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A Comparative Study of “Godmanhood” (bogochelovechestvo) in Russian Philosophy. The Eighth Day in V. Solovëv, S. Bulgakov, N. Berdiaev, and S. Frank

Streszczenie

W eseju pt. «Studium porównawcze „bogoczłowieczeństwa” w filozofii rosyjskiej...», w zwięzły sposób zostały przedstawione poglądy czterech rosyjskich filozofów religijnych: V. SOLOVËVA, S. BULGAKOVA, N. BERDIAEVA i S. FRANKA. Zdaniem Autorki, w myśli tych rosyjskich myślicieli wyraźnie zaznacza się przekonanie, że nie można w pełni zrozumieć Stworzenia bez Bogoczłowieka — CHRYSYUSA. To właśnie w CHRYSYUSIE i poprzez CHRYSYUSA ludzie stają się bogoludzkością. Przyjmując łaskę i prawdę, daną nam w CHRYSYUSIE, ludzkość może urzeczywistniać tę łaskę i tę prawdę, zarówno w skali życia indywidualnego, jak i w skali historycznej. Antropologia rosyjskich filozofów jest niewątpliwie bardzo szczególna. Sugeruje ona, że w bogoludzkości (bogoczłowieczeństwie) dochodzi do połączenia pierwiastka boskiego z pierwiastkiem ludzkim. Urzeczywistnienie Królestwa Bożego zależy więc nie tylko od samego Boga, ale również od ludzi, którzy muszą się przeistoczyć duchowo. To przeistoczenie jest pracą, jest zadaniem, które zostało ludziom powierzone przez Boski Absolut. Bogoczłowieczeństwo CHRYSYUSA — tak, jak zostało ono

ukazane przez SOLOVĚVA – ukazuje prawdziwy sens Wciele-
 lenia i ów bogocześniczy zbawczy czyn, przynoszący real-
 ne wybawienie świata od zła. Jednocześnie – poprzez Bogoc-
 zześniczość CHRYSZTUSA – możemy dostrzec i zrozumieć
 nadprzyrodzone powołanie człowieka. Myśl SOLOVĚVA konty-
 nuował BULGAKOV, który z jeszcze większą mocą podkreślał
 rolę Kościoła, który nie jest jedynie bogocześniczym funda-
 mentem odkupienia ludzi, ale bogocześniczą wspólnotą, bu-
 dowaną w celu odkupienia świata. BERTIAEV z kolei, całą od-
 powiedzialność za historyczny sukces ludzkości składa w ręce
 „arystokracji”, czyli ludzi prawdziwie wolnych, o wielkim
 sercu i gotowych do „samouświęcania się”. FRANK przedstawił
 fascynującą ontologię duszy ludzkiej, w której Bóg „zdepono-
 wał” część swojej mocy stwórczej, dzięki czemu człowiek mo-
 że świadomie towarzyszyć Bogu w Jego działaniu. (Zob. także:
 Wprowadzenie do... konferencji „Człowiek i Wszeczeńświat”)

Słowa kluczowe: Bogocześniczość – Kreatywność –
 Duchowa cielesność – Personalizm – Docta ignorantia

Vladimir SOLOVĚV (1853–1900), Sergej BULGAKOV (1871–1944),
 Nikolaj BERTIAEV (1874–1948), and Semën FRANK (1877–1950) are
 Russian philosophers with impressive Christian faith. All four of
 them were concerned with cosmology, with Creation, matter, en-
 ergy, and nature. All of these four so-called “Silver Age-philosophers”
 shared the a priori statement that the human universe must extend to
 something bigger, something more than it actually is. They regarded
 the cosmos man is an inhabitant of as to be always developing, ex-
 tending, a dynamic sphere whose ends are in parts non-predictable.
 Albeit their prophecies differ significantly in discursive terms they
 share the fundamental axiological idea of man as co-Creator. This
 investigation on “*bogochelovechestvo*’/Godmanhood” hypothetically
 understands this religious anthropology as an implicit prophetic call
 man to continue Creation: philosophising for a Christian is to be at-
 tached to two extremes, namely to prophetic Biblical visions and to
 the philosophers’ rationality. A religious philosopher is pulled in op-
 posite directions thinking on one side the sober words of the philoso-
 phers while being on the other side influenced by the words of the
 prophet.

Following Immanuel KANT human cognition is heavily restricted by “forms” of cognition, yet, already cultural traditions may restrict insights in what is truly true to an important extent. Vladimir SOLOVĚV’s historical situation certainly was not as dramatic as GALILEO GALILEI’s, yet also he was expelled from official academic life by the tsars’ secret services, because his philosophy of Godman/*bogochelovek*’ and All-unity/*Vse-edinstvo*’ had launched into public discussion the vision of the “*Universal Church*” reunifying Western and Eastern Churches, or to be more precise, Roman Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy under the patronage of the Roman pope. The next passage tries to resolve supporting anthropological views in order to axiologically understand this far reaching claim.

The famous Solovĕvian notion of *bogochelovechestvo*/Godmanhood embeds the world’s cosmological organization. And so, essentially man is a natural, a social, and foremost of all a spiritual, mystical, and Godly being. The third predicate renders possible the spiritualisation of whatever experience; it is the “bond” between eternal and minor forms of truths. It is extremely important to note that the first two attributes loose human character when disassociated from the third.¹ Consequently man is *spiritual-physical* essence that corresponds to the duality of the Uncreated and the created, spirit and matter, eternity and the boundedness by time and space. Nature in general and nature in man is not anything independent from spirit, but nature generally represents “*sviataia telesnost*’/spiritual corporeality.² In nutshell, contrary to pantheism conceiving nature as to manifest a special type of deity *‘für sich*’ SOLOVĚV’s concept of “All-unity” defines the properties of being in terms of a duality in God himself: nature his His “counterpart”, His “Creation” and “portrayal”.³ Even if it holds dependent, created being — a design perfectly in the

¹SOLOVĚV, “Smysl”, p. 37f.

²SOLOVĚV, “Evrejstvo”, pp. 142–150.

³Cf. BULGAKOV, “Priroda”, p. 20ff. he comprehensively delineates SOLOVĚV’s concept of *‘sviataia telesnost*’.

line with Jakob BOEHME,⁴ Franz BAADER and Friedrich SCHELLING⁵ — Creation has not ended but has yielded transcendent and immanent seeds to spiritual co-creatorship. Co-creatorship in SOLOVĚV always points at the omnipresent spiritual-natural character of humanity's life-worlds.

Perfectly in line with neo-Platonic, gnostic, and mystical traditions SOLOVĚV associates nature with the feminine principle that seeks union with the world's masculine logos, with Christ.⁶ Nature does not have antithetic to the Divine existence, but signifies, so to say, rather a yet undignified dwelling that by definition shelters the potential of its proper deification. This is what he called "religious materialism": God's spirit sanctifies nature in man and nature around him, given, of course, man consciously wishes and accompanies this process by his proper ambition to spiritualise/ 'odukhotvorit' nature.⁷ In *Opravdanie dobra* (1894–1897, *The Justification of the Good*) he maintained the position that between spiritual and material being there is no dichotomy, but both are intrinsically bound to each other, which is why every transformation of material is a "development of God's material ('protsess bogomaterialnyj')". Matter, nature, every corpus has a right to spiritualisation, a ever-changing process that begins with man's love to the Created.⁸

⁴Cf. DAVID, "The Formation", pp. 190–205, about BOEHME's theosophy as having ignited SOLOVĚV's metaphysical views. For both, *Sophia* is the substantial, or bodily aspect of God ('*materiia Bozhestva*'). For both, BOEHME and SOLOVĚV, it is necessary that the force of the One (the incipient spirit of God) clashes with the opposing force of multiplicity. Both characterise the One not only as "unity" and "freedom", but also as the universal bearer of love. Cf. in this context SOLOVĚV, "La Sophia", p. 13, and many other places. SOLOVĚV makes also use of BOEHME's symbolism, associating the One, with the source of love (SOLOVĚV, "Smysl"), with light. In this context see especially idem, SOLOVĚV, "Krasota", pp. 235–236, and SOLOVĚV, "Mistika", pp. 243–245.

⁵Cf. F.W.J. SCHELLING, *Ideas* and F.W.J. SCHELLING, "On the World Soul".

⁶Cf. GROYS, *Die Erfindung*, p. 3ff.

⁷Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Evrejtstvo", pp. 135–185.

⁸Cf. idem SOLOVĚV, "Opravdanie", pp. 369–385.

Man's corpus, the social corpus, and the corpus of the world have "ideal-real" character; each represents a "mystical corpus".⁹ At one place in his comprehensive works, SOLOVĚV regrets that until his lifetime apart from singular "poets", people in general did not yet provide the necessary type of love to "spiritualise nature".¹⁰

The young SOLOVĚV already must have been fond of nature as to await its spiritualisation, for combating Marxian materialism he introduced his concept of "religious materialism" in *Jewry and the Christian Question (Evrejsstvo i khristianskij vopros, 1884)*.¹¹ Christ's advent to the Jews accounts for their deep religiosity, but also the fact that they were people of law and order, just as much as they were a prophetic people. "Religious materialism", describes, as he maintained, the Hebrews' thought and mentality. They did not separate "spirit" from its material appearance: "matter" did not have any independent existence, it was neither God nor devil, but represented rather a yet "undignified dwelling", inhabited by God's spirit and sanctifying the vessel through man's co-operation. The believing Hebrew desired entire nature, the world he lived in, to have God's "wholeness" at its disposal, given He was a "holy" or a "spiritual corporeality".¹² Because the Hebrews deeply believed in this type of abundance, meaning in fact a permanent interrelation between God and nature by means of a spiritualised nature, they were the chosen people to whom Christ first appeared. Yet, as SOLOVĚV affirms, Christ demanded from them a dual deed: first, the renunciation of national egoism and secondly a temporarily, partially limited relinquishment of the world's welfare. If they had combated the pagan empire of Rome as martyrs, they would have won it over and finally would have had a great triumph in uniting with Christianity. Despite the Hebrews' omission of their duties arising from historical and spiritual responsibilities, the tasks

⁹Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Smysl", p. 29ff.

¹⁰Cf. *ibid.* p. 59f.

¹¹First published in: *Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie*, 1884 No. 8-9.

¹²Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Evrejsstvo", pp. 142-150.

of Jews and Christians still remain the same: the establishment of the *universal Church* [italics mine, KB].¹³

In “*Istoriia i budushchnost’ teokratii*” (1885–1887, *History and Future of Theocracy*) SOLOVĚV provides the seven Biblical Days of *Genesis I* with metaphysical and anthropological considerations to Godman’s tasks and destiny. The sun, the moon, and the stars were created on the fourth day that accomplished the Creation of the universal body. It is the fourth Biblical day SOLOVĚV finds in the seeds of theocracy. In metaphysical terms the cosmic order materialises the distinction between state (moon), the Church (sun), and prophets (stars). In correspondence to the moon the state rules the “dark” whereas the Church corresponds to the sun. The sun’s all-embracing light enlightens the entire firmament. The moon whose light is reliant on the sun’s predominant position on the firmament only faintly enlightens the night; the moon then is the cosmic symbol of the state that in turn depends on the Church.¹⁴

The sun’s role should be mirrored by the universal Church. The sun is the centre of our galaxy, it is, as he maintained, the physical, the cosmic expression of the world’s All-unity/ ‘*mirovoe vsesedinstvo*’ and this is precisely also the Church’s role. The latter now, the prophets are to “brightly light the way” as if they are stars on the firmament. At all future times this was to be the natural order, i.e. the hierarchy of all human life. On the sixth day He made the beasts of the earth according to its kind and man after His image, according to His likeness (*Gen. 1, 25–26*). The seventh day, God’s day of rest when He blessed and sanctified what He had created (*Gen. 2, 3*), is responded to by the life-time of the first Godman, by Christ’s lifetime on earth albeit this day has not ended after His crucifixion. On the contrary, He was sent in order to manifest Creation in what is its goal, viz. the ubiquitous

¹³As is reported, cf. STRÉMOUKHOFF, *Vladimir Soloviev*, p. 298, SOLOVĚV devoted his last prayer before dying on 31st July 1900 (old Russian calendar) to the Jews, for his hope on their self-communion was related to believing on a drawing near of theocracy in this case.

¹⁴Cf. idem, SOLOVĚV, “*Istoriia*”, pp. 569–579. For discussion, cf. STRÉMOUKHOFF, *Vladimir Soloviev*, pp. 281–298.

reinstatement of the world's logos in natural life, which is same as to establish free theocracy, namely the universal Church.¹⁵

As we are to understand discursively, the sun (light) elucidates matter. Once matter and/or nature and/or whatever exists on earth finds itself under the rays of light, totally independent from each other parts are unified by the simple fact of their simultaneous elucidation. This is, as I read his oeuvre, the cosmic, natural form of *syzygy/unification/sochetanie*¹⁶ when natural segregation is overcome by the rays of the sun.¹⁷ Analogically the Church should spiritually play the same role integrating all there is on earth, viz. unifying people. This universal task of course needs a universal Church. In metaphysical terms this universal Church shelters all forms of social organisations, the state included.

The moon whose light is reliant on the sun's predominant position on the firmament only faintly enlightens the night's darkness; the moon then is the cosmic symbol of the state that in turn depends on the Church. Once a state codifies moral evil and hinders its execution by monopolised power, it deserves to be called a "Christian state". SOLOVĚV's *Dukhovnye osnovy zhizni* (1882–1884, *The Spiritual Foundation of Life*) adds: the "Christian state" recognises a "higher goal" aligned by the Christian religion and the Church; it "voluntarily serves" both.¹⁸ Obviously, the more a state recognises the Church's monopoly in spiritual education and ensures it by legislation, the higher it qualifies.

Thirdly, He created stars twinkling in the night's darkness and by doing so interrupting it and recalling the all-embracing sun. Stars

¹⁵Cf. footnote 14.

¹⁶Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Smysl", p. 57, first footnote. In this context cf. KOLEROV, "Smysl", 57ff, for a detailed account of SOLOVĚV's preoccupation with Gnosticism between 1891 and 1893, for *syzygy* as a Gnostic item.

¹⁷Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Smysl", p. 46f. Cf. in this context esp. STRÉMOUKHOFF, *Vladimir Soloviev*, p. 274f. He suggests this idea had been inspired by a number of sources: (1) Reading of Gen. I, 27, by Church Fathers like JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. (2) The Jewish Cabalistic teaching man as to be androgynous. (3) Jakob BOEHME (and also his successor F. v. BAADER) and his theosophy on the restoration the *Jungfrau* (virgin) in God by human acts.

¹⁸Cf. SOLOVĚV, "Dukhovnye osnovy", p. 325f.

now symbolise people. People should thus act as if they were prophets of the universal never ending light – metaphysically corresponding the Church – always to await.¹⁹ Every person alive, or to use SOLOVĚV’s expression, ‘*bogochelovechek*’/Godman anthropologically shelters this universal cosmic order within himself. The *seventh Biblical Day*, God’s day of rest when He blessed and sanctified what He had created (*Gen. 2,3*), corresponds to Christ’s lifetime on Earth. This seventh day has not ended after His crucifixion. On the contrary, He was sent in order to manifest ‘*bogochelovechestvo*’, or to be more precise, He was sent by the father in order to manifest Creation’s idea, namely the ubiquitous reinstatement of the world’s cosmic logos in all natural life by Godman.²⁰ Fundamentally Godman is as much a *priest* (in correspondence to the sun as a cosmic symbol of the Church), as he is a *king* (in correspondence to the moon as symbol of the state), as he is also a *prophet* (in correspondence to the stars).²¹

SOLOVĚV introduced his design of Godmanhood already between 1877 and 1881 in twelve *Lectures on Divine Humanity* (*Cteniiia o bogochelovechestve*); in all of his later writings it figures as a key notion. Also in his French treatise *La Russie et l’église universelle* (*Russia and the Universal Church*, 1889) ‘*bogochelovechestvo*’ is linked to the appearance of the Second Adam, the world’s *masculine* logos.²² Consequently, Godmanhood’s significance corresponds, as we have seen already, on the one hand, to both tripartite characterizations, namely man as to be a priest, a king, and a prophet and man as to be a spiritual-physical and a social being and also corresponds to the masculine principle. As we have seen already SOLOVĚV’s discourse determined a distinct feminine principle, too. The unification of both creates syzygy,²³ ‘*sviataia telesnost*’/ holy corporeality, the highest point of which is the universal Church: in *La Russie* SOLOVĚV designed this spiritual yet-to-be marriage between the world’s masculine principle,

¹⁹Cf. idem, SOLOVĚV, “Evrejstvo”, p. 566 and SOLOVĚV, “Istoriia”, pp. 569–579.

²⁰Cf. idem, *ibid.* pp. 574–579.

²¹Cf. *ibid.* p. 267.

²²Cf. idem, SOLOVĚV, “La Russie”, p. 241ff, and many other places.

²³Cf. footnote no. 16.

its personified logos in Christ and the feminine principle, i.e. nature in man, in great detail. This marriage would give birth to the "universal Church" that reflects Trinity whichever constitutive element you regard. This unique Church would be headed by a papal government representing the Father. God-the Son is represented by the "essential community," by bishops sharing the same sacraments. Their community would fulfil the function of a mediator between the paternal mightiness and the assembly of priests, the latter denoting the fundamental level universal Church and representing God the Holy Ghost.²⁴ This is the design of ideal society that universally organises itself in form of a free theocracy.

L'église universelle was in his eyes the embodiment of *Sophia*. The Old Testament describes Sophia, His Wisdom, as a quasi-personal feminine reality.²⁵ Both St. ATHANASIUS, the generally acknowledged Father of the Orthodox Church, and also St. AUGUSTINE have a fully explicit sophiology at the heart of their vision. Both see *Sophia* as the final glorification of *human nature in Christ* by the Church that, metaphorically, denotes his mystical body. In SOLOVĚV *Sophia* appears as the archetype of humanity's social relations which is the same as to speak of the universal Church: this yet-to-be manifestation of Sophia will spring off the marriage between the world's masculine principle, its personified logos in Christ, and the feminine principle, i.e. nature. Nature thus has to undergo a sufficiently effective process of transformation by spiritualisation in order to overcome all physicalness as a brute matter of fact. *What does this mean, what are history's dynamics in this respect? And, what was man's role in this historical process?* SOLOVĚV must have introduced some programme of change, which either allows for some sort of voluntarism or whose ends are fulfilled *deus ex machina*. This extremely complicated problem must be given a résumé:

In agreement with 18th and 19th centuries mainstream thought also SOLOVĚV argued that the universe's history is made up of three successive phases. He called the first phase "cosmogonic phase." As sug-

²⁴Cf. idem, SOLOVĚV, "La Russie", p. 280ff.

²⁵Cf. BOUYER, "An Introduction", p. 149.

gested by its name already this phase took place before human history started and it was removed by the Creation of complex forms and organisms, the human organism included. This creative “theogonic phase” encompasses all mysteries to Creation and is characterised by processing activity of human consciousness. SOLOVĚV enumerates the development of Buddhism, Hinduism, Greek philosophy, Judaism and other important pre-Christian mainstream world-views which gave witness to consciousness’ unfolding that provided grounds for the third, namely the “historical phase”. The latter took start with Jesus Christ who set off *‘bogochelovechestvo’*.²⁶

In fact, SOLOVĚV considered his lifetime a period on the edge of great historical change, the seventh day was, as he assumed, close to fulfilment: he was sure the rapprochement of the Roman Catholic Church and Russian Orthodoxy was to come during his lifetime. Anticipating this re-union he also considered concrete policies and developed the notions of “Christian” and “religious politics” in great detail.²⁷ Confirmed by many other scholars, he had an intensive reading of Catholic dogmatic. He studied the multi-volume work *Praelectiones theologicae* by G. PERRONE and apparently also studied in original more or less all works by the popes GREGORY VII and INNOCENT III. His writings *Istoriia i budushchnost’ teokratiia* (1884–1886, *History and Future of Theocracy*) and *Dogmaticheskoe razvitie tserkvi v sviazi s voprosom o soedinenii tserkvej* (1886, *The Dogmatic Development of the Church in Relation to the Question of the Churches’ Unification*) are dedicated to an analyse of dogmatic differences between Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. He concluded that there aren’t any significant discrepancies. The vision of a drawing near unification of both Churches under the roof of Rome was central in his thought. He is even believed to have been in contact with the pope in this mission. It brought in from the Tsarist side a prohibition of all his works concerning this issue.²⁸

²⁶Cf. footnotes no. 17, 19, 20.

²⁷Cf. SCHROOYEN, “Vladimir Solovëv”, *passim*.

²⁸Cf. MOCHUL’SKIJ, *Vladimir Solov’ev*, pp. 164–194.

Sergej Nikolaevich BULGAKOV, who may be called one of Solovëv’s disciples, began his intellectual biography as specialist on Marxian theory of surplus value having done his studies in Political Economy at Moscow University.²⁹ However, his Marxist period was extremely short, since under the spiritual influence of DOSTOEVSKIJ and SOLOVËV he already in 1901 experienced serious disappointment by Marxism as a world outlook; henceforth he gradually moved away from economy and gained expertise in Orthodox theology.

He reformulated MARX’s concept of materialism and arrived at a sophianic religious materialism with the Church as the decisive promoter of progress, viz. improvement of social life. The *Philosophy of Economy* quotes MARX’s well-known 11th thesis on FEUERBACH: “The question whether objective (*gegenständliche*) truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth in practical orientation, that is, the reality and power, the ‘this-sidedness’ (*Diesseitigkeit*) of his thinking. [...] The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it”.³⁰ As will be shown also as a theologian he defended principles of change: in 1918 he was ordained orthodox priest, yet, was expatriated only shortly afterwards, for he had intensively participated in public debates on how to continue Russia’s political and social fate after abolishment of absolute rule and also on reforms of Russian Orthodoxy.³¹ In 1926 became director of the Institute St. Serge in Paris where he died in 1944.

The sophiology he developed in exile met with immense interest and critique among the parishes of Russian Orthodoxy in Western Eu-

²⁹Before publishing his doctoral thesis BULGAKOV, *Kapitalizm* (1900) BULGAKOV had published important articles on this issue already: BULGAKOV, “Chto takoe” (1896), BULGAKOV, “O nekotorykh” (1898), BULGAKOV, “K voprosu” (1899).

³⁰Cf. BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 77, first footnote on this page. In EVTUHOV’s translation, this passage in MARX is from MARX & ENGELS, *Selected Works*, pp. 28–30. In this context, see COPLESTON, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 17f, on the “operative” word “only” signifying that theory according to MARX should be oriented to practice, but by no means indicating that theory is superfluous.

³¹Cf. EVTUHOV, *The Cross* for Bulgakov’s role Russia’s pre-revolutionary political and social life.

rope. A commission set up to by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul urged him to eliminate all passages concerned with *Sophia* in order to safeguard acknowledgement by the Russian Orthodox Church in exile. As he decided not to follow this advice, crucial parts of his works were and still are condemned as heretical by today's Russian Orthodoxy. What is *bogochelovechestvo* and who is *Sophia* in BULGAKOV are the leading questions of the next passage.

He intensively looked into SOLOVĚV's idea of "sacred corporeality" that, as we have seen, is intrinsically intertwined with the latter's notion of "religious materialism". Despite the fact that SOLOVĚV never developed this concept into a refined, separate philosophical discourse, BULGAKOV praised him for having prepared the ground for a magnificent Christian metaphysics that allocates the sparkling idea of nature as the "other God" or the "second absolute".³² Nature must be the visible spirit, and spirit must be the invisible nature.³³ "Nature's highest goal to become wholly an object to herself is achieved only through the last and highest order of reflection, which is none other than man".³⁴ To say the same in another wording by BULGAKOV, nature is humanised by becoming man's "peripheral body, submitting to his consciousness and realising itself in him".³⁵ As in SOLOVĚV, in BULGAKOV, too, there is no dichotomy between matter and spirit, between body and soul. Nature does not signify evil, but is merely shapeless, dependent upon form and upon its association with the Divine. The human person itself is made of spirit and nature and must properly dispose of each.

In fact, this complex of ideas refers back to ATHANASIOS of Alexandria, GREGORY of Nyssa, and other fathers of the Church, whose teachings, as he regrets, have never been worked out fully.³⁶ In *Svet nevechernyj* (1916, *The Unfading Light*), a writing that testifies to his

³²Cf. BULGAKOV, "Priroda", pp. 8–20.

³³Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 85, quote from F.W.J. SCHELLING, "Ideen", I, p. 152. As BULGAKOV decides, "...the true founder of the philosophy of economy" is SCHELLING. Cf. BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 79.

³⁴Cf. *ibid.* p. 85f, quote from F. SCHELLING, "System", II, p. 14f.

³⁵Cf. BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 121.

³⁶Cf. *ibid.* p. 37f.

becoming more and more a theologian, BULGAKOV explicitly refers to GREGORY of Nyssa’s teachings on Creation and on resurrection: GREGORY developed the idea of Creation in two acts: “general” (*‘obshchee’*) and “partial” (*‘chastnoe’*) Creation, viz. Creation “in the beginning” and in a second step during the “six days”. “[...] In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and was void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”.³⁷ “*In the beginning*” then is another expression for “Sophia”. God created by an ineffable ‘sophianic’ act that is unfathomable because of the all-embracing “sagacity” and “mightiness of Creation”. Sophia then is “potentiality”: she is a “unity of opposites, a *coincidentia oppositorum*” [italics mine, KB]. This way Sophia is “double-centred”: the heavenly Sophia is the “architect” of the earth and thus is “transcendent to the world”. The difference between Sophia and the actually created world denotes the fundamental principle of Creation. As it were, the re-unification of both, the creation of a new unity between both, or with his words, the establishment of a “living ladder” establishing a connection between “heaven” and “earth” represents the final goal of the world’s historical process.³⁸

His *Filosofia khoziajstva* (*Philosophy of Economy*, 1911) subtitled *Mir kak khoziajstvo* (*The World as Household*) presents an ontology of economy.³⁹ “The purpose of economic activity is to defend and to spread the seeds of life, to *resurrect nature*. This is the action of Sophia” [italics mine, KB].⁴⁰ In fact his ontology of economy discusses the question of how matter and nature is resurrected by man who after the Fall was condemned to wear the “heavy shroud” of economic

³⁷ Bulgakov refers to *Tvorenii sv. Grigoriia episkopa Nisskogo, Chast’ I, O shetoneve* (*Works of Saint Gregorius of Nyssa, Part I, On the Six-Day Creation*), cf. BULGAKOV, *Svet*, p. 208f, esp. first footnote. The translation is taken from the English standard-translation, *Gen. I, 1–3*. The Russian Bible has another numeration. Cf. *Byt. I, 1–2*.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.* p. 208f.

³⁹ Cf. *idem*, BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.* p. 153.

need.⁴¹ Henceforth, the world is a “calcified skeleton”, is *natura naturata*.⁴² The content of all activity – which is economic activity – is mere struggle between life and death, a matter of pure survival.⁴³ Yet, this struggle between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* is not a struggle between “two principles”, but rather a struggle between “two states [...] Only this makes possible that constant, incessant *partial resurrection or resuscitation of dead matter*, its temporary revival [...] life passes into a state of lifelessness, or death, that is new or transcendent to it [*italics mine, KB*]”.⁴⁴ This is, as BULGAKOV continues, an “[...] experiential fact, self-evident to all”.⁴⁵ In order to substantiate this existentialist evidence metaphysically, he explains that if life is merely an “[...] epiphenomenon of death, death’s lovely decoration” there would be no sense to life. Life is a principle that differs from death in its potential for “self-consciousness”.⁴⁶ Potentially, all matter is organised by life and concentrated in “knots of life (*‘uzelki zhizni*)” interconnected to each other.⁴⁷ Nature waits for being modelled in order to become man’s “peripheral body”, viz. a particular type of human corporeality submitted “[...] to his consciousness and realising itself in him”.⁴⁸

⁴¹Cf. BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 154. Cf. also BULGAKOV, *Svet*, pp. 304–309, on art and economy. Fundamentally, both bear ‘sophianic’ character. Until the fall “white theurgy” (*‘belaia magiia*) determined man’s relationship with the Created, there was no difference between art and economy. Life’s acts (*‘zhiznennyj protsess*) pursued beauty and harmony. After the fall, “grey theurgy” (*‘seraia magiia*) made man a bondsman of nature and put him in the dire need to conquer nature with the help of labour. Henceforth art and economy are diametrically opposed to each other forms of *creativity*: while art creates beauty in an “erotic” [in the Platonian sense, KB] ascent, economy is brute struggle in order to physically survive within the bonds of numerous chains of causality.

⁴²Cf. BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 152.

⁴³Cf. *ibid.* p. 73, and many other places.

⁴⁴Cf. *ibid.* p. 96f.

⁴⁵Cf. *ibid.* p. 97.

⁴⁶Cf. *ibid.* p. 98.

⁴⁷Cf. *ibid.* p. 98f.

⁴⁸Cf. *ibid.* p. 121.

For him, economical issues turn around the question of “man in nature and nature in man”.⁴⁹ Answering on the question of how matter and/or nature could become man’s “peripheral body” BULGAKOV’s ontology of economy picked out as a central theme the three cornerstones to every economic theory, namely production, consumption, and labour. Needless to say, BULGAKOV shared neither MARX’s narrow concept of “valued labour”, (‘*Arbeitswert*’ measured by MARX’s ‘*Mehrwerttheorie*’) nor the liberals’, esp. Adam SMITH’s notion of productive labour. BULGAKOV qualified labour a epistemological category, or to be more precise redefined it by ascribing cognitive functions to it. “Thanks to labour, there can be no subject alone, as subjective idealism would have it, nor any object alone, as materialism holds, but only their living unity, the subject-object”.⁵⁰ Labour intensive economy is a constant modelling of reality, namely the objectification of the ‘I’ as ideas bridging the ‘I’ and the ‘non-I’.⁵¹ Labour, for BULGAKOV, tears off the skin of unconsciousness by actively identifying the ‘I’ as intrinsically bound to the ‘non-I’, be it nourishment, matter or something else. His ‘*Glavy o Troichnosti*’ (1928/30, *Chapters on Trinity*) unambiguously clarifies that the primordial premise for all anthropology is to look at God as the absolute subject and not, as in natural religions, as the absolute object:⁵² this is the basis for self-awareness and cognition of the ‘non-I’. Following his footsteps, Trinity reaches out into the world, because the singular subject is always threefold: the individual ‘I’ exists within a triangular relationship, is a multiplicity of the ‘I’ given by God, the ‘I-you’-relationship and, thirdly, the ‘I-he’-relationship, whereby the latter guarantees the existence of the ‘I’ and the ‘you’. As it stands, the ‘he’ hinders mere doubling of the ‘I’, ensures the recognition of the ‘you’ and thus is the condition for the ‘we’. This ‘we’ forms the basis for all cognition. The ‘you’ is possibly alien both to the ‘I’ and to the ‘he’ after man has

⁴⁹Cf. *ibid.* p. 35. In ЕВТУХОВ’s translation the Bulgakovian term ‘*udivlenie*’, cf. *ibid.* p. 49, translates into “surprise”, an expression that is unusual for the Platonic idea of it.

⁵⁰Cf. *ibid.* p. 114.

⁵¹Cf. *ibid.* p. 111.

⁵²Cf. *idem*, BULGAKOV, “*Glavy*”, p. 54f.

fallen and this is precisely why life is tragic in character. Nevertheless, from a metaphysical point of view, all three units form the ‘we’ that is fundamental for the ‘I’ to bridge distances between itself and the ‘non-I’.⁵³

Man is entirely free to fill that gap between these two parts of his being, either to recognise the latter, working his way through his own empirical ‘I’, creating it consciously, transforming it to the needed extent, or give his unconscious, non reflected empirical ‘I’ the prominent, or worse, the absolute place. BULGAKOV admits the essence of this “*free act*” [italics mine, KB] to be “[...] inexplicable for it is non-causal”. The individual’s intelligible nature is liberty. “We have to do [...] with absolute self-causality of the will”.⁵⁴ The ‘I’ is never finished, immutable, “[...] but incessantly growing, developing, living. The changing relation between the subject and object, the unfolding ‘I’ in nature is *life*, that is, growth, movement, and dynamic rather than static”.⁵⁵

As we have seen already, the world awaits modelling in order to enter man’s consciousness, in order to become his “peripheral body”, viz. a particular type of human corporeality submitted to his consciousness.⁵⁶ Production then is the conscious transformation of dead, inanimate matter and or nature into a “body” that man gives a distinct name to. Consumption metaphysically comes down to partaking of the “[...] flesh of the world”. Life is the “[...] capacity to consume the world” our bodily organs being “[...] like doors and windows into the universe, and all that enters us through these doors and windows becomes the object of our sensual penetration and, in the process, becomes in a sense part of our body”.⁵⁷ Evidently nourishment is the most vivid means of “[...] natural communion”.⁵⁸

At the most fundamental level production and consumption are hence forms of man’s interaction with nature in order to physically

⁵³Cf. BULGAKOV, “Glavy”, pp. 59–62.

⁵⁴Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 204.

⁵⁵Cf. *ibid.* p. 113.

⁵⁶Cf. *ibid.* p. 121.

⁵⁷Cf. *ibid.* pp. 99–105.

⁵⁸Cf. *ibid.* p. 103f.

survive. On the one hand man is nourished by nature and, on the other, he intervenes and stops natural causality by his making use of materials offered by nature. He himself creates new realities. Both processes are active–passive processes that do not necessarily entail any type of co-createness re-attaching man to *Sophia*, the *prototype of the created world*. At this place we can already draw a conclusion: Formally, man’s relation to nature, to the world as an object, amounts to the same as the relation of ‘I’ in God and the empirical ‘I’, which embeds factually existing interpersonal relationships: the cosmos and the ‘I’ are both divided into two spheres: the ‘I’ given by God, metaphysically, is located in the same sphere as is the Divine Sophia, the Sophia ‘in the beginning’.⁵⁹ Furthermore human creativeness in ongoing self-awareness, i.e. in dynamically realising the proper personality to hinge on the ‘we’ and on intrinsic connectedness with nature correlates to the six-day-Creation. *History is created*, just like individual life is a product of creation.⁶⁰

Different from SOLOVĚV the theologian BULGAKOV answered on the question of how this cognitive processes could be ignited unambiguously. Already his non-theological, early *Philosophy* defined the Eucharist as an active–passive event that reunites *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*.⁶¹ The unity of both is, as must be concluded, *Sophia* in terms of her personal epiphany that bases on conscious consumption of His flesh. As he affirms, the Eucharist sacrament bears “practical character” by definition;⁶² it shelters, as I conclude, the ‘sophianic’ knowledge needed to spiritually transform nature. In his much later *The Russian Church* (1936), he details the significance of the Eucharist maintaining that it “[...] gives benediction to the natural elements” and extends it to the “[...] entire domain of economic production and consumption. This sanctification includes transfiguring power, so that man’s activity which transforms nature, his economic toil, and the power of God which transfigures that nature, work-

⁵⁹Cf. footnote, no. 38.

⁶⁰Cf. BULGAKOV, “Apokaliptika”, pp. 243–247, on Christian eschatology.

⁶¹Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, *Phil. of Economy*, p. 104.

⁶²Cf. *ibid.* p. 69.

ing above human power but not outside it, are wholly reunited”.⁶³ Without any doubt BULGAKOV narrowed in his focus: in his eyes co-creation depends on sacramental communion with God, which leads to the world’s transformation by deification. Exclusively the Eucharist sacrament shelters the ‘sophianic’ knowledge needed to properly continue the world’s creation. This view perfectly corresponds to his view of the Church, prior to all creaturely existence: “Creation was raised to its perfection in *Godmanhood*, and the realization of this *Godmanhood* is the Church in the world”. The Church is both Un-created and created. She is the world’s “entelechia.” Therefore, she receives “social” and “historical” in addition to “cosmic significance”. The Church’s tasks hence include not only ways of personal salvation but also of the transfiguration of the world, obviously including the history of humanity, which simultaneously is the “history of the Church.” Its authorisation is therefore unfailing and originates “[...] not only in the sacramental, mystical life, but in the prophetic spirit, as a call to new activity, to new tasks, to new achievements”.⁶⁴ The Church’s work bears creative character; it formulates and appropriate to historical changes is to at certain times reformulate the dogmatic corpus that reflects the collective religious experience of a certain time at a certain place.⁶⁵

Prophecies are born in an analogous manner: “social Christianity,” or which is the same, “Christian humanism” presumes the “[...] development of all creative capacities of man” and it “[...] may be understood as a new revelation of Christianity.”⁶⁶ “Christian life cannot be limited to an individualistic life; it is communal or social, yet not violating the principle of Christian freedom”.⁶⁷ Yet, “*social Christianity*” is “[...] rather a dogmatic postulate than a completed program of life,

⁶³Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 168.

⁶⁴Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, “Social Teaching”, p. 17f. For a theological justification of “Godmanhood” consult esp. BULGAKOV, *Svet*, pp. 342–271, this passage includes the discussion of Sophia as the essence also of the Second Person.

⁶⁵Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, “O pervokhristianstve”, pp. 160–162. Cf. also BULGAKOV, “Ot avtora”, p. XII, and many other places.

⁶⁶Cf. idem, BULGAKOV, “Social Teaching”, p. 19.

⁶⁷*ibid.* p. 21

more prophecy than actuality [italics mine, KB].⁶⁸ Prophecy arises out of the "soul's creative activity", the soul's confrontation with history and with visions that go beyond its horizons. Prophecies are hence equally bound to time and to timelessness; they pronounce the individual perception of both. Prophecies are relative by definition and require careful examination of the "historical circumstances of their origin". This, however, does of course not lessen their power but calls for further spiritual action; in this sense prophecies have "*practical character*" [italics mine, KB] by definition.⁶⁹

As may be concluded, if the Church fails to upraise "social Christianity" a central prophecy and implement it dogmatically Godman cannot fulfil one of his main destinies, namely establish a righteous social organisation. Furthermore, in case the Church does not dogmatically extend the Eucharist's significance to co-creative issues *natura naturata* stays as a brute matter of fact devoid of change. The Church must enhance general social progress and help people to spiritualise nature in the name of Godmanhood.

Deeply inspired by SOLOVĚV's and BULGAKOV's notions of Godmanhood⁷⁰ BERDIAEV equipped its basic idea with another myth, namely the *theandric myth*, symbolising man's destiny to create his individual non-recurring personality.⁷¹ The first problem we thus have to examine concerns attributes to this self-creation, which seemingly exceed the notion of Godmanhood by the formerly mentioned religious philosophers.

According to BERDIAEV, as well as to other existentialist thinkers before and after him, discursively there are three types of time to be discerned: there are "cosmic", "historical", and the "existential" time-horizon. He discerns "cosmic", "historical" and "existential time".

⁶⁸Cf. *ibid.* p. 20. In BULGAKOV's view, the Churches' World Congress in Stockholm 1924 took a step in the right direction by discussing forms and possibilities of "social Christianity".

⁶⁹Cf. *idem*, BULGAKOV, "Prorochestvo", pp. 7–9.

⁷⁰Cf. BERDIAEV, *Samopoznanie*, p. 123f and p. 147f for details of his encounter with SOLOVĚV and BULGAKOV, his turn from Marxism to idealism, and finally to Russian Orthodoxy.

⁷¹Cf. McLACHLAN, *The desire*, pp. 153–190; on the "theandric myth" in BERDIAEV.

Cosmic time bases on “mathematical calculations” which mathematically capture objects out of the range of man’s immediate perception. Calculations encompass the cosmic movement, the planet’s motions in the orbit, the change and succession of years, seasons, months, days, and hours. The symbol that best describes “cosmic time” is the circle. By contrast “historical time” needs the symbol of a “[...] line which stretches out forward into the future”, for humanity’s history started at a certain point and presumably ends at another. “Historical time” is embedded into “cosmic time”. It signifies the rule of standards and the humdrum, the realm of what HEIDEGGER called “*in-der-Welt-sein*”. “Existential time” is measureless by definition and therefore it escapes all arithmetic calculations. It is as if it is a “point”, telling of “movement into depth”.⁷² It escapes all objectivity, for it is subjective by definition and thus scarcely finds an adequate externalised expression. Hererein lies the difficulty in describing those “breakthroughs of the spirit” into existential time, which open up the realms of personal birth; they are non-causal and non-expressible by a spacious symbol and/or by words.⁷³ It may be said that the New-Testament “Kairos” as understood by Paul TILLICH, viz. the influx of eternity into time,⁷⁴ is what BERDIAEV had in mind when discussing breakthroughs of the spirit into existential time.⁷⁵

All human creative acts initially take place within the spheres of existential time; within its spheres everything is possible. Seen from within this existential time man is a “microcosm”.⁷⁶ Creator and microcosm man are intertwined by God’s emanation of Spirit.⁷⁷ Spirit is creative energy that transfigures the world,⁷⁸ all great and seminal events in history are personal first: they are born, as BERDIAEV maintained, in *existential time* before appearing in *historical time*. The leap now into the kingdom of standards is tragic because there is always

⁷²Cf. BERDIAEV, *The Beginning*, p. 206f.

⁷³Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *Slavery*, pp. 20–59, and many other places.

⁷⁴Cf. CALIAN, *The significance*, p. 105.

⁷⁵Cf. BERDIAEV, *Slavery*, pp. 20–59, and many other places.

⁷⁶Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *The Beginning*, p. 172.

⁷⁷Cf. HERBERG, *Four Existentialist*, pp. 103–107.

⁷⁸Cf. DAVY, *Nicolas Berdiaev*, p. 123.

a difference between the created and the appearance of the created in historical time: creations go through processes of alienation when they pass from existential into historical time.⁷⁹ What was created in existential time is an imaginary creation non restricted by space and time nor by anything else. "The tragedy and torment of history are above all else the tragedy and torment of time".⁸⁰ "Creativeness in art, like every other form of creative activity, consists in triumph over given, determined, concrete life, it is a victory over the world. Objectification knows a humdrum day-to-day concreteness of its own, but creative power finds its way from this imposed concreteness into concreteness of another kind. Creative activity does not consist merely in the bestowal of a more perfect form upon this world; it is also liberation from the burden and bondage of this world. Creativeness cannot be merely creation out of nothing; it presupposes the material, which the world supplies".⁸¹ "Man's countenance is the most touching thing in the world", as BERDIAEV summarises the inner spiritual struggle, accompanying the creation of one's own personality,⁸² prior to any other form of creativity. He correctly called this creative act "myth," for this process of non-causal self-creation lies beyond objectification, indeed, why his readers are explicitly invited to evaluate this myth in terms of personal "spiritual experience".⁸³

In accordance with this scheme of times BERDIAEV presented a sociology into which he embedded the predominance of Godmanhood, or to be more precise, his conceptual notion of the "theandric myth": what is alienation (*Entfremdung*) in MARX⁸⁴ flows into his "apophatic sociology," differentiating merely two groups of people, no more: on the one side, there are self-created "aristocrats," on the other hand there is the "plebs" that is wholly determined by "bourgeois mentality": everybody who did not create inner aristocracy is a plebeian in his being blinded and dazzled by impersonal standards of social

⁷⁹Cf. BERDIAEV, *Slavery*, p. 59–72.

⁸⁰Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *The Beginning*, p. 209.

⁸¹Cf. *ibid.* p. 173.

⁸²Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *Slavery*, pp. 20–58.

⁸³Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *Das Ich*, p. 57.

⁸⁴Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, "Personalizm", p. 10.

and other world-environments. By contrast, the aristocrat is a “free” person, ready for “self-sacrifice” and “with generous heart”; “aristocrats” may organize themselves in groups such as a “clerical caste”, a “hierarchy of princes of the Church” or it may be an “aristocratic selection within a class which is not aristocratic”. “The aristocratic breed of men is extraordinarily sensitive and suffers much”, and it is outnumbered by the bourgeois plebs. BERDIAEV’s late writings reflect deep sorrow that European societies have ended up in a proletarian status.⁸⁵ Impersonal masses socially determine modernity and the masses — “plebs” whose “bourgeois” members lack inner “aristocracy” — dominate social life. Egotism sets political paradigms. Parliamentary Democracy comes down to a farce, for it merely serves the welfare of diverse ‘perverted’ interest groups of what he calls soulless “organised chaos”.⁸⁶

BERDIAEV was far from presenting any type of teleology. His assumption that spiritual liberation and co-creativity would have immediate social and political implications⁸⁷ cannot be explained on another basis but personal hope. Co-creation in BERDIAEV demands personal struggle, hinging on recognition of freedom, viz. man’s personal and prior creative task to create “personal aristocracy”. Evidently, the leap from eternity into historical time is hindered by all kinds of standards, including language and all other expressive forms. This is why BERDIAEV’s proper notions of anarchy and/or God’s Kingdom are prudently presented as spiritual, subjective-objective, existential categories impossible to objectify by another category than eternity flowing in time. Also his notion of theocracy lacks whatever conception of the Church. The Church did not play any role in his existentialist myth of man. As far as I can see, he hoped on a general Christian renaissance,⁸⁸ as it were, bringing forth *spiritual societies of aristocrats*.

⁸⁵Cf. idem, BERDIAEV, *Sud’ba*, p. 66ff.

⁸⁶Cf. *ibid.* p. 14ff.

⁸⁷Cf. GOTTLIEB, “The Christian”, p. 124f.

⁸⁸Cf. BERDIAEV, *Christentum*, p. 108, and many other places.

I take his late writing *Man’s Destiny in our Time* (*Sud’ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire*, 1934) as if his testimony: it unambiguously testifies to his total disillusion, which did not prevent him from mentioning his hope on the universal “eighth day” fulfilling Creation.⁸⁹ This hope based, as I see it, on his extraordinary “theandric myth” that to some extent was more than ‘*bogochelovestvo*’ by SOLOVĚV and BULGAKOV, for he constructed this myth in independence from whatever kind of standard, religious standards included.

From 1898 to 1901/02 Semën Liudvigovich FRANK (together with BULGAKOV and BERDIAEV) adhered to “legal Marxism” nourished by Neo-Kantianism. His break with Marxism was mainly a result of his encounter with Friedrich NIETZSCHE’s works, which for him offered new insights into the spirit’s reality.⁹⁰ In 1912, after he had gone through a long interim period due to his suspicion of being institutionally bound to a particular confession,⁹¹ FRANK was baptised into the Russian Orthodoxy.⁹² However, he did not wish to become a theologian but rather stay a free philosopher, because he was unable to “[...] overcome the feeling that all abstract dogmatic theology is prone to sinful idle talk”.⁹³ Nonetheless also FRANK must be considered a religious philosopher who belongs to those who defended the idea of Godmanhood. Platonism⁹⁴ especially its two greatest representatives, PLOTINUS and NICOLAS OF CUSA, decisively determined the horizons of FRANK’s religious philosophy.⁹⁵ He acknowledged the

⁸⁹Cf. LOWRIE, *Rebellious*, p. 145, quoting BERDIAEV on “*Freedom of the Eighth Day*”, and cf. BERDIAEV, *Slavery*, p. 216.

⁹⁰Cf. P.S. EHLEN, “Die Wir-Philosophie”, p. 390.

⁹¹Cf. FRANK, “O nevozmozhnosti”, p. 89: Frank equates “eternal facts” (*vechnye fakty*) and *Urphänomene* (primordial phenomena). As BOOBYER, “The Two”, says, by 1906 “[...] Frank was broadly in favour of religion but hostile to anything that might lead to dogmatism”.

⁹²For details concerning FRANK’s conversion to Russian Orthodoxy in 1912 cf. BOOBYER, *S.L. Frank*, pp. 72–81.

⁹³Cf. FRANK, *The Light*, p. xixf.

⁹⁴Cf. NETHERCOTT, *Russia s Plato*, pp. 86–95: about the *Neo-Kantian Recovery of Plato* in Russia. Cf. FRANK himself on PLATO’s ontology versus KANT’s debatable “Copernican” turn in: FRANK, “Zur Metaphysik”, pp. 361–363.

⁹⁵Cf. FRANK, *Reality*, p. xiv.

latter even his “only philosophical teacher”,⁹⁶ for NICOLAS OF CUSA presented the “[...] highest philosophical interpretation” of “Christian Humanism”.⁹⁷

The Jesuit philosopher Peter EHLEN sees one of FRANK’s most creditable contributions to twentieth-century philosophy in the latter’s integration of the phenomenology of ‘I-you’ relationships (“personalism”⁹⁸) into the “ontology of all-unity” and social philosophy.⁹⁹ EHLEN discerns FRANK’s central self-given task in “*philosophically*” elaborating the anthropology inherent in Christianity,¹⁰⁰ which comes down to another version of Godmanhood. As my investigation is to show, however, the most captivating impact of FRANK’s social philosophy rooting in his perception of ‘*bogochelovek*’ amounts to overcoming the dichotomy between ontology and phenomenology by the principle of *service*. This principle signifies the central point of his understanding of *bogochelvecstvo*, an idea and vision that always has to do with personal creativity.

Frank praised NICOLAS OF CUSA for his *Docta ignorantia*: also leads to a new sphere just like HEGEL’s dialectics culminate in a synthesis in the third stage: “If everything that is determinate as such is grounded in the principle of ‘either-or’ (*aut-aut, entweder-oder*), in the choice between the one and the other”, the first negation of the whole obviously leads to “[...] ‘both the one and the other’ (*sowohl-als-auch*)”.¹⁰¹ This principle “[...] presupposes the presence of both the ‘one’ and the ‘other’, the presence of a variety” and it “[...] evidently presupposes the ‘either-or’ form”. As it were, both forms lie on one

⁹⁶Cf. P.S. EHLEN, “Die Wir-Philosophie”, p. 391.

⁹⁷Cf. FRANK, *Reality*, p. 124. Cf. also FRANK, “O nevozmozhnosti”, p. 97.

⁹⁸Cf. P. EHLEN, “Einleitung”, pp. 58–60: in view of their discussions of the “we”-structure of the human spirit EHLEN lists IMMANUEL FICHTE, WILHELM HEGEL, MARTIN BUBER, FERDINAND EBNER, and FRANZ ROSENZWEIG as having been studied by FRANK. As far as FRANK’s dialogical description of the ‘I – the Holy – relationship’ is concerned EHLEN names WILHELM WINDELBAND, RUDOLF OTTO, MAX SCHELER, and last but not least also IMMANUEL KANT as to have inspired FRANK.

⁹⁹Cf. FRANK, *The Spiritual*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰Cf. *ibid.* p. 56.

¹⁰¹Cf. FRANK, *The Unknowable*, p. 79.

and the same level".¹⁰² Both are "useless" to describe the unknowable: it "[...] is *neither* 'both the one and the other' *nor* 'either-or'". The unknowable rather is "[...] 'neither-nor'" in turn leading to a "[...] 'nothing' – the 'quiet desert' (*die 'stille Wüste'* of Meister ECKHART)". "But if it is nothing and if it is nothing but *nothing*, it has everything else, the whole fullness of being, *outside of itself*. But then it is not the Absolute, not the all-embracing fullness which we sought".¹⁰³ In order to "[...] overcome this difficulty", FRANK suggests to "[...] *negate* the negation of negation" in order to "[...] attain a sort of third power of negation"¹⁰⁴ and concludes: "In this sense Cusanus is right when he says that separate determinations pertain to the Absolute *neither disjunctively* (in the form of 'either-or') *nor conjunctively* (in the form of 'both' the one and the other)". The Absolute is 'non-otherness' itself, *non aluid*, the *unspeakable*."¹⁰⁵ Consequently, the third negation defines the unknowable as "[...] *both* nothing *and* all. [...] The unknowable is the ineffable unity of unity and diversity, and not in such a way that this unity embraces the diversity from outside like something new and alien, but in such a way that it *is* and acts in the diversity itself".¹⁰⁶ This "synthesis", the "third or highest stage" is "[...] expressible neither in judgements nor concepts". It is an "[...] expression of the ultimate mystery of being", fathoming the "*trinity* of reality".¹⁰⁷ In sum, reality then transcends the oppositions between unity and diversity, between unity and diversity, between the absolute and the relative, between transcendence and immanence, for it is an ineffable unity, the coincidence of opposites.

Seen from here, it is evident that every "teaching about ideas or the logos" (*Ideen – oder Logoslehre*) must include "philosophical anthropology" or, to be more exact, "metaphysics of the soul". Detailing

¹⁰²Cf. *ibid.* p. 80f.

¹⁰³Cf. *ibid.* p. 81

¹⁰⁴Cf. *ibid.* p. 82.

¹⁰⁵Cf. *ibid.* p. 81.

¹⁰⁶Cf. *ibid.* p. 83. Cf. also FRANK, *Reality*, pp. 44–54: for a summary of the *Docta's* basic tenets

¹⁰⁷Cf. *ibid.* p. 98.

his ideas on “Godmanhood”,¹⁰⁸ FRANK wonders where the soul ends and where the spirit begins.¹⁰⁹ Spirit is “[...] *neither* transcendent *nor* immanent in relation to the soul but stands in some other, ineffable relation to it”. We thus encounter another coincidence of opposites: “[...] the principle of *the unity of separateness and mutual penetration*”. As must be concluded, the human soul *an sich* (in itself) does not bear the property of being, for it needs to be revealed to itself: this revelation stands midway in the trans-rational gap between immanence and transcendence, for as FRANK asserts, the “[...] deepest layer of our psychic being (i.e., of immediate self-being) that reveals itself to our self-awareness is already spiritual”. Inversely, the same is true and “[...] spirit in its immediate action on the soul’s being is already ‘soul-like’”.¹¹⁰ Consequently, revelation is both, namely the soul’s immanent revelation to itself and simultaneously the revelation of the spirit’s transcendent reality.

In *O prirode* FRANK agrees with BERGSON that the soul’s action — never being fractionalised into parts — indicates “*creativity*”.¹¹¹ Spirit denotes vital energy: it is “[...] not anything ready-made, not ‘substance’” and “[...] creative life is not its (the spirit’s; the author) property, state or attribute, but its very essence; the conceptions of life and of living, of creativeness and the creator coincide”.¹¹² Man is not only a servant *of God*,¹¹³ an higher will,¹¹⁴ but simultaneously a “[...] co-partner in God’s creativeness”. He “[...] creates derivatively creative beings, and granted His creatures a share in His own creativeness.

¹⁰⁸Cf. idem, FRANK, *Reality and Man*, pp. 133–141: he credits SOLOVĚV with the honour of having elaborated its tents “the most convincingly”, p. 141. Cf. also, FRANK, “Dukhovnoe”, p. 394.

¹⁰⁹Cf. idem, FRANK, “Zur Metaphysik”, pp. 351–373: This treatise written in German by FRANK represents a sort of summary of *Dusha cheloveka*.

¹¹⁰Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Unknowable*, p. 169f.

¹¹¹Cf. idem, FRANK, “O prirode”, pp. 231–233. Cf. also FRANK, *Reality*, pp. 153–160.

¹¹²Cf. idem, *ibid.* p. 82.

¹¹³Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Light*, p. 165f.

¹¹⁴Cf. FRANK, *The Spiritual*, p. 111, 135. Cf. RUSSELL, *A History*, p. 15f: “Christianity popularised an important opinion already implicit in the teaching of the Stoics, but foreign to the general spirit of antiquity — I mean, the opinion that man’s duty to God is more imperative than his *duty* (my italics) to the State”.

[...] Human spirit is a created entity to which God as it were partly *delegates* His own creative power".¹¹⁵

As FRANK asserts, "[...] all arguments supporting the 'natural state' of man, an order of life harmonious with his nature, are demolished by the fundamental fact that the distinctive character of man's nature consists precisely in *the overcoming and transfiguration of his nature*"¹¹⁶ and, analogously, in the "[...] perfecting of an *essentially imperfect world*".¹¹⁷ These assumptions denote what Frederick COPLESTON must have had in mind hinting at FRANK's idea on Godmanhood as denoting "[...] 'theandric' action, *creative action* (my italics)".¹¹⁸ However, SOLOVĚV, BULGAKOV, and BERTIAEV differ from FRANK in that he does not write an eschatology: FRANK's idea of man as a "self-transforming being" doesn't revolve around the notion of a not yet completed process of Creation. As far as eschatological belief is concerned, he maintained that "[...] we can have a concrete idea neither of the forms of the end of this world nor of the forms of the transfigured being of the 'new heaven and new earth'".¹¹⁹

And so, what is Godman's creative action primarily focused upon? Godmanhood in FRANK is intrinsically bound to his ontology of the soul's life, which in turn is bound to an ontology of community. Reflecting upon modern Western-European social philosophy, FRANK argues that "[...] the theory of *communion*, the encounter of two consciousnesses" as a basis of community was made completely impossible by defining the 'I' as to be an absolutely primordial principle (rare exceptions to this false strand of thought in his eyes were Max SCHELER, Ferdinand EBNER, Martin BUBER,¹²⁰ and "to some extent" Georg SIMMEL¹²¹). As FRANK delineates at length, the personal 'I' perpetually transcends itself and it cannot have its own real being, its *non*

¹¹⁵Cf. idem, FRANK, *Reality*, p. 156f.

¹¹⁶Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Spiritual*, p. 83.

¹¹⁷Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Light*, p. 204.

¹¹⁸Cf. COPLESTON, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 70f.

¹¹⁹Cf. FRANK, *The Light*, p. 107f.

¹²⁰Cf. P. EHLEN, "Einleitung", pp. 58–60: about BUBER's "I-thou-philosophy" and its impact on FRANK.

¹²¹Cf. FRANK, *The Unknowable*, p. 141.

aluid, except as part of the *aluid*. Communion bears the experience of reality as it simultaneously is ‘this’ and the ‘other’. In formal-logical terms reality is accessible only to the *Docta ignorantia*,¹²² whereas in human life communion is our link with that which is external to us, and at the same time essential of our inner life; communion is ultimately disclosed in the phenomenon of love. The person we communicate with ceases to be an ‘object’ and is no longer a ‘he’ but a ‘thou’. The primordial category of ‘we’ overcomes and simultaneously preserves the opposition of ‘I am’ and ‘thou art’.¹²³ The ‘we’ is “[...] a certain *widening* of the ‘I’ spreading beyond its primary and, so to speak, its natural limits”. Consciously, the ‘I’ can only be perceived “[...] *beyond the confines of my own self*”.¹²⁴ And so, the ‘we’ denotes another “[...] coincidence of opposites in which I perceive the inner ground of my own existence — *me* — in the unity of being ‘inside of me’ and being ‘outside of me’ which surpasses all rational thought”.¹²⁵

Because “[...] every man is the ‘image and likeness of God’ [...] all people are fundamentally equal”. This equality touches man’s “*relation to God*” and does not contradict “[...] *some correlative inequality*”¹²⁶ corresponding to the “[...] principle of *hierarchy*, which is present with ontological necessity in society”.¹²⁷ “*Equality is the universal call to service, while service, as a moral activity, is based on human freedom* (my italics)”.¹²⁸ “The *obligatory* is a primordial category which expresses the subordination of human will to a higher, ideal, absolutely obliging principle”: it arises out of the Divine-human nature of social life.¹²⁹

Service in FRANK is a creative task, service as a bond between the I and the ‘non-I’ be it a person or else arises out of his notion of God-

¹²² Cf. idem, FRANK, *Reality*, p. 62.

¹²³ Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Unknowable*, pp. 137–148. Cf. also, FRANK, *Reality*, pp. 60–69 and cf. FRANK, *The Spiritual*, pp. 46–52.

¹²⁴ Cf. idem, FRANK, *Reality*, p. 61f.

¹²⁵ Cf. idem, FRANK, *The Unknowable*, p. 149.

¹²⁶ Cf. *ibid.* p. 149.

¹²⁷ Cf. *ibid.* p. 141.

¹²⁸ *ibid.* p. 149.

¹²⁹ Cf. *ibid.* p. 87.

manhood. The four Russian religious philosophers discussed share the belief that the Creational process is unfinished until ‘*bogochelevek*’ (Godman) arrives at organising social life according to his God-given creativity. And so, SOLOVĚV, BULGAKOV, BERDIAEV, and especially FRANK expound as much the possibilities as the boundaries of reason by reason discussing the coming of the *eighth day of Creation*. In them the world *an sich* (in itself) is not fathomed by ways and means of cognition, but by ways and means of co-quintessential being, by co-creatorship. FRANK reformulates *cogito, ergo sum* to *cogito, ergo est esse absolutum* (I think, therefore being must be absolute), replacing the Platonic world of ideas by God Who is not any “object”, but rather the “quintessence of being”, denoting the “living potential of knowledge and consciousness”.¹³⁰ The world *für sich* (itself) transcends the oppositions between unity and diversity, between the Absolute and the relative, between transcendence and immanence. It is a coincidence of opposites, determinations don’t pertain to it *disjunctively* (in the form of ‘either-or’) but *conjunctively*, in the form of ‘both’ the one and the other. This isn’t, of course, a very original idea, but it refers back especially to the Patristic Fathers ATHANASIUS of Alexandria, GREGORY of Nicce, ORIGEN, as well as to the Neo-Platonists, and esp. to mystics like Jacob BOEHME, and Meister ECKHART; also in SOLOVĚV, BULGAKOV, BERDIAEV, and FRANK cognition of the world’s reality hinges as much on the Absolute as on the relative. In all four of them Godmanhood entails first of all the task to act as God’s co-creator.

Summary

A Comparative Study of “Godmanhood” (bogochelechestvo) in Russian Philosophy...

The essay seeks to present a brief tour de raison through four Russian religious philosophies. In my opinion they share the

¹³⁰FRANK explicitly refers to St. AUGUSTINE’s *Confessions*. See esp. the Augustinian motto to *ibid.* p. 99. Cf. also, FRANK, “Absolutnoe”, pp. 66–69, FRANK, *Predmet*,

axiomatic belief that Creation stays incomplete until Godman comes to organize social life according to his Godlike creativity. Godmanhood is a special type of anthropology: it presumes that man does not fathom life by means of cognition, but rather by means of his proper co-creatorship with the Absolute. The traditional theology of Creation “ex nihilo” is decisively modified. SOLOVĚV conceived of nature — both in man and around him — as representing His holy body, which awaits conscious modeling: Godman is first of all His creative partner. BULGAKOV continued this idea. However, he dedicated an extremely important supporting role to the Church in respect of co-creatorship. BERDIAEV in turn leaves the entire responsibility for history’s success to the “aristocracy.” FRANK presented a fascinating ontology of the human soul, which allows for the potential divinity of human deeds. This essay concentrates on four variants of bogochelovechestvo, which all entail the same task for man: that of consciously continuing Creation. (See also: Introduction to... the Conference “Man and the Universe”).

Key words: Bogochelovechestvo / Godmanhood — Creativity — Spiritual Corporeality — Personalism — Docta Ignorantia

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p. 381, and cf. FRANK, *Reality*, p. 20. FRANK reasons about the fundamental premises to “*cogito, ergo sum*” versus “*sum, ergo cogito*”.

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