argument (dispute) vs. talk” co-exist. In the novel, this opposition eventuates in the bishop’s address to his companions, “We decline to argue, but let’s talk about it – here we are.”⁶ The bishop suggests that instead of verbal dispute and deriving logical (rational) proof, his companions should empathise with the vivid images of Christ in European paintings and Russian icons. He suggests that everyone, by way of empathy, should be inspired by the spirit of the confronting traditions.

Further, continuing his “descriptive” preaching, the bishop narrates his own experience as a missionary in a remote Siberian diocese, among the Yakuts and the Tungus. The opposition “argument vs. talk” forms the plot of the bishop’s talk. The word “talk” is one of the most frequent in his speech, and his “talks” with Father Kiriak and the Tungus guide form the main contents of the story. They reveal each character’s confession and flesh out the consolidating and enlightening image of Christ’s love. At the same time, the narrator’s intentions to over-persuade, out-argue, “over-caprice” the companion never come to fruition: the “native” Tungus cannot understand the bishop’s speech, and the argument with Kiriak about the need for active and “effective” missionary work ultimately results in Father Kiriak’s death in a snow desert.

Father Kiriak (from the Greek for “divine”), who aborted his once-successful missionary activity, refuses to reveal the reason behind his decision:

“No, little children,” he said, “this matter is no joke – it’s terrible... I can’t look at it.”
“Pardon me, Your Grace, but don’t ask.”⁷

Eventually (in talks), it transpires that Father Kiriak stopped baptising “aliens” after realising his inability to put the essence of baptising and Christianity into words and language intelligible for the “natives.” Father Kiriak’s life “of Christ’s kindness and wisdom” determines his path of preaching:

Leskov pictures Father Kiriak, a “man of God,” loved by “both the brothers and the lay people, and even the heathers,” as a person who consciously abandons the human word as inadequate to express the essence of faith, and prefers to “convince by deeds.”⁸ Here we can see a reflection of thinking shaped with symbols and images, liturgical by nature, that has outlined the typological

⁶ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, trans. M. Prokurat, New York 1992, p. 24.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 37, 49.

⁸ Григорий Палама, *Триады в защиту священно-безмолвствующих*, пер. В. Вениаминов, Москва 2011, p. 7.

features of Russian culture, both ecclesiastical and conventional, primarily in the Middle Ages, but also in the Modern Age. One such feature is the direct shift away from verbal disputes (herein truth is not born of arguments). Consequently, the Old Russian literary culture has a large corpus of accusatory texts but lacks the culture of theological disputes; there is practically no original dogmatics and exegetics,⁹ while hymnography and hagiography are greatly developed.

That is why Leskov connects Father Kiriak's wordless preaching with the "unsaid" dying prayer for everyone:

he either prayed to God, or judged him like the prophet Jeremiah, sometimes negotiated like a genuine evangelical swineherd, *not with words* but some kind of *unsaid* groans.

[...]

– Oh, kindness... oh, singleness... oh love!.. Oh my happiness!.. Jesus! I'm running to You, like Nicodemus, at night; come to me, open the door, let me hear God walking and speaking!.. Here... Your garment is already in my hands... break my leg... but I won't let You go... till you bless everyone who is with me.¹⁰

Leskov's story is connected with the medieval hesychasm tradition through Father Kiriak's unsaid prayer, his yearning to hear God, and his "bold confession of love for God,"¹¹ who is alive, personal, and is facing His creation in the dialogue.

The movement of the hesychasts, the "silent" practitioners of "smart" praying originated in the middle of the 14th century from Saint Gregory of Sinai. This theological school moved to Mount Athos, and then spread across the Eastern Christian world. The practice of hesychasm is theologically connected with the doctrine about the Tabor Light and divine energies by St Gregory Palamas. Even though in Slavic countries the "hesychasm disputes" of the middle of the 14th century stimulated great interest towards the Byzantine theological tradition, "a very little part of various dispute-induced literature was translated from Greek into Slavic."¹² One of the translated writings is *Talks of St Gregory Palamas with the Hyons and Turks*, originally a recording of a polemic talk (!) that Emir Orhan initiated between St Gregory Palamas and the Hyons and

⁹ G. Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)*, München 1982, pp. 5, 20, 170, 274.

¹⁰ Н. С. Лесков, *Собрание сочинений: в 12 тт.*, vol. 1, Москва 1989, p. 391 (my Italics – N.B.).

¹¹ В. Вениаминов, *Краткие сведения о жизни и мысли св. Григория Паламы*, [in:] Григорий Палама, *Триады в защиту священно-безмолствующих*, op. cit., p. 378.

¹² Г. М. Прохоров, *Византийская литература XIV в. в Древней Руси*, Санкт-Петербург 2009, p. 15.

Turks. At that moment St Gregory had been captured by the Turks for more than a year.

Despite the emir's plans to initiate a theological dispute, St Gregory Palamas is reluctant to argue with the Hyons, yet ready to introduce the Turks to Christian teaching (compare with Leskov's "We decline to argue, but let's talk about it"). This is how Palamas justifies it: "I am not worthy to offer a defence of the lofty and great catholic and apostolic Church of my Christ, since I am the least and almost nothing."¹³ Leskov's Father Kiriak explains why he doesn't baptise "natives" in a similar manner: "The reason is in my heart, Your Grace, and the Seer-of-Hearts sees it, that it's too great for me and beyond my feeble strength... I can't!"¹⁴

It is surprising that throughout the hesychast disputes on the uncreated nature of the light of Tabor and practicing "smart prayer," both the polemic attitude of writings, and the tendency for hesychast authors and Council members to "pass by" the opponent's reasons,¹⁵ manifest themselves equally. St Gregory explains his preference of pastoral mentorship and a vivid interpretation of the Holy Scriptures to proofs and refutations in the very beginning of the first triad in *Triads For The Defense of Those Who Practice Sacred Quietude*: "Any word is fighting with a word, which means another word is fighting with it too; you can't create a word that is totally victorious and knowing no defeat; the followers of the Greeks [...] have proved it, constantly confuting each other"¹⁶ (that is what in the 20th century Karl Popper called the main feature of rational knowledge – its falsifiability or refutability). Genuine knowledge cannot be obtained from arguments or conclusions, but from the life and deeds: "Any word is fighting with a word, but with word – with life!"¹⁷ St Gregory saw the Hesychast monks as an example of intense spiritual life, enlightened with the genuine "smart" knowledge, and they encapsulated the ideal of the monastic calling.

It is said in science that the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh and his followers, who determined the paradigm of the Russian spiritual culture the most, are those who implement the hesychasm tradition in their prayer monastic practice. The achievement of the Venerable Sergius is revealed

¹³ *Беседования Солуньскаго архъиерея Григориа, еже сътвори с хионы и турки*, trans. Г. М. Прохоров, [in:] Г. М. Прохоров, *Византийская литература XIV в. в Древней Руси*, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁴ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, op. cit., p. 38.

¹⁵ В. Вениаминов, *Краткие сведения о житии и мысли св. Григория Паламы*, op. cit., p. 378–379.

¹⁶ Григорий Палама, *Триады в защиту священно-безмолвствующих*, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

with “the life and deeds,” and his hagiographer writes this about his achievement:

Day and night he kept praying to God, who helps the new hermits find salvation. How can I mention all his virtues: calmness, sufferance, meekness, lack of wrath, singleness without any motley? He loved all men equally...¹⁸

It is certain that the Venerable Sergius did not leave any writings, likely following Dionysius the Areopagite and Gregory Palamas:

How can I use a word to talk about Goodness, which is higher than word? I can only thank God for His grace.¹⁹

A similar joy of contemplation fills the life of Leskov’s Father Kiriak: “Everything [...] whatever is revealed to us and whatever is hidden from us.”²⁰

What Father Kiriak says sounds almost like a quotation from St Gregory Palamas:

Very great mysteries already go on there. All blessings come from there: mother’s milk which nourishes little children, love dwells there, and faith. [...] You can call it forth only with the heard, and not by reason. Reason doesn’t create it, but destroys it. Reason brings forth doubts, Your Grace, but faith gives peace, it gives joy.²¹

As A. A. Novikova-Stroganova demonstrated, *On the Edge of the World* is a story about man’s spiritual transformation, or deification, and “light dominates the text.”²² The image of the hem of Christ’s garment becomes the dogmatic foundation of Father Kiriak’s life and his selfless service among the “natives.” Receiving help from the righteous man, the unbaptised pagans

were grateful; they took him in Christ’s name and praised him. He is good, they would say, and kind. [...] They themselves don’t recognize how they touch the hem of His

¹⁸ Библиотека литературы Древней Руси, vol. 6: XIV – середина XV века, Санкт-Петербург 1999, [in:] <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4989> (15.01.2014).

¹⁹ Григорий Палама, *Триады в защиту священно-безмолвствующих*, op. cit., p. 7.

²⁰ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, op. cit., p. 51.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² А. А. Новикова-Строганова, “Возсияй в сердцах наших”: Рождественский рассказ Н. С. Лескова “На краю света (из воспоминаний архиеерея)”, [in:] <http://www.bogoslov.ru/text/3055071.html> (18.11.2013).

garment. [...] Let them touch the very hem of His garment. They'll feel His goodness, and He'll snatch them off to Himself.²³

The figurative expression of Father Kiriak "He'll snatch them off to Himself," which caused a stylistic protest, was also induced by St Gregory's doctrine about Divine energies: "Barely emerged, a man's straining after God 'is supported' by the eternal Divine action; even though a man's success is inevitably limited, the divine counteraction is infinite."²⁴ The concept of divine energy in theological hesychasm had a symbolic and moral meaning, "having moved towards rationally inconceivable doctrinal beliefs like Trinitarian dogma" (constantly resting upon the texts of holy fathers, St Gregory fights not for words, but "dogmas, hence, deeds").²⁵

In our opinion, in the story the hesychasm dogmatics of Palamas' writings determines the image structure of "miraculous" enlightenment the Archbishop experienced when an unbaptized "native" put his life at risk saving him in the snow desert.

The first description of the "stinking savage" corresponds to the medieval conception of human nature incarnated in Russian literature in the writings of the sixteenth-century writer and publicist Ermolai-Erasmus. In the introduction to the *Tale of Peter and Febronia*, Ermolai-Erasmus characterises human nature, and calls mind, word, and spirit the three divine gifts that define man. From mind "comes word [...] which spirit lays upon, because a man's mouth cannot *produce words without spirit*."²⁶ Here we see the quotation from *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* by St John of Damascus about Trinitarian dogma (about coeternity of Word and Spirit to God); it is also referred to by St Gregory Palama in *Talks of St Gregory Palamas with the Hyons and Turks*. In the writings of St Gregory the quotation justifies Trinitarian dogma, Ermolai-Erasmus uses it to characterise human nature as created after the image and likeness of God.

Leskov's image of the "native" was built on a negative definition of these qualities: there is no sign of mind, word is poor, and spirit is malodorous:

a sliver of bath soap – voicing nothing. In his peepers, which it would be a shame to call eyes, not a glimmer of the light of the soul could be found. The sounds of words

²³ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁴ В. Вениаминов, *Краткие сведения о жизни и мысли св. Григория Паламы*, op. cit., p. 375.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 376, 378.

²⁶ *Сочинения Ермолая-Еразма*, [in:] *Памятники литературы Древней Руси. Конец XV – первая половина XVI*, eds. Л. А. Дмитриев, Д. С. Лихачев, Москва 1984, p. 626.

themselves, which issued from his larynx, were somehow dead. Both in sorrow and in joy, there was always one pronunciation, languid and passionless. Half the words were uttered in his gullet and half were squeezed through his teeth. [...] His presence so close was unbearable. Lazarus of the Four Days in the Bethany cave couldn't stink more abhorrent than this living man [...] oh, God, a poor man I am! How disgusted I am with this man, made in Your image, brother of mine! [...] He suddenly rolled over me like a bedbug and lay nose to nose, and began breathing in my face with terrible glanders and stench.²⁷

Hesychastic gnoseology resolves itself to self-knowing aimed to open God in the heart. The pagan (dark and stinking), who is ready to risk his life to save his neighbour, in the end turns out to be shining with God's light and blessed with God's grace:

A winged gigantic figure swam toward me clothed from head to toe in a chiton of silver brocade, sparkling all over. The wordly human nature of both "native" Tungus and the bishop was changed and overcome: "I couldn't believe my eyes or ears. This wondrous spirit was, of course, he – my native!" [...] What is the enigmatic journey this pure noble spirit is making in this clumsy body in the horrible wilderness? [...] If You in his sad existence, illumine him with the divine light from above, then I believe that this light of his understanding is a gift from You!" [...] "His word is poor, but he cannot console a mournful heart with a movement of his lips, and his word is a sparkle, the movement of his heart." [...] I bowed my head to the earth near the head of my native; and getting on my knees, I blessed him and covered his frozen head with the skirt of my coat, and slept by him as I would sleep embracing the angel of the wilderness.²⁸

In conclusion, we would like to say that the thoughts of St Gregory Palamas, in our opinion, the basis of Leskov's poetics was initially and, as V. Bibikhin (V. Veniaminov) notices still is, a theological challenge aimed not to introduce the Orthodox theology to innovation, but to turn it to lively origins²⁹ through the spiritually-dampened official Church. The image of Leskov's Father Kiriak is the closest possible to a righteous hesychast, it is the image of living faith:

²⁷ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, op. cit., p. 77; cf. Н. С. Лесков, *Собрание сочинений: в 12 тт.*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 370, 372–373.

²⁸ N. S. Leskov, *On the Edge of the World*, op. cit., pp. 97–98, 102, 104; cf. Н. С. Лесков, *Собрание сочинений: в 12 тт.*, vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

²⁹ В. Вениаминов, *Краткие сведения о житии и мысли св. Григория Паламы*, op. cit., pp. 349, 359, 376.

He was an innovator of sorts. Seeing the falsity of this world, he was ashamed of it and awaited a new one filled with spirit and truth.³⁰

The hesychasm tradition itself initially has some features of exclusiveness and oppositionality within the Orthodox faith. It is no coincidence that throughout St Gregory Palamas' life, Byzantine church councils discussed his doctrine (it happened until 1368, when, nine years after his death, he was canonized). Leskov embodied the hesychasm boldness of dogmatic creations, and the boldness of the confession of love for God in the last prayer of Father Kiriak:

My dear old Kiriak prayed just like that: he dared for everyone, "Bless everyone," he would say, "or I won't let you go!" What would you do to such a man? [...] I can still see how he adheres and follows Him saying "Bless everyone," or I won't let you go. This bold old man will get what he wants; He is too kind to deny.³¹

For a number of reasons the Russian culture of 19th – 20th centuries, from religious and philosophical tradition and literature to the practices of "revolutionary monks" (S. L. Frank) at the turn of the century, inherited these traits of exclusivity, boldness of dogmatic creations, urgent need of the living inner activity, of the living faith. Leskov creates the image of a man "on the edge of the world," who is uplifted with a touch of "the hem of Christ's garment," but still "practices heresy a bit," and this image has become an incarnation of the Russian spiritual ideal, born in the context of Palamistic theology.

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Dostoyevsky's *Pochvennichestvo* as the Outcome of His Characters' Ontological Self-Identification (*The Possessed*, *The Brothers Karamazov*)

Dostoyevsky's *pochvennichestvo*, or grass-roots philosophy, is a religious and cultural model that proclaims Jesus Christ to be the moral and ontological ideal, as well as the ultimate goal of the spiritual progress of humanity, in its inseparable ties with the Earth. At the same time, it is a project of religious revival of Russia and of the whole world, based on the idea of New Christianity which was nurtured, simultaneously or together with Dostoyevsky, by a number of Russian writers and philosophers of the mid- and late 19th century. Its main principles were stated in the essays by F. M. and M. M. Dostoyevsky, N. N. Strakhov and A. A. Grigoryev published by two periodicals, "Vremya" (1861–1863) and "Epoha" (1864–1865), where the project was positioned as an idea that, on one hand, could consolidate the class-divided Russian society, and on the other offered an alternative to the economic progressivism by substituting technical progress with a spiritual one. From the religious and philosophical point of view, it was philosophical personalism based on the idea of each individual's full responsibility for everyone else and for the "world as an organism."¹ For Dostoyevsky, the fundamental idea of *pochvennichestvo* was one of the corporality of Jesus Christ as a physical manifestation of God within the substance of Planet Earth; *pochva* (ground, or earth) produces the ideal congenial to its own nature: "Christ is God to the extent that the Earth could show God."²

Dostoyevsky took three separate routes to his *pochvennichestvo*: one from the idea of the "uniqueness of the Russian nation," another from his aesthetic

¹ Н. Н. Страхов, *Мир как целое. Черты из науки и природы*, Москва 1872.

² Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, Ленинград 1972–1990, vol. 23, p. 224.

views based on the special place of art in the life of a society and one more from his specific religious Creed ("the Image of Christ") that is linked to the idea of the special significance of the institution of *starets* in the renewed Christianity.

It is hard in a brief paper to offer a comprehensive description of this concept; besides, it has been fairly well described: Dostoyevsky was both praised and condemned – for his Russian nationalism, utopianism, the heresy of "pink Christianity;" for exaggerating the significance of Russia in the contemporary world, and even for materialism. Dostoyevsky's religious and philosophical doctrine was criticized by K. Leontyev, V. Rozanov, N. Berdyaev, S. Bulgakov etc. We will thus focus on two issues that we believe to be crucial: Dostoyevsky's understanding of Jesus Christ and the way that he believed the Russian religious revival should go.

As early as the days of his exile (1850–1859) Dostoyevsky planned to write an opus on the religious transformation of the Russian nation; some of the ideas pertaining to this project were later voiced in his famous *Pushkin Speech* (1880). In a letter of April 13, 1856 he informs A. E. Vranghel of his intention to write an essay "about Russia" that he described as a "regular political pamphlet," in which he "should not like to erase a single word."³ When five years later he returned to St Petersburg, he incorporated those ideas into his essays on art, where "some chapters will have whole pages from the pamphlet. It is, actually, about the mission of Christianity in art."⁴ The essay in question, on Christianity and the mission of art, is *A Sequence of Essays on Russian Literature* published by "Vremya" in 1861.⁵

Dostoyevsky believed that the main locomotive to propel mankind along the course chartered by Providence is art, primarily literature. He believed that Art is a way to God, for it restores a ruined man by adhering to the Christian Commandments. Dostoyevsky refuted all literary trends, recognizing just two: the one that brings an individual closer to the ideal of Christ, and one that distracts him from it. The proto-narrative of all his books is the idea of a "zhitie (legend) of a great sinner," an unwritten novel that underlies almost all of his works, an idea that came to him long before the abovementioned narration plan was conceived.⁶ After *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky planned to write a book about Jesus Christ;⁷ the plan was only checked by his death.

³ *Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends*, trans. E. G. Mayne, London 1914, p. 93.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ See Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 18, pp. 41–103.

⁶ See *ibidem*, vol. 9, pp. 125–128.

⁷ See *ibidem*, vol. 5, p. 409.

In his *Notebook* containing preliminary sketches for his essays on art (early 1860s) there is an entry that introduces the essence of the dispute on Jesus Christ that Dostoyevsky was conducting with his opponents: “Christ preached his learning as an ideal only, he had professed that until the end of the world there would be struggle and evolution (the teachings of the sword), for it is a natural law, since life on earth is evolving, while there the existence is synthetically full, eternally enjoyable and complete, for which, thus, ‘there would be no more time.’”⁸ That was how he viewed the evolution of the world: “The entire history, both of mankind and, in a way, of each individual, is progress, struggle, striving and achieving this goal.”⁹ (Thus the Christian religion, according to Dostoyevsky, is a project aimed at achieving ethical progress of mankind, based not as much on the Christian “teachings,” as on the apparent “Image of Christ.” Christ, according to Dostoyevsky, is the ideal and the goal of human progress, while God is the Integrity of the Universe that has a Purpose. He believed that Russia and the Russian people who carried the image of Christ in their hearts were expected to play a special part in this process. Incidentally, the same idea was voiced even more clearly by A. A. Grigoryev, who wrote to M. P. Pogodin on August 26, 1859, “Personally, I believe that Orthodoxy is just a well-known, spontaneous historic force that still has a long time to live and will produce new forms of life and art [...] rooted in the Slavic world, primarily the Russian Slavic world, with its scope of moral encompassment – and it will justify the world.”¹⁰

The logic of this concept evolves in keeping with the idea of the compatibility of the religious *pochva* (ground) with the *pochva* in the ethno-geographical sense, and of the need to converge them. How people would evolve while implementing this project of ethical advancement, depends on setting the right goal, on the pace of progress towards this goal, as well as on their location in space. That is the whole essence of *pochva*:

What is it like, where is it, on which planet, in which center, is it the ultimate center, the heart of universal synthesis, i.e. God? – we do not know. We are only aware of one trait of the future nature of this future being that would hardly be called a human (and thus we have no idea what sort of beings we will evolve into). The feature was foretold and foreseen by Christ, the great and ultimate ideal of the evolution of mankind, who came to us, in keeping with the law of our history, in flesh.¹¹

⁸ Ibidem, vol. 20, pp. 173–174.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 172.

¹⁰ А. А. Григорьев, *Воспоминания*, Ленинград 1980, p. 301.

¹¹ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 173.

Dostoyevsky believed that the destiny of Christian religion was to be shaped through allegiance to the ideal of Christ, through “the feat of allegiance to Him. That’s what I emphasize and point out.” The writer was so focused on this idea that he had appropriated the concept which is rather widespread in all the Christian confessions: “This is my idea, no one has so far pointed it out, but that’s the way it is, and it is true.”¹²

The mechanism of this progress towards Truth is based, according to Dostoyevsky, on the effect of inherited memory (or genetic memory, as we would put it nowadays):

a man transfers a part of his personality to a son he sires, and leaves his moral memory to people (NB. Chanting *Memory Eternal* at the mass is quite significant), and thus a part of his former personality that once lived on Earth is incorporated into the future progress of mankind. We can plainly see that the memory of the great evolvers of man is still alive (the same as of the evil evolvers), and, for a person, it is a matter of great pride to be like them. Which means that a part of their personality enters other people, both corporeally and spiritually; thus Christ entered mankind in his entity, and each person tries to transfigure into the personality of Christ, into his ideal. Once he achieves it, he will plainly see that all those who had previously achieved the same goal on earth, were incorporated into its ultimate personality, that is Christ.¹³

“In The Gospel Christ utters the final word of human progress.”¹⁴

This clearly shows that anything moral (beneficence, self-sacrifice) for Dostoyevsky equaled “Christian,” and *vice versa*: “the question is set in a moral, that is Christian sense.”¹⁵ Moral advancement and acts of faith are, too, the same things.¹⁶ An alternative to an individual’s persistent strivings towards the ideal of Christ is life in the guise of an insect; all the attempts to forego this postulate met with Dostoyevsky’s deepest derision; thus, to him, one of those insects trying to forego Christ, was Hegel, the “German bug” who “tried to reconcile everything with philosophy.”¹⁷ Thence come the inferences that we see put into practice in the actions of Dostoyevsky main philosopher-characters, as well as the wording of his essays; Dostoyevsky is ready to take a religious character who destroys his opponents for an “honest person,” yet not for a Christian:

¹² Ibidem, p. 174.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem, vol. 24, p. 253.

¹⁵ Ibidem, vol. 25, p. 60.

¹⁶ Ibidem, vol. 26, p. 224.

¹⁷ Ibidem, vol. 24, p. 112.

I do have a moral pattern and an ideal, it is given, it is Christ. I am asking, would he burn the heretics – no. Consequently, burning the heretics is an immoral deed.¹⁸

Thence comes the statement that sometimes, in order to stay true to your creed, you must commit immoral deeds.¹⁹

The writer's characters fit perfectly into this pattern; they are divided into two categories: those who adhere, even though erring continuously, to the ideal of Christ, and those who stray from this path. Throughout his literary career, Dostoyevsky sought a righteous Christ-like person, such a protagonist is central to all his works, from the first to the last one, from *Poor Folk* to *The Brothers Karamazov*. The protagonist of *The Idiot* is called in the preliminary sketches for the novel *Prince Christ*.²⁰ His main feature, as outlined in the plan for the novel: "he forgives everything, sees a reason everywhere, treats each sin as forgivable and can justify *anything*."²¹ Looking for the dominant idea of his doctrine, as incorporated in the moral properties of his character, he puts down in his notebook, "Compassion is all Christianity,"²² and enlarges on the same idea in the final text of the novel: "Compassion is the chief law of human existence."²³ In the copy of the New Testament, given to him in Siberia by a Decembrist's wife N. D. Fonvizina, he marked out: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34); incidentally, John's Gospel was Dostoyevsky's favorite Book of the New Testament.

According to Dostoyevsky, an ideal Christian is not necessarily a person who meticulously observes all the rites prescribed by his creed, but a person who makes a deliberate effort to save and to restore his perishing or luckless neighbor. In an essay on Victor Hugo, dedicated to the forthcoming first Russian edition of *Notre Dame de Paris*, Dostoyevsky points out:

His idea is the chief idea of all art of the nineteenth century, and Victor Hugo, as an artist, was almost the first herald of this idea. This is a Christian and a highly moral idea; its formula is the restitution of a fallen individual, unfairly brought down by the burden of events, stagnant age and social prejudices. This idea is the retribution of all the humiliated and discarded pariahs of the society.²⁴

¹⁸ Ibidem, vol. 27, p. 56.

¹⁹ See ibidem, p. 85.

²⁰ See ibidem, vol. 9, p. 246.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 218.

²² Ibidem, p. 270.

²³ F. Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. E. Martin, [in:] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2638/2638-h/2638-h.htm> (25.03.2014).

²⁴ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 28.

Thus Dostoyevsky treated all those who personified this idea of “restitution of a fallen individual” as true Christians, irrespective of their creed, judging an individual’s worth by the Christian content of his activities. In his later-years notes there is a list of names, “Balzac, Moliere, Christ.”²⁵ For him, other true Christians were Charles Dickens and Georges Sand (the latter was actually a deist, but, according to Dostoyevsky, “did not believe in Christ;” the writer pointed out that she “did not like to show in her novels the humiliated persons, righteous but submissive, deranged and timid, such as you would find almost in every novel by the great Christian Dickens; on the contrary, she made her heroines stand proud, almost queen-like.”²⁶

There’s no doubt that Dostoyevsky enjoyed reading an essay on Georges Sand at “Novoye Vremya” that stated that

Sand was as appalled by the atheists at least as much as by the Tartuffes, who believe that the main prerequisite of salvation is rigorous adherence to all the religious rites... She believed in Providence and claimed that good deeds were the best proof of Faith.²⁷

The controversy of this statement – a Christian who does not believe in Christ – is a good way to render the essence of Dostoyevsky’s religious idea. Dostoyevsky learned from the same essay that Georges Sand did not observe the rituals of Roman Catholic Church and did not believe in religious rites. Earlier he had learned from the same essay about the death of Georges Sand and her “secular” funeral without a priest; the paper also published her testament that stated, “the eternal teaching of the believers – God the Almighty, immortal soul and hopes for afterlife – that’s what managed to hold its ground under the assault of criticism, ratiocinations, and even of the attacks of hopeless doubts.”²⁸ This text is almost repetitive of what Dostoyevsky put into a letter to N. D. Fonvizin after leaving the prison, at the age of 32: “If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth.”²⁹ The humanistic doctrine of G. Sand, whose name was mentioned repeatedly in Dostoyevsky’s *Pushkin Speech*, made a major impact on Dostoyevsky; the *pochvennichestvo* he was advocating is based on her ideas to no lesser degree than on the socialist doctrines of Saint-Simon, Cabet, Fourier he once studied as a member of Petrashevsky Circle.

²⁵ Ibidem, vol. 27, p. 198.

²⁶ Ibidem, vol. 23, p. 37.

²⁷ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Дневник писателя*, “Новое время”, 1876, no 97, p. 1.

²⁸ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Дневник писателя*, “Новое время”, 1876, no 93, p. 3.

²⁹ *Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends*, op. cit., pp. 67–68.

The universal “brotherhood” of all men, proclaimed as the ultimate goal of human evolution, is a state opposite to the present one that Dostoyevsky termed “civilization,” built around a jealous competition of the humans; a “transitory state” with “ruined individual faith in God:”

this condition, the falling-out of masses into individuals, i.e. civilization, is a diseased one. The proof is the loss of a viable idea of God. The second proof that it is a disease, is that a person feels unwell in this condition, he pines, losing the source of lively life, he is oblivious to his own sensations, while realizing it all.³⁰

One of the symptoms of the disease was atheism; Dostoyevsky believed that all the people were, to a certain extent, infected by it. According to his ideas, even a true believer is in a pendulous state, posed in a certain position between faith and faithlessness. While working on *The Idiot*, he jots down, “A Christian, yet he does not believe. The duality of a profound personality. A tongue in the mirror.”³¹ Denouncing Western civilization (and, at the same time, admiring the cultural traditions of Western Europe), as did the Slavophiles before him, Dostoyevsky tended to overemphasize the genetic links between Western Christianity and Socialism. For the writer, Jesus Christ, rather than a branch of religion, was the moral and ontologically solid justification of the existence of man and the whole of mankind. Thus the abovementioned relationship, in the historic and theological sense, does not look particularly convincing; the contrast did not even work from the ethical and religious viewpoint: in Dostoyevsky’s opinion, there was a much sharper contrast in the world’s history, between those who believed in Christ (Beauty, Truth, Good) and those who did not believe (or just pretended they believed) in him – irrespective of the specific creed they professed. He knew full well that “creed and the image of Christ are still alive in the hearts of most Catholics, in all their former truth and purity.”³²

A way more dangerous than atheism or any other creeds (those, according to Dostoyevsky, often showed an individual a right way to God) is the state of “indifference” that is conducive to social “degradation and stinking.” The writer called it “an almost Russian feature, as compared, for instance, to other European nations.”³³ S. T. Verhovensky (*The Possessed*) admires the profundity of a quote from the New Testament that expresses this idea:

³⁰ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, pp. 192–193.

³¹ *Ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 185.

³² *Ibidem*, vol. 24, p. 48.

³³ *Ibidem*.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write. [...] I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.³⁴

Dostoyevsky believed that the painful oscillations between faith and faithlessness, with the sharp tension between the two, are typical for the individuals with a high spiritual potential; his philosopher characters can contemplate simultaneously “the depths of faith and faithlessness.”³⁵ Stavrogin (*The Possessed*) who insists on his atheism, is, according to Tihon, a “poor youth” who actually is an ardent believer in God: “How then did you say that you do not believe in God?... God will forgive your misbelief, for you do venerate the Holy Spirit, without knowing it;”³⁶ working on this character, Dostoyevsky made a note: his “unbelief and torment come from faith.”³⁷ Kirillov from *The Possessed* whose “highest idea is the one that there’s no God” lights a lamp before the icons.³⁸ The same idea is traceable in the other notes for the novel.³⁹ In his confessional letter to N. D. Fonvizin, Dostoyevsky admits: “I am a child of this age, a child of unfaith and scepticism, and probably (indeed I know it) shall remain so to the end of my life.”⁴⁰ The writer’s contemporaries, e.g. L. N. Tolstoy, believed that this idea was a reflection of the inner struggles of the writer.⁴¹

With special poignancy, Dostoyevsky formulated an ethical paradox: how to deal with the tension of the relative importance of Self and Other, after the death of his first wife Maria Dmitrievna, in an entry to his diary of 1864; in this entry, Dostoyevsky offers a full-scale formula of his religious model, based on the ethical ideal of Christ, and of the goal of the progress of each individual and of mankind in general:

To love thy neighbor as thyself, according to Christ’s Commandment, is impossible. We are bound on Earth by our personality. Our Self resists it. Only Christ could do it, but Christ was an eternal ideal, given forever, the one that man is striving for, and should

³⁴ See F. Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, trans. C. Garnett, [in:] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8117/8117-h/8117-h.htm> (25.03.2014).

³⁵ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 15, p. 80.

³⁶ Ibidem, vol. 11, p. 28.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 175.

³⁸ See F. Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, op. cit.

³⁹ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 11, p. 183.

⁴⁰ *Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends*, op. cit., p. 67.

⁴¹ А. Б. Гольденвейзер, *Вблизи Толстого*, vol. I, Москва 1922, p. 100.

be striving for by the laws of nature. Yet, after the advent of Christ as an incorporated human ideal, it became as clear as day that the highest, ultimate perfection of personality must reach the point (at the very end of its evolution, once it achieves its goal) where man should discover, understand and probe with the whole force of his nature that the highest use he can put his personality and the completeness of his evolution to, is to sort of destroy this self, to give it in its entirety to each and everyone, completely and selflessly... That's Christ's Paradise. The entire history, both of mankind and, in a way, of each individual, is progress, struggle, yearnings, and achievement of this goal.⁴²

While working on *The Adolescent*, Dostoyevsky notes,

Versilov. Russia will be saved by Christ, for it is the only national thing left to it; as a matter of fact, everything national it ever had, is Christ. The end of faith in Christ will be the end of the Russian nation.⁴³

Dostoyevsky shared Versilov's religious and philosophical model that implies moral and ontological domination of the ideal of Jesus Christ. There's an entry in his *Notebook* with the preparatory sketches for *The Possessed*,

All of them [...] are against Christ (Renan, Ghe), they think he was an ordinary man and criticize his doctrine as inappropriate for our times. But there is no doctrine, just haphazard words, what is important is the image of Christ wherefrom emanates each and every learning... Christ emanates the idea that the main achievement and goal of mankind is the result of the acquired virtue. Imagine that we were all Christs – would the present-day doubts, bewilderment, pauperism be possible? Whoever does not understand that, does not understand Christ, and is not a Christian.⁴⁴

According to this idea, Christ is the perfect corporeal incarnation of both God and man: from that point on, Dostoyevsky would be obsessed by the idea of God-Man and write extensively about it, especially in the 1870s, in *The Possessed*, *The Adolescent*, *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoyevsky was aware of the fragility of his construction, "Christ's Paradise," where all humans will morally be infinitely close to Jesus. *The Golden Age in Your Pocket* and *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* are two utopias and, at the same time, anti-utopias,

⁴² Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 72.

⁴³ Ibidem, vol. 16, p. 341.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, vol. 11, pp. 192–193.

where Dostoyevsky shows that Christ-like society is possible, but it only takes one Un-Christ-like person to destroy the harmony.

Overall, *pochvennichestvo* is, *de facto*, a call for a religious reform. Dostoyevsky's lukewarm attitude to religious attributes, rites and rituals is quite noteworthy. Alexander Egorovich Vranghel, a close friend of Dostoyevsky in the 1850s, recalls that

we did not talk much about religion with Dostoyevsky. He was a pious person, yet seldom attended church, and detested the priests, the Siberian ones in particular. He talked ecstatically about Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

Dostoyevsky noted bitterly that many clerics tended to substitute faith with prejudice;⁴⁶ such instances are described in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this novel, he enlarges on the life of a Russian Orthodox monastery; the tension between the new and the old Orthodoxy is shown through the conflict between Zosima and Ferapont.⁴⁷ Dostoyevsky was of an opinion that faith in Christ comes from the natural ontology of a human being, both mortal and immortal. His model of Christianity was based on the idea of humanism ("brotherhood") and faith in Christ as a moral and ontological ideal: "In the Russian Christianity, really, there is not a trace of mysticism, just humanism, just the image of Christ – or, at least, that's what matters."⁴⁸ The Church as an institution was, to him, secondary to Christ as a live personification of Truth. He writes, "The cause of the Orthodoxy. (Not just churches, but truth and release through Christ)."⁴⁹ Dostoyevsky's Creed was different from the canonic one, that proclaims the unconfused and undivided existence of God, Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. In his works, there is not a single reference to the Holy Trinity as the unification of the three hypostases of God, just the mentioning of the related feasts of the church calendar.⁵⁰ Vranghel mentions that Dostoyevsky's

⁴⁵ А. Е. Врангель, *Воспоминания о Ф. М. Достоевском в Сибири. 1854–1856*, Санкт-Петербург 1912, p. 52.

⁴⁶ See Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 189.

⁴⁷ See *ibidem*, vol. 14, pp. 148–156, 301–305. The English translation: F. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. C. Garnett, [in:] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28054/28054-h/28054-h.html> (25.03.2014).

⁴⁸ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 23, p. 130.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 179.

⁵⁰ See *ibidem*, vol. 15, p. 153. The English translation: F. Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, op. cit.

prayers in Semipalatinsk were more like the prayers of Goethe's Werther admiring Ursa Major:

The favorite pastime for both of us was to stretch on a warm evening on the grass and, lying supine, to watch the myriads of stars glittering in the blue depths of the sky. Those moments soothed him. To watch the greatness of the Creator, of the universally known, omnipotent Power of God, brought a kind of softness to the hearts, and the realization of our nullity appeased our souls.⁵¹

Incidentally, the famous description of the religious exaltation that Alyosha Karamazov experiences while looking at the starlit sky,⁵² seems to be an autobiographical allusion. Dostoyevsky firmly believed that mankind has an ideal and a goal, and it would lose its sanity without the ideal and the goal, which is Christ, and an additional proof of this omni-important idea is that the ethical ideal of Christ is not even contested by the atheists:

Not a single atheist who contests the divine origins of Christ, even denies that HE is the ideal of mankind. The last word was Renan's. It is most noteworthy.⁵³

Moreover, such a concept of Russian Orthodoxy and, in a broader sense, of Christianity met with the harsh disapproval of a number of official clerics, such as K. N. Leontyev, who disapproved of these ideas and, especially, of the way Dostoyevsky described the monks. Dostoyevsky would have probably agreed with that, adding that he would prefer the kind of monks he had described in *The Brothers Karamazov* through Zosima and Alyosha.

The concept of "grass-root Christianity" that Dostoyevsky had developed in his essays and fiction does differ from Orthodoxy in a number of ways; at the same time, it hints at the idea of syncretism. It is quite noteworthy that in the drafts of *The Brothers Karamazov* there is the following entry,

No, because we still have much to be desired. There's much to be achieved. – People like Christ, Mohammed, Moses.⁵⁴

⁵¹ A. E. Врангель, *Воспоминания о Ф. М. Достоевском в Сибири. 1854–1856*, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵² See Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 14, p. 328. The English translation: F. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, op. cit.

⁵³ Ф. М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений в 30-ти томах*, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 192.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, vol. 16, p. 257.

E. L. Radlov was right in pointing out that when Dostoyevsky speaks about Church, he means not a historic phenomenon, but a project of setting up the “ecumenical Church” that, “according to his beliefs, lives deep in the hearts of Russian people” as a “vague image and an unspecified goal, with the possibility of its achievement barely traced.”⁵⁵

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⁵⁵ Э. Л. Радлов, *Соловьев и Достоевский*, [in:] Ф. М. Достоевский, *Статьи и материалы*, ed. А. С. Долинин, vol. I, Петербург 1922, pp. 162–163.

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V. F. Bulgakov's Tolstoyism as a Cultural Project (Emigration Period)

The fear of different nations and states to lose their national identity is becoming the downside of modern globalization. Globalization is a marker of a boundary situation connected with the loss of not only national but personal identity. To get out of this borderline case of doubt, a person needs a guide, a kind of "Ariadne's thread" to find their way in the labyrinth of history and culture. It is perhaps curious to relate, but the story is repeated on another level. The Russian emigration endured the same troubles and fears in some ways in the early 20th century.

The Russian emigration of the first wave "retrieved" the search for their guide, i.e. the identity from cultural memory. The breach with the native land, the intelligentsia's disconnection of fates made Russian culture the foundation of unity and identity. Like a biblical people, they held on to Russian literature, philosophy, art as to a single "God," expelled from their temple but not lost in a foreign land.

The case of Czechoslovakia can be a very interesting example of respect for Russians and Russian culture. This country was one of the busiest centers of cultural and scientific life of the Russian emigration in the 1920's and 30's, receiving financial support and material assistance from the government of the republic, as well as from individuals. Holidays were devoted to the idea of spreading Russian culture in general, as individual persons. The finding of the reasons for honoring Alexander Pushkin, M. Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy and others became akin to a national obligation that transferred national identity to the younger generation. A nation is its best representatives and Valentin Fedorovich Bulgakov was just such a person. He was a phenomenal figure and follower of L. Tolstoy who can rightly be called an indispensable part of Russian culture. Bulgakov, being Tolstoy's last secretary, of course, absorbed his titanic and deep ideology in understanding of the Russian world in human and the

ideas of self-improvement, so he became a distributor of the ideas of Tolstoy. He represented Tolstoyism as a cultural project of a religious nature of man.

While in exile in Czechoslovakia from 1923–1948 Bulgakov tirelessly promoted the ideas of Leo Tolstoy, travelling with his lectures to many European countries. Valentin Fedorovich was not only a lecturer, but all his life was an advocate of the ideas of the teacher. These are pacifism, non-participation in political activities, but social activity based on Christian principles, religious humanism, etc. Bulgakov's pacifism was based on the participation in the anti-war and anti-revolutionary movements. His emigrant activity was a logical continuation of pre-revolutionary Russia. Opposing the outbreak of World War I, he completed and spread the anti-war proclamations which were officially published in the Swiss magazine "Demain" in 1914. As a result of this, he was arrested that year and spent 13 months in prison in Tula and joined the All-Russian Committee for Famine Relief peasants during the Civil War.

Even then, Valentin Fedorovich developed a number of judgments of the pacifist sentiment based on two Christian commandments which reflected the teachings of Tolstoy. The first commandment is the following: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind." And the second is like "Love your neighbor as yourself." At the same time, Bulgakov explained his activity against violence as not external, but internal impulses and motives.

My whole life is the pursuit of love, desire for unity with all life. When the war started, I saw that this unity is broken. It was very difficult for us to look at horrors that surrounded us. It seemed to us that a time has come when human life is getting cheaper day after day and it is easy for man's hand to shed the fraternal blood now, and we wanted to shout: "Back to Christ! Wake up, come to your senses, people are brothers!"¹

Relying on the commandment that all people are brothers and sons of God Bulgakov was saying that our enemy is not German, not French, but our common enemy is the "beast" living in us. Speaking against the principle of "an eye for an eye," he repeated Tolstoyan non-resistance formula: "For who strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." One must say "no one under any pretext must not use any force, and especially under the most commonly pretext of retaliation."² Evil cannot be destroyed by evil; the only means of

¹ В. Ф. Булгаков, *Лев Толстой и наша современность (о путях к истинному возрождению)*, [in:] http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow_w_f/text_0180.shtml (28.03.2014).

² See В. Ф. Булгаков, *Христианская этика. Систематические очерки мировоззрения Л. Н. Толстого*, [in:] http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakow_w_f/text_0020.shtml (28.03.2014).

reducing the harm of violence is to abstain from violence. As the fire did not extinguish the fire, so evil cannot extinguish evil. Only good, encountering evil and it is not infected, triumphs over evil. Only one non-resistance stops evil, puts it in itself, neutralizes it, and does not allow him to go further.

Emigration became the continuation of his pacifist activity. While staying in the European world he led the non-violent struggle against the British colonialists (the influence of Mahatma Gandhi), he joined the international anti-war organization which was called "International War Resisters" and soon he became one of the members of its board. During the Second World War, after the occupation of Prague, Bulgakov was arrested on suspicion of communist activity in 1941 and sent to a Bavarian concentration camp in Veysenburg, where he stayed until the end of the war. This was the paradox of the history, because he was expelled from Soviet Russia and he was "her representative" in exile defending, in fact, the universal values and common Christian unity of people. Fascists identified Tolstoyism Russian by means of (Soviet) Russian ideology and identity. Evidently, it is true. Tolstoy is "pan-human" and he is absolutely Russian in spirit, and Bulgakov, as the successor of his ideas is one of his best students.

Let us remember the words of Tolstoy: "Rejoice when you are abused. It drives inside." This means, be with God, be with yourself and draw strength to serve the people in yourself, in the depths of your soul.³ These words helped many immigrants to save a human and personal beginning, not to become embittered and not to betray their homeland. Thus, another reminder of Russian emigration about Tolstoy in the period of emigration was not an accident. The main priority for Tolstoy was to serve the people: he wanted to give the people all of his works, renounced all his property and only wanted to go on the path of self-improvement and internal religiosity.

Many times in correspondence, conversations and collaboration with some scientific and cultural figures Bulgakov discussed the axiological dogma of human existence that is Tolstoy's self-improvement. Every time he mentioned the correctness of Tolstoy's remarks that the soul of man is, under all circumstances, at the center of which everything revolves in the world. The happiness of the world depends on individuals. Self-improvement is the basic precept of Tolstoy's catechism that will remain as one of the essential foundations of rational human life even in the future. To make life better it is necessary for ourselves to become better. If we do not have the necessary moral force ourselves, we do not learn to control ourselves, to limit our needs,

³ See *ibidem*.

to abstain from evil, to cultivate a sense of love and brotherhood to others, to live more for the soul than the body, then no forces of heaven and hell, no revolution will not help us.⁴ And further he noticed:

having reached an external release, we remain to be the slaves of our passions and in the presence of this internal bondage of each individual to their passions, the perfect life that people dream seems to be impossible. And, on the contrary, someone who has reached his own internal possession and desires would “gain” everything else. Such a person would be a worthy member of the future and the better order of society.⁵

Taking into consideration Christian ethics, Bulgakov shows the importance of self-identity through Christ's commandments and self-awareness with a single part of the Creator of all things, an internal self-improvement which reflects the external manifestations of human circumstances.

The kingdom of God is inside us and outside us. When we set it in ourselves, it is set in the world. I live to do the will of him because he sent me into life. His will is in the following: to bring my soul to the highest degree of perfection in love and to establish unity between human beings and all beings in the world.⁶

The purpose of life is only to strive for the excellence that Christ pointed out. He left us an invincible commandment:

Be perfect, as your heavenly Father. This is the only aim of life, available for a man that can be achieved not only by standing on the pole, not by austerity, but by the production of a loving communication with all men.⁷

The desire to understand this correct purpose results in all useful human activity, and therefore this purpose solves all the issue.

Love is love in others; God awakened in you, is the awakening of the same God in others. Therefore, the establishment of the kingdom of God within us is necessary both for God and for us and for others.⁸

⁴ See В. Ф. Булгаков, *Толстой, Ленин, Ганди*, [in:] http://az.lib.ru/b/bulgakov_w_f/text_0090.shtml (28.03.2014).

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ В. Ф. Булгаков, *Христианская этика. Систематические очерки мировоззрения Л. Н. Толстого*, op. cit.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

As for the Russian intelligentsia trying to preserve Russian culture, they selflessly created Russian public organizations, Russian schools, press unions, Russian legal advice, the museums and so on in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s, thus keeping themselves together with some expression of their identity.

The Russian emigration of 1920–1930 years which is characterized by individual representatives, demonstrated how it is possible to preserve their identity in a foreign land, relying on the memory of their great culture. However, it is not enough to have only the memory and the past to maintain the integrity of the spirit and self-identity. Another important component was an infelt religiosity, that was understood largely by Tolstoyan as actively propagating the cause of Christ; it was the case of sacrificial and pacifist service to the people.

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The Love Poetry of Marina Tsvetaeva in Light of Dietrich von Hildebrandt's Metaphysics of Love

There are different ways in which one can write about poetry. It is explored by the poets themselves, by literary critics and philosophers. This review I do chiefly as a philosopher. There can be some variants too. We can say about the nature of speech itself and about the features of poetic speech, about its emotionality, figurativeness, and specific design. Poems can be considered as “openness of Being” (M. Heidegger) or as a text (with its context, pretext, etc.), as a set of signs or symbols to be deciphered. We can analyze a variety of plans or levels of a work as R. Ingarden did, we can focus on the problems of interpretation, the participation in it of the recipient, Umberto Eco's “the role of the reader.”

What method shall I choose? Taking into account the theme of our meeting (religion and culture in Russian thought), I will try to consider one of the poems of Marina Tsvetaeva through the prism of culture as such (which is permanent and remains at the beginning of the twenty-first century as veritable as it was at the beginning of twentieth century, i.e. from the point of view of the eternal values). I also premise that philosophers and poets bring up the same problems. In order to clarify this thesis I'll analyse a piece of love poetry by Marina Tsvetaeva's in the light of Dietrich von Hildebrandt's metaphysics of love.

Finally, I have one more remark. I want to find out what senses the reader of our time can derive from the literary heritage of Marina Tsvetaeva. It was not without reason that I have chosen to research the work of this particular poet, about whom Joseph Brodsky said that “there is not a greater poet than Tsvetaeva in our age”¹ and “the whole history consists in the fact that the world-view

¹ И. Кудрова *Верхнее “до”*, [in:] <http://www.synnegoria.com/tsvetaeva/WIN/kudrova/verhneedo.html> (24.12.2013).

which you find in the works of such poets formed a part of our perception.”² For the same reason, I will not be absorbed in her biography. Of course, one way or another, the events of Marina Tsvetaeva’s life and her way of experiencing them will come into view in my reflection, at least because I know about them, but in my analysis I would like to keep away from them to look at the poems as an uninvolved person. So, what are the most important interpretations of love, as for our pragmatic age, that Marina Tsvetaeva renders in her works?

The most attention, in my opinion, is deserved by the poem *In Empty Temple*, composed on June 26, 1922 in Berlin. The date and the place of writing present the expressive context of the work, but, as I have already declared, I will not get deeper into the biography. Neither will I linger on the fact that the poem is not typical for M. Tsvetaeva who “falls” from the height of creative work to an ordinary love.

The first strophes tell about it:

In the deserted temple
As incense I would trifurcate.
I’d fell as grain and flame
Onto the crown of head...

I would join nightly screams
In with as a compeer –
I’ll be a brazier
Diminutive for thee...³

In the last lines I cannot do without a comment on D. von Hildebrand. The essence of his treatise on love (in English translation *The Nature of Love*) may be reduced to a couple of words: love is a value-response. Everything else will be added! If there is a response, it means that there is a call, i.e. the presence of Another (thus, self-love is only a love by analogy), if the value is mentioned, it means the inner interest to the person in whole (not to his/her utility, including the ability to give pleasure).

But I must revert to the poem by Marina Tsvetaeva, namely to the word “brazier tiny,” and to the specification of this one in the next strophe: “domestic

² Иосиф Бродский о Марине Цветаевой, [in:] http://lslold.ksu.ru/virt_vyst/22/fr_zv_br.htm (24.12.2013).

³ Here and below: M. Tsvetaeva, *In Empty Temple*, trans. I. Shambat (*The Best of Marina Tsvetayeva*), [in:] http://lib.ru/POEZIQ/CWETAEWA/sbornik_engl.txt (24.03.2014). I use the translation of Ilya Shambat, but sometimes give my own translation.

fowl." I will serve you not only as a person but even as a thing, the lyrical heroine says. Sacrifice is one of the main attributes of true love. It is typical that the beloved becomes the focus of the lover's life, the source of the lover's personal and most inner happiness which depends entirely on the beloved.

To understand this remark better we should refer to the fundamental, according to D. von Hildebrand, feature of love, namely, *intentio benevolentiae* (disposition to benevolence). This implies a personal concern in the happiness of the beloved, a desire to make him or her happy. Such a desire, however, involves all types of sacrifice and indicates the interdependence of happiness of two people: the happiness of my beloved is a cause of my own happiness. Here we touch upon the dimension in which love becomes a super value-response, and the beloved – an objective good for the lover. The beloved assumes a personal significance for the lover, hence the offering of personal life arises. As D. von Hildebrand writes, the presence of the objective good for a person not only juxtaposes with a value-response without any detriment to the latter, but also arises from it; because the fact that a person becomes a source of someone's happiness means deeper respect for him/her and his/her values.⁴

This would require self-giving, putting oneself into service, but it is well worth it. I will dwell on that later, as now I will consider the form of the heroine's service. As a household stuff she wants:

To smoke the angst,
To chase night boredom,
Warm earthly hands!

It means she is going to ensure that all her beloved's needs are met. It is a real miracle that the lover takes interest in everything that happens to the beloved regarding what is objectively good or bad for him or her.⁵ Angst, boredom, and the cold of the beloved torment the lyrical heroine more than the person she wants to help.

We should pay attention to the symbolism of the expression "brazier tiny" implies not only a concern of the above-mentioned service, but also the heat of love. D. von Hildebrand connects the latter with the second (together with *intentio benevolentiae*) fundamental feature of love, *intentio unionis* or desire for union. In contrast to the heat associated with unsatisfied desire, a heat of the true love arises from the beauty of beloved person; therefore it does not abate when the union is reached, of course, if the love itself does not abate. It is

⁴ See D. von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Regensburg – Stuttgart 1971, p. 163.

⁵ See *ibidem*, pp. 199–200.

clear that the poem does not answer whether this love will be durable, but the sixth strophe clarifies one moment:

For this, that you torment,
 For this, that you demand.
 For this, that there are
 Poor earthly hands...

The heroine is not blinded by the sexual instinct; she is sober-minded, because she sees the “inconvenience” of the beloved. It is love that opens our eyes. D. von Hildebrandt focused on one of the panoramas, opened by love, on the virtues of the beloved person. That is why sometimes it seems that the lover overestimates the object of his or her love. Hence it is easy to take a step to another outlook: one who loves is not blinded to faults of the beloved, but tolerates them, because his or her love is a response to the overall beauty of the person in which there is place for black spots too.

Expressed love as a service, M. Tsvetaeva continues in such a way:

From chest of gods
 I have been down thrown,
 Yet any love I got:
 Is bigger even though!

There are the first two lines that show a motif of denial of creativity for the sake of love. It will be continued in the words: “In vain! By amphibrach / You will not regulate!” Considering versions of denial of love (including a situation when somebody was called by a person who merits the proper response in all respects) D. von Hildebrand emphasizes those which are legitimated. Among them are those situations when we refuse love, because we believe it is required by serving higher values than marriage.⁶

In our poem we deal with the opposite situation. If to speak in poetic language the heroine renounces serving the Muses for the sake of love, and for the sake of quite ordinary, “any” love yet. At the same time for the sake of “bigger” love. With D. von Hildebrand I would say that love has “intentional character, that is, a meaningful relation exists between the beauty and preciousness of the other person and the word of love spoken to the other.”⁷ If the beloved personifies for me the greatest beauty and the greatest value, then my love can be only

⁶ See *ibidem*, pp. 426–427.

⁷ D. von Hildebrand, *The Nature of Love*, trans. J. F. Crosby, South Band 2008, p. 26.

maximized. It is, *a fortiori*, true, because the cost for this love is a denial of a quite worthy value as one of service to the beautiful. However, in this strophe my attention was caught, first of all, by the words "I got." The heroine does not choose love, she leaves the heights of Parnassus involuntarily, and she was "thrown." Apropos of this, I again turn to D. von Hildebrand, who insists that love is not an act of will: we cannot love arbitrarily, are not able to control our love like, say, we control our behavior. It is in this sense love is a gift, even if a gift beyond one's strength. There's nothing to be done; "as soon as I really love, I enter, as it were, into a world in which there is no place for the arbitrary."⁸ By the latter, the philosopher means action motivated by selfish desire. One who loves comes into the world of values; filled with the highest severity, in order to leave it he or she must only stop loving.

Later in a poem a new motif is woven:

With such bonds!
With such privileges!

These lines are coherent with the preceding strophe, related to the love which has fallen, and indicates the features of this love. It brings both bonds and privileges. How can we decipher these capacious words, based on the concept of D. von Hildebrand? The word "bonds" in the best way, we can say, archetypically characterizes affection, created by love.

As D. von Hildebrand writes, the nature of love consists in the fact that a man can be interested in another man. The result is solidarity, similar to one in relation to oneself.⁹ The emphasis in this definition is placed on the word "similar," because it is wrong to translate the selfish attitude into other-centered love. Solidarity cannot be deduced from self-love and the translating of one's own identity into one's possession. I am talking here about a particular type of affection. To understand it we should recall D. von Hildebrand's doctrine of value and value-response. The last differs from a response to something merely agreeable, something subjectively satisfying or objective good for the person, because a value is relevant regardless of its effect on us. Both something agreeable and of value give pleasure, but the pleasure is of a different nature (incidentally, D. von Hildebrand accused M. Scheler of carelessness in this fact). If the relevance of something agreeable is formed by its agreeability, than the value of valuable, on the contrary, forms happiness, taken from contact with it.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 65.

⁹ D. von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, op. cit., p. 19.

In other words, something subjectively satisfying binds me to itself, fetters a will; objective good (e.g. life or health) is important just for me and therefore is a certain limitation. But value appeals directly to my free will.

The situation with love is similar. Its bonds do not bind us as does the desire which seeks pleasure, but it always involves our free sacrifice. It seems *prima facie* that this statement is contrary to what was said about the involuntariness of love, however, this is not the case. Love is not arbitrary in the sense that we cannot compete against it, but affective value-response only becomes a man's real attitude when it is sanctioned by his free identity. In other words, free will sanctions a response when the heart has already received the gift of love, spiking poetic diction, it is no longer free. Here, by the way, we can see how the language of images outstrips a rigorous language of scientific exposition.

The fact that the sanction is an act different from the involuntary adoption of love is indicated by both the existence of illegitimate forms of love (such as love in spite of ought) and the possibility to not sanction such forms, to force oneself to stop loving.

Having scrutinized “bonds,” let us proceed to the study of “privileges.” In the poem, these two words are both mutually complementary and contrasting. Both characterize a great love; both must have an ambiguous meaning. If the “bonds” are heavy, because they oblige, and at the same time they are delightful, because they fulfill a union, than the “privileges” symbolize happiness from this union and even the desire for it. Regarding love, three facts can make us happy: the very being in love and yearning for union with the beloved, the happiness of the beloved, and what is more, mutual love. From the standpoint of morality, the happiness of the beloved person is incomparably higher than the joy of being in love, and even the union with him or her; nevertheless, as D. von Hildebrand comments, the union which does not make us happy is soulless.¹⁰

Having proposed the metaphors of “bonds” and “privileges,” M. Tsvetaeva adverts to the most substantial feature of love, self-giving:

Half of life? – The whole one for you!
Up to elbow? – Here it is!

Self-giving is an essential condition that the creation of the real union is premised on. Nevertheless, there must be no talk of the fusion of two persons. This would be at variance with the dictates of common sense and does not

¹⁰ See *ibidem*, p. 180.

occur even on a subjective level. According to D. von Hildebrand, the self-giver becomes more him/herself; his/her life becomes truer, and his/her deepest feelings becomes keener and more existential, thus it is his/her whole individuality that belongs to the beloved.¹¹ By force of mutual love, both persons become deeper and truer.

It is noteworthy that, according to the German philosopher, the power of love depends on the value of the gift. Upon this, the lyrical heroine offering her whole life and hand characterizes the highest level of her value-response.

In the final part of the poem, M. Tsvetaeva touches on one more aspect of love: insight. Having declared the priority of mundane love over the poetic creativity (In vain! By amphibrach / You will not regulate!), the lyrical heroine appeals immediately to the beloved:

Just open wider eyes
Within thy own chest,

D. von Hildebrand mentions that the lover “becomes alert to an aspect of the world that had before not intuitively revealed itself to him, he becomes alert to a new dimension of beauty and depth in the universe.”¹² The world opened in the act of love is directly related to good, beauty, and truth. It is a sheer value-vision. The overall beauty of the beloved person opens our eyes to the whole world, i.e. makes us more sensitive to higher values; this act in turn increases the purity of our response. The German philosopher says elsewhere that “new levels of depth in the person are actualized in loving and in being loved.”¹³ Not without reason, M. Tsvetaeva talks about those eyes that are within the breast and finishes the sentence in the following way:

Not as Logos I came,
Not as eternity,
With empty-headedness
Your twittering
To the chest...

These words describe the virtue of humility with their figurativeness. Analyzing the previous strophe, I talked about the insight brought by love, now I can clarify the nature of this insight with respect to the beloved person.

¹¹ See *ibidem*, pp. 80–82.

¹² D. von Hildebrand, *The Nature of Love*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

As D. von Hildebrand writes, the one who loves truly notices the faults of the beloved, but sees them “in the light of those excellences of which they are the back sides.”¹⁴ That is to say, the overall beauty of a person remains in the foreground, while any vices are understood as only a betrayal of the real being. This does not mean that they are overlooked; the philosopher draws our attention to the fact that it is not love that makes the lover blind, but such wrong dispositions as one’s indulgence of instincts or pride; although this perversion is considered as temporary, corrigible.

What does this remark have to do with humility? It testifies that the lover is ready to lay down the arms of self-affirmation and rivalry.¹⁵ Likewise, the heroine of the poem comes as markedly humble as empty-headedness. This idea is emphasized in the last strophe:

... Not to the power!
Without word on the word –
To love... a prostrate
Swallow – in the world!

The emphatic exclamation “not to the power!” sounds a polar opposite to the starting statement of the lyrical heroine: “on chest of gods” as well as clarifying her humble coming. D. von Hildebrand connects this phenomenon with such an element of love as the “enthronement” of the beloved person. It consists in the proclamation of that value of the beloved which the lover has already found out. It is noteworthy that at the foundation of love there is “the overall beauty of the individual rather than just individual valuable traits, as in the case of admiration and respect.”¹⁶ *Pro tanto*, the “throne” is created as much more powerful, the throne of delightfulness and of happiness. From this moment, the happiness of the lyrical heroine depends on the presence of the beloved in her life, and therefore she loves as “a prostrate swallow.”

That was a small philosophical analysis of the poetic text. If I had taken into consideration the approach of another thinker, I would have found other correlations as well, but I was primarily interested in a realm that can be called the general culture. If we consider the fact that both poetic and philosophical systems are created in a specially equipped environment by human beings, i.e. in culture, and contribute to its functioning, it is not surprising that we find many points for their intersection.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 70.

¹⁵ D. von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, op. cit., pp. 412–413.

¹⁶ D. von Hildebrand, *The Nature of Love*, op. cit., p. 67.

I have already mentioned the fact that the poetry of Marina Tsvetaeva has mightily influenced Russian culture, the very understanding of the aesthetic and often ethical phenomena. But why did I resort just to the philosophy of D. von Hildebrandt? Because the ethics of value which he defends presupposes the existence of absolute, transcendental criteria that oblige us to behave a certain way, no matter the times in which we live and to what local culture we belong. His understanding of the nature of love is also similar, that is the substantive personal phenomenon which plays a significant part in human life and represents one of the main themes in world literature.¹⁷

Appendix

M. Tsvetaeva, <i>In Empty Temple</i>	М. Цветаева, <i>В пустынной храмине</i>
In the deserted temple As incense I would trifurcate. I'd fell as grain and flame Onto the crown of head...	В пустынной храмине Троилась – ладаном. Зерном и пламенем На темя падала...
I would join nightly screams In with as a compeer – I'll be a brazier Diminutive for thee...	В ночные клёкоты Вступала – ровнею. – Я буду крохотной Твоей жаровнею:
Domestic fowl: To smoke the angst, To chase night boredom, Warm earthly hands!	Домашней утварью: Тоску раскуривать, Ночную скуку гнать, Земные руки греть!
From chest of gods I have been down thrown, Yet any love I got: Is bigger even though!	С груди безжалостной Богов – пусть сброшена! Любовь досталась мне Любая: большая!
With such bonds! With such privileges! Half of life? – The whole one for you! Up to elbow? – Here it is!	С такими путами! С такими льготами! Пол-жизни? – Всю тебе! По-локоть? – Вот она!
For this, that you torment, For this, that you demand. For this, that there are Poor earthly hands...	За то, что требуешь, За то, что мучаешь, За то, что бедные Земные руки есть...

¹⁷ Cf. *ibidem*.

In vain! By amphibrach You will not regulate! Just open wider eyes Within thy own chest	Тщета! – Не выверишь По амфибрахиям! В груди пошире лишь Глаза распахивай,
Not as Logos I came, Not as eternity, With empty-headedness Your twittering	Гляди: не Логосом Пришла, не Вечностью: Пустоголовостью Твоей щебечущей
To the chest... Not to the power! Without word on the word – To love... a prostrate Swallow – in the world!	К груди... – Не властвовать! Без слов и на слово – Любить... Распластаннейшей В мире – ласточкой!

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“Free Theurgy” *Versus* “Art For Art’s Sake”?

The two expressions put into the title both characterize an understanding of art’s nature in the Russian philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries. In spite of the visible contradiction between them, I start with a presupposition that they are inspired by common roots and have a common philosophical background.

Across a variety of Russian philosophical thought in this period, one dominant feature attracts the attention of its researchers – Russian philosophy as a whole has an evidently aesthetic “coloring.” A lot of ontological, epistemological and ethical issues are either treated from an aesthetic viewpoint or, at least, have an aesthetic (sometimes rather far from academic one) form of expression. Moreover, the nature and essence of Beauty and Art are among the mainstream points of the majority of Russian thinkers.

One may discern the reasons of such aesthetical directionality in the fact that the birth of original Russian philosophy coincides with the crisis of European modernity, with the transitive state of culture as itself, which necessarily brought to life aesthetism as a defining feature of all cultural phenomena. Indeed, the majority of Russian thinkers of this period began with the critique of the current state of European culture. For instance, the critique of so called syncretism in Vladimir Odoesky’s works, the “critique of abstract foundations” or “atomism” by Vladimir Solovyov and Vasily Rozanov’s critique of literariness are well known as starting points of their philosophical investigations. But an essential issue is that all of this critique is aimed at overcoming the main drawback of the Western world – the isolated and fragmented existence of a person which corresponds to the same fragmented state of culture as a whole. Definitely this integrative intention of Russian thought predetermines its abovementioned aesthetic coloring, but not “empty aesthetism” as an attempt to replace the lost existential harmony

with autonomous self-governed creativity. This aesthetic coloring is a sign of specific ontological rootedness which is well described by Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "participative thinking" (*участное мышление*). Participative thinking may be regarded as a name for the mainstream of Russian philosophical thought. This is why I will use the terms of Bakhtin's ontological conception for justifying the specificity of Russian thought.

Let us draw a general image of such ontology. A man is rooted in his place-in-Being which in turn is understood as an event or co-being.¹ Being-co-being (event) is characterized by unity and uniqueness that defines a specific position (situatedness) of man in the universe. This position presupposes the non-replacement of one's place-in-being and eternal responsibility for my choice and acting (non-alibi in Being). The fact of the great importance is that responsibility is regarded as not an ethical but an ontological concept, because it specifies human way of being connecting and coordinating it not only with another person but with being as a whole. Human beings are responsible not only for his own existence, but for the unity and uniqueness of all existence. To some extent, this intention of Russian thought finds its implementation in the principle of "sobornost" which was articulated as free existence of all components in the perfect unity of the whole. But, in my opinion, it finds specific implementation in the aesthetic directionality of Russian philosophy, in its breathless attention to the problems of beauty and art.

The reason is that only an aesthetical attitude is able to solve the fundamental contradiction of our existence – the contradiction between our physical finiteness and the infinity of being as itself. It helps to implement the responsibility of a finite entity to the infinite being. The aesthetical permits us to connect and reconcile the finite and infinite, the subjective and objective, the transcendent and immanent, providing a human being with a concrete "distance of outsidedness." It shows the eternal and infinite through temporal finite forms commensurate to human scope. It subjoins all existing with unity and uniqueness of human life and fate.

Art plays a specific role in this aesthetical movement of reconciliation because it is obviously based on human creativity, it is active in its nature, and thus hides in itself a specific mode of responsibility. That is why art becomes the subject of investigation of numerous Russian thinkers.

An extremely broad framework of research has been established in Solovyov's philosophy of positive all-unity where art is considered to be one

¹ The Russian word *событие* used by Bakhtin contains a play of both meanings (an event and co-being) that allows to emphasize temporality, meaningfulness, uniqueness and co-existence of human existence simultaneously.

of the necessary ways of its achievement.² Considering truth, good and beauty as the *modi* of positive all-unity Solovyov includes art in more wide stream of human creativity which is necessary for the real implementation of good and truth. Good and truth should be transformed into the creative force of a subject who does not reflect only but transforms reality. Solovyov calls this creativity "free theurgy" or "integral creation" which serves the ultimate goal – communication with the Upper World. In this capacity, art fits to the implementation of the purpose of human existence – the forming of universal human organization including free theurgy (integral creativity), free theosophy (integral knowledge) and free theocracy (integral society). While human existence is considered as the conscious promotion of positive all-unity, art plays a great role in the enlightening and spiritualization of material world. This spiritualization of the material world brings it up to the eternity of spiritual, i.e. to the victory over death. So the supreme goal of art is the implementation of absolute beauty in reality. While the complete implementation of absolute beauty means the end of human history, real art is a prophecy about the future ideal state of humanity, the image of impending perfect Life. This perfect life connecting the divine and the human is based not on absorption of human by the divine but on their free interaction. So art obtains a great ontological status and brilliant justification as a link between finite and eternal, that elevates the earthly to existential fullness.³

This conception initiated ontological studies of art in Russian philosophy, among which we should first of all mention the works of Pavel Florensky, Sergey Bulgakov, Gustav Shpet and Mikhail Bakhtin. In spite of the variety of philosophical backgrounds (sophiology, phenomenology, dialogism) their interpretations of the nature of art are very close. Art is understood as a connection between finite and eternal, as a guide to the transcendent due to its capacity to present the unity in a single and a unique entity.

While Pavel Florensky examines art's nature referring directly to religious art as a link or "a window" between the divine and the earthly,⁴ Bakhtin and Shpet reveal the sacral character of art as a whole.

² Though Solovyov did not write any fundamental book devoted to aesthetical problems, his views concerning nature of art may be found in different works such as *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, *The Universal Meaning of Art*, *Three Speeches in Memory of Dostoevsky*, *The Drama of Plato's Life* and others.

³ See V. Soloviev, *The Universal Meaning of Art*, [in:] idem, *The Heart of Reality: Essays on Beauty, Love, and Ethics*, trans. V. Wozniuk, Notre Dame 2003, pp. 67–81; idem, *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, trans. V. Z. Nollan, Michigan 2008.

⁴ Since aesthetical conception by P. Florensky has already been well-examined by different researchers I do not represent it in detail in this article. See P. Florensky, *Iconostasis*, trans. D. Sheehan, O. Andrejev, Crestwood –New York 1996.

Insisting on the statement that beauty appears in human existence from the requirement to express a sense, Shpet argues in his *Aesthetical Fragments*⁵ that beauty in art is aimed at the justification of the ontological rights of reality. First of all, an artist has a specific mode of seeing which feasts his eyes on a definite fragment of reality. It is the first “ontological gesture,” because as it has been already noticed by Rozanov, such artistic feasting confirms a thing. But it is not sufficient. The artist should express his seeing to another. Creating an image, art confirms the rights of external, the rights of material, which is given to an artist’s eyes and which is given to us by the artist. The internal could not exist for us as finite beings without the external. The role of art and the artist is to catch, notice and open up for others the beauty of the external, of an alive reality given us as singular thing (a piece of art). Thus art not only justifies the right of reality to be, but does so with the help of establishing and confirming the ontological weight of singularity and uniqueness. So, according to Shpet, art is unique and individual, it is stylish and aristocratic; the way of an artist is the way from singularity to uniqueness that validates the existence of every entity and reality as a whole.

This ontological intention of Russian aesthetical thought are brilliantly summarized in the works of Bakhtin, who pursues a deep philosophical analysis of art’s nature and mode of acting as well as of the ontological status of an artist. Though art is a cross-cutting topic of his works, I base my research mostly on *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* where the abovementioned problems have found a concentrated philosophical treatment. Defining man as a center and precondition of aesthetical perception, Bakhtin introduces two basic concepts – *the other* and *distance of outsidedness* – that make possible artistic completion of the reality in a piece of art. Bakhtin underlines the fact that it is not pure material which is completed but rather a lived-through composition of being, a piece of art organizes concrete world. That is why a piece of art cannot be regarded as an object. It is an alive artistic event – a valuable moment of unity and uniqueness of event-of-being (being-co-being). This organizing activity becomes possible thanks to the productive *distance of outsidedness* that marks the specificity of artist’s position. But it is specific outsidedness which allows us to complete everything that is principally non-completing within an alive human life. Here I offer a rather long quotation from Bakhtin to illustrate and justify the above said.

⁵ See Г. Г. Шпет, *Эстетические фрагменты*, [in:] idem, *Сочинения*, Москва 1989, pp. 345–474.

The aesthetically creative relationship to the hero and his world is a relationship to him as one who is going to die (*moriturus*): it is the act of setting a saving consummation of him over against his own directedness to meaning. To accomplish this, one must clearly see in a human being and his world that which he himself is in principle incapable of seeing in himself, and do so while remaining in oneself and living one's own life in earnest; one must be able to approach him not from the standpoint of a lived life, but from a different standpoint from a standpoint that is active outside a lived life.

The artist who is, in fact, someone who knows how to be active out-side lived life, someone who not only partakes in life from within (practical, social, political, moral, religious life) and understands it from within, but someone who also loves it from without – loves life where it does not for itself, where it is turned out-side itself and is in need of self-activity that is located outside it and is active independently of meaning. *The divinity of the artist consists in his partaking of the supreme outsideness* (Italicized by me – I.N.). But this situatedness of the artist outside the event of other people's life and outside the world of this life is, of course, a special and justified kind of participation in the event of being. To find an essential approach to life from outside – this is the task an artist must accomplish. In doing this, the artist and art as a whole create a completely new vision of the world, a new image of the world, *a new reality of the world's mortal flesh, unknown to any of the other culturally creative activities* (Italicized by me – I.N.). And this external (and internally external) determinateness of the world that finds its highest expression and preservation in art always accompanies our emotional thinking about the world and about life.

Aesthetic activity collects the world scattered in meaning and condenses it into a finished and self-contained image. Aesthetic activity finds an emotional equivalent for what is transient in the world (for its past and present, for its present-on-hand being) [...], it finds an axiological position from which the transient in the world acquires the axiological weight of an event, acquires a validity and stable determinateness.⁶

But this specific position and activity of the artist (the author) is first of all a responsible position – a definite form of responsibility. Precisely, Bakhtin says about such responsible position which is a position in the unity and uniqueness of event-of-being. Moreover, according Bakhtin, only in event-of-being any creativity may be serious, valuable and significant. But it seems that this principle may be shared by all thinkers discussed in this article. It is against

⁶ M. Bakhtin, *Author and Hero in Aesthetical Activity*, [in:] idem, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, eds. M. Holquist, V. Liapunov, trans. and notes V. Liapunov, Austin 1990, pp. 190–191.

this ontologically interpreted responsibility of the artist that should prevent the didactical treatment of art which Solovyov has actively argued for.

And this fact gives to several Russian thinkers the opportunity to justify the definite truth of “art for its own sake” and even to speak about the specific humility of it. The activity of the artist should not proceed from the point of conceit and self-importance, inspired by the high mission of art as a whole.

This activity is limited and governed by definite borders born and reborn by the distance of outsideness. It is rather important that the word “border” is met in the works of almost all abovementioned thinkers. And it is not only a border between the divine and the earthly which, according to Florensky, an artist should cross twice in order to reveal the truth of the divine to the others.⁷ It is precisely what Bakhtin calls the “culture of borders” which defines the very specificity of creative activity and is its precondition. Bakhtin not only gives a brilliant description of this culture of borders but justifies with its help the sacral character of artistic activity and art as itself:

Aesthetical culture is a culture of the boundaries and hence presupposes that life is enveloped by a warm atmosphere of deepest trust. A confident and founded act of constituting and shaping the *boundaries* of man and his world (outer as well as *inner* boundaries) presupposes the existence of a firm and secure position outside of him, presupposes a position in which the spirit can abide for a long time, can master of its own powers, and can act without constraint. It should be evident that this presupposes an essential axiological consolidatedness of the enveloping atmosphere.⁸...

[...] These, then, are the conditions of the author’s participation in the event of being, for the strength and foundedness of his creative position. It is impossible to prove one’s *alibi* in the event of being. Nothing answerable, serious and significant can exist where that *alibi* becomes a presupposition for creation and utterance. Special answerability is indispensable [in an autonomous domain of culture] – one cannot create directly in God’s world. This specialization of answerability, however, can be founded only upon a deep trust in the highest level of authority that blesses a culture – upon trust, that is, in the fact that there is another – the highest other – who answers for my own special answerability, and trust in the fact that I do not act in axiological void. Outside this trust, only empty pretensions are possible.⁹

⁷ Shpet says something similar when he writes that beauty in art is twice born.

⁸ M. Bakhtin, *Author and Hero in Aesthetical Activity*, op. cit., pp. 203–204.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 206.

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Evangelical Motifs in Children's Fiction on the Integrative Methodology for Adult Christian Reading of Children's Books

Children's fiction is able to reflect how God's love transforms life-destroying evil, a chaos intolerable for children, into an ordered world, and restores its harmony. This action becomes evident as the characters of these books freely choose good over evil.

Nikolai Berdyaev wrote about two freedoms. He called one of those the second freedom. It was the freedom in the acknowledgement of the truth:

the very summit of his life's activity and its final goal. But there is another kind of freedom, the kind from which man starts and by which he makes choice of his direction in life and through which he acquires truth and goodness the basic and original experience, the abyss which is deeper than being itself and by which being is determined.¹

Even though in history evil often wins under the guise of good, children's books² are more likely to reflect the interaction of these two freedoms with the undoubted ultimate predominance of good over evil. This is so in as much as the valuing of children, the instinctive desire to give them the best of everything, is inherent in man from his creation in the image and likeness of God: "children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Ps 127:3). This understanding can light up as a spark of active compassion in any darkness of human actions, thoughts and feelings.

¹ N. Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, trans. O. Fielding Clarke, London 1935, p. 126.

² I.e. written for children, and not included in children's reading, such as, for example, the adult story *Vanya* by Anton Chekhov – an echo of his famous words that as a child he had no childhood.

Such are fiction books written for children. We will look at the acts of God, the acts of the one drawing away from Him and the human response to them as they are shown in *The Magic Stagecoach* by V. Krotov, which by its author's design reflects on the way to the Fountain of life and truth (God) being bent by the free will of human – sometimes to good, sometimes to evil.

Victor Krotov. *The Magic Stagecoach*

When God finished creating our world and the first people He gave them freedom from the very beginning: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:16–17). The tree was not fenced and anyone could approach it easily. God gave man free will: to obey Him or not.

As is well known, the man blindly obeyed his first freedom which poses the “possibility of the destruction of the divine idea and image.”³ Our first freedom is always with us, but it does not mean that we will inevitably choose the good that leads us to God. Freedom may give rise to discord and evil: “Incalculable forces both for good and evil are latent in the first kind of liberty.”⁴

Choosing the potentiality of evil has made the path leading man to the second freedom long and difficult, in the acknowledgement of the truth.

Is it possible for a children's book to convey serious philosophical ideas in a way that entertains the reader?

In our opinion it is absolutely possible, because true love of wisdom, which is inherent for children, seeks those things that are above, “full of mercy and good fruits” (Jas 3:17).

As a child who has not been carried away by adventure, when at first it's all grim and hopeless, you must be steadfast and courageous, gather up all your strength and not quit despite hunger and cold, overcome fear, defend the truth and those who are weaker than you, and win. A child understands perfectly the essence of the most “adult” story, as expressed by the Psalmist:

Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place (Ps 66:10–12).

³ N. Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 132.

As a child, it was usually interesting for you to fall into such a crucible along with the characters of the story. It is only later that you recognized that the literary experiences that saturated your childhood have enabled you to personally appropriate the paths leading to true freedom. One of these roads – being loyal to yourself, to another person and to God – bears the unpopular name of “obedience” and was tossed aside by man in the Garden of Eden.

Adults reading *The Magic Stagecoach* recognize a thought by Nikolai Berdyaev that

the human soul is an arena in the interplay of freedom and necessity, the spiritual and the natural world, takes place. When the spiritual is operating within the physical, the freedom of the spirit is revealed.⁵

And so the soul of the book’s main character, the little boy Vagik, becomes an arena during his journey with the magic stagecoach (his soul) to the Fountain (God).

Now let us look closer at the Grey Shadow, the intrusive companion of Vagik from the very beginning of the journey and the “lower inhabitants” of the Magic Stagecoach – in order to see how easily one can set foot on the slippery road of “the potential of evil.”

Let us look closer at the Attendant (Christ) and Wizard Aik (Guardian Angel) and the “higher inhabitants” of the Haulage – that call Vagik to “good potential” so that he discovers the truth and becomes free.

Let us begin with the character that pretended to be a friend and turned out to be an enemy. May we recall the miserable story of one of the first God’s creatures that failed to stand in the truth and became the father of lies (cf. Jn 8:44):

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Is 14:12–14).

He presented himself to Vagik through the figure of poor Grey Shadow, speaking in a pleading tone and convincing Vagik that everyone else was lying but he alone spoke the truth. He foisted false treasures on Vagik (and sometimes successfully!) – in place of the real ones, essential for reaching the Fountain.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 123.

Each false treasure was aimed at strengthening Vagik in a false thought which was attractive at first sight: "then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5).

Who was the one that called Vagik to the enchanting journey to the Source, and when was it?

It all began when Vagik was upset by the insults and other disappointments which outweighed his joys. He longed for changes and called for help not knowing who he was calling for. That was the moment when the Wizard Aik appeared before him and called him to the journey to the Fountain. After the Fountain is found, as Wizard Aik told him, your life will be harder but more interesting – as you will have learnt the taste of freedom. After all,

man can get on without freedom, and the demand for spiritual liberty which is the cause of so much tragedy and suffering in life is not human but a divine claim. The divine plan for man and for the world cannot become incarnate apart from the freedom of man and the freedom of spilit.⁶

Vagik didn't doubt for long, and he started the journey – to the unknown Fountain, after the comfortable Stagecoach where there was space for many more living creatures than one could guess by its look.

The "higher inhabitants" of the Stagecoach like Recognizer, Faith, Conscience, Patience, Debtor, Great Woo, the first guesser Intuition and others struggled to help Vagik beat off Grey Shadow (which once managed to enter the Stagecoach because of Vagik's negligence) and find the treasures.

As for the "lower inhabitants" of the Stagecoach like Pride, Mother Sloth, Envy, Greed, Sore-keeping Snake, Marquis Caprice and many others assisted Grey Shadow in diverting Vagik from the way to the Fountain.

It is only after Vagik personally met many of the "higher" and the "lower" inhabitants that the Recognizer revealed the truth to him: the Stagecoach and all its inhabitants are Vagik and he alone. The more Grey Shadow assured Vagik that listening to him will do him "the best," the more often Vagik saw it becoming "the worse." Thus he saw how much depended on him. Truly, "salvation comes through the Truth which brings us freedom, but Salvation cannot be achieved without man's freedom."⁷

Freedom is the wind swelling the sails of desire and if one fails to deal with them, he will be thrown from one side of life to another, slipping more and more often to the "evil potential."

⁶ Ibidem, p. 128.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 127.

After a while Vagik found his road map in the Stagecoach. The road shown on it led directly to the Fountain through the Bookish Principality, but because of the desire to catch the Merchant House and the Maze of computer games Vagik changed it so dramatically that got himself into dangerous vicinity of the Ball of the Forces, with which these Forces started playing gigantic football as soon as the Stagecoach was there. The only way to quit the game of the Forces was to call for the help of Patience and Great Woo – one of them collected kernels of freedom from air and the other joined them into a cover; and as soon as the Stagecoach was covered, the Ball of the Forces could not detain it. Indeed, if one is covered with freedom, no game of the Forces can captivate him – at least internally.

Vagik discovered treasures and, by using them, learned to broaden and strengthen his freedom – to overcome the Fear-bear with an Inviolability Cap, to know the shortest track to the Fountain from the “Yes-compass,” to never reflect anyone or anything but rather shine himself – for Vagik is born of the Sun of Truth, to see things clearly with Live Glass.

At this moment Black Darkness, sent by Grey Shadow (because he didn't like Vagik's freedom), stretched himself in Vagik's way. With the assistance of the “higher inhabitants” he beat Black Darkness and riding the crest of this victory rashly decided to survey the underground of the Stagecoach. So he was captivated by the “lower inhabitants” and barely escaped.

Each experience strengthened Vagik's freedom, especially when he called for the help of the Fountain, but even meeting the real Grey Shadow in the dungeon (where he was caught playing at the Maze of computer games) did not ultimately fix Vagik's decision to defy the lures.

And then Vagik met his Author and learnt he should hurry to the Bookish Principality that lead the invisible Battle Within alongside with the ones travelling through them – the battle for freedom of choosing the good, not evil, on one's way to the Fountain and for finding one of the last treasures.

This treasure, unlike the others, was not to be found but collected. So Vagik became a Sparkle Collector, gathering what the heroes of the Bookish Principality brought to him. The last of them was Narnia where Aslan the lion sculpted a treasure out of these sparkles – an Ever Light with the inextinguishable fire of sparkles from the best loved children's books, whose message of good beating evil sows freedom in the heart of a child, open to the world and people, can bear great fruit.

Armed with the Eternal Light, Vagik made his way through the Black Darkness blocking his way to the Fountain once again, crossed the abyss bridged by the Attendant and meeting him. Talking to the Attendant about his journey Vagik saw how he failed to notice the tricks of Grey Shadow and

even trusted him, how he took his cues from the “lower inhabitants.” Standing beside the Attendant he decided not to fall for them anymore.

When they ended up at the Fountain, its drops sprinkled upon Vagik's treasures so that they became part of him. He entered the Fountain and became the real Vagik, knowing the Truth and the freedom. He appeared home at the very moment he started the magic journey. He appeared to become a man that “out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good” (Lk 6:45).

All of this story took place (as seen only after the returning of Vagik) on the Transfiguration of Christ, which adds to its happiness because of freedom.

Now **let's** examine one of the methods that can help adults to read children's books in a Christian way.

Books of Our Childhood

Adults do not always find it easy to read children's and teen's books, especially when they honestly and openly tell children about the fears and horrors of everyday life.

We do not want to see in these books how children suffer from the brutality of adults and their peers – in family, at school and in society; how parents destroy their families, or to see disabled children and social orphans, or sick and dysfunctional parents. Adults often object to such books, but the kids read them gladly and find support in them. How can adults understand why this is happening?

Paradoxically, the books of our childhood can help us to understand the books that are read by children today.

Our method enables us to see how the books we read as children encouraged us to comprehend the possibilities of freedom. It also fosters our *essential* ability to perceive a children's book we have read for the first time in adulthood by “two readers:” the inner child and the adult of today. This is the way to understand how books motivate our children to comprehend the possibilities of freedom *and its constraints*.

Let us apply this method (based on Chapter 5 of the Epistle to the Galatians) to the novel *The Acceptable Year of the Lord* by Ivan Shmelev. The author of this article read this book for the first time as an adult but with the eyes of a child.

Here are the three steps of the method:

1. To dive into your favorite childhood book – and take out the treasures of your early years – all of that which encouraged you to imitate its characters.
2. To bring down from the attic your anti-treasures – the torment of your early years, with which it was impossible to be reconciled.

3. To collect the seeds of treasures and anti-treasures that brought the fruit of your growing maturity.

First, we note that the fruit of the spirit: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...,” and the works of the flesh: “fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...” (Gal 5:19–23), help us discern what motivates a person to increase the “potentiality of good” and the “potentiality of evil” inherent to freedom, since their real-life manifestations are mixed and not always easy to sort out.

1. To dive into your favorite childhood book – and get out the treasures of your early years – the characters whose words and deeds are stored in your heart through adulthood, even if you rarely recall them.

Here are some of them.

First – people like Gorkin, little Vanya’s favorite tutor that had a heart which responded not only to others’ sufferings but primarily to any kind of abasement of human dignity, for any human is God’s image and likeness, and there is an angel standing beside his shoulder that gets all the spits and stones of offense thrown at him.

Second – a breathtaking, amazing image of “home” (when you become familiarized with the Scripture, you understand that this is a true biblical home). Since the beginning of times it has an Old Believer style of life inherited from Great-Grandmother Ustinya. This means honesty in merchant business is more important than wealth; many work-hands and servants at home should be not only sufficiently fed, but also have joy in their food; a generous reward is to be provided for even minor services; on church and family holidays, the feasts should be held not only for family members, but also for the orphaned and poor; financial aid for those that became old and lame while serving at their home or by contract; avoid anger by forgiving the weaknesses of workers that lead to various failures. Leaving behind all the deep sorrows in the family, these principles give great joy from the larger family whose member cares for each other’s needs following the householder’s example.

And, of course, there is the householder – “Daddy,” Sergey Ivanovich Shmelev, whose image in the eyes of little Vanya is made of joy, beauty and love. It was his belief that for all his life Vanya stuck to – that people are to be sympathized with, to be pardoned, even if they misbehave – because God in his incomprehensible freedom does these things, awakening a respondent love in humans. But Vanya’s happiness only lasted for five years, until the accident that caused the severe illness and death of the “Daddy.”

The conversations between little Vanya and Gorkin about death being an entrance to immortality are woven through the whole book. No one knows the

upcoming woes but these conversations prepare Vanya's heart for the last year of his father's life, when each minute could bring death, and hope for life was trembling like the flame of a candle, and in the end there was just grace – when Gorkin explained to Vanya the preparation of “Daddy's” Christian heart to face the Lord.

If I could come back to this book year after year, I would have gained the strength to endure the hardships of life from people who seemed to be saying to me: “if we truly want a free and perfect life, then we must entrust ourselves to the One who can deliver us from evil and give us power for good.”⁸

2. To bring down from the attic your anti-treasures – the torments and burdens of your early years. Here are some examples.

Bitterness and pain (the consciousness of a child lets through only as much as it can bear) caused by the endless wickedness one human being can commit towards another one or towards himself.

Many “former humans” in the novel – like “the master Entaltsev,” whose life and human image were defaced by other people or by their own thoughtlessness and even foolishness.

Numerous affluent people whose money is watered by the tears of orphans – like little Vanya's godfather, the richest merchant Kashin, that lived in a house one would not enter because of fear produced by how easily the inhabitants hurt each other. And just how dreadful it was that the only thing able to soften his heart was the tragic death of the “Daddy...”

If you read a book without skipping the descriptions of disasters and sufferings, then eventually you realize more and more that

our soul is only able to become free and perfect, but has neither freedom nor perfection by itself, it has only a possibility for both. The divine ability of our soul, in order not to remain barren, should surrender to its ruler and liberator, the Father of new life.⁹

3. To collect the seeds of book-found treasures and anti-treasures that produced the fruit of your growing maturity. Here are some of the fruits of the harvest.

All that is evil and disgusting, all that is good and heroic, is committed before God. That is a truth of life. It is a common practice to look back at God, to rely upon Him, to ask him for help, even if someone neglects His vows in their everyday life, they remember Who is the Lord and Who is to bow to. This brings people to vivid and effectual understanding of the distortion that may be caused in the hearts and souls by leaving God.

⁸ В. Соловьев, *Духовные основы жизни*, Санкт-Петербург 1912, p. 316.

⁹ Ibidem.

The path to spiritual freedom and the salvation of souls is forgiveness and unconditional love, and there is no more direct path. Those who are given much can overcome the lure of prospering at others' expense and choose not to prosecute the ones that harmed them. One should lament merciless people, pray for them and hope that their hearts soften and souls be saved. One should not fear to expose people that choose the ways of "this world," using the Scripture.

From my own reading experience I can assume that if this book had fallen into my hands during my childhood, long before I had read the New Testament, it would have helped me to believe it, because I would have known already that people can live in accordance with the Gospel even when their lives are hard and difficult.

And finally, **let's** get back to where we started: the books of our childhood can help us to understand any children's books. How does this happen?

Here is how. The Gospel tells us that children belong to the Kingdom of God and adults take it by force, and that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt 18:10). Does this mean that children experience His mercy and truth much more sharply and clearly? Is that why they can't bear destructive chaos and need creative harmony in life?

As a child, we are free to experience the thoughts, words, feelings, emotions and actions of the fictional characters as our own. This gift fades away with the experience of adulthood. The heart of a child catches in the characters of the books he reads even the slightest glimpses of the image and likeness of God.

When we dive into the books of our childhood, we release our feelings hidden behind adulthood. And through these feelings, no matter how few they were, we will see glimpses of the image and likeness of God in the characters of the books read by our children – no matter how unusual these books may be to us.

Undertaking this labor is not easy, but it's worth it, because it opens the way to mutual understanding with your children.

The roots sown by the Ten Commandments and the Good News are difficult to pull out of life completely, because only they quench the thirst for the merciful love that humans need anywhere, anytime, "for so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (1 Pt 2:15–16).

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