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**BREAKS AND LINKS. PROSPECTS
FOR RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY TODAY**

Wolle die Wandlung!
Sonette an Orpheus, XII.

Half a century ago, after the fall of the Weimar Republic and Third Reich, German philosophy saw as its urgent task the recovery and reassessment of its heritage. One important part of this heritage was summarised in a big compendium published in 1949 under the title "Christliche Philosophie in Deutschland". The title was the formula taken from one of the texts in the book and belonging to Max Scheler. *Mutatis mutandis*, Russian philosophy may be said to have a similar task today; and the Christian thought is, probably, still more important part of its heritage. Looking at the Russian philosophising as a whole, in all its history, we must admit ineluctably that it always was predominantly religious in its main trends as well as main fruits. Religious thought was always the prevailing kind of the Russian thought including its last years of freedom before the Communist period, so that its enforced atheism during this period is nothing but the exception which proves the rule. But if we turn to the present situation, we must as ineluctably admit another thing: this prevailing kind is practically not developing today. Though all the outward obstacles are removed and even replaced by the opposite, the outward prompting and stimulating, but, notwithstanding these stimuli, what takes place now is at most the study of the old and not the creation of the new.

But here an important proviso should be made. What we called "the study of the old" is in fact a big and specific task. Works of the main authors of the Christian philosophy in Russia, like Florensky, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Franck and others, today are currently referred to as "classic". But classic authors by the very definition are supposed to have the *corpus* of their works in academic editions with proper archival, textological and commenting base; only in this case can they really function as "classics" of a definite culture. Now, all the classics we discuss still 10 years ago were forbidden in their country, their texts never collected and often unpublished and none of them ever had anything like an academic edition. The result is that the philosophy in Russia in the postsoviet years was forced to exist in a dual time. There had to be the *Time of the Past Thought*, in which the recovery of the classical heritage developed, and there had to be the *Time of the Present Thought*, the thought placed in the (post)modern intellectual and social situation and dealing with all its problems.

The double life is rarely a success story even for US presidents, but at least in "The Time of the Past Thought" Russian philosophy has been managing well enough. Besides producing (almost) academic editions of the majority of the principal known texts, important previously unpublished works by Florensky, Karsavin, Bulgakov, Losev, Bakhtin et al. have appeared. Texts have been unearthed by interesting new names such as Muraviev, Meyer, Druskin, Golosovker, among others, and critical, epistolary and similar materials associated with the philosophical process are being published and studied. Despite the disastrous situation in the country this fruitful work is going on with much still to do (to mention just one task: the unusual cross-cultural

episode associated with the Russian philosophical journal published in German in Stuttgart in 1929-31, *Der Russische Gedanke*, remains completely unstudied). But my main subject is "The Time of the Present Thought". Regretfully, here the above assessment is correct: there is no creation of the new. What are we to make of this? By a certain logic, it will only help us better to understand the current philosophical and spiritual situation. Just as a lifeless body is fit for dissection, a period of the absence of philosophy is fit for reflection upon finished philosophy – *sine ira et studio*. My reflection should start with the description of the present situation of the lifeless body, then proceed to display the genesis and causes of the situation, and finally examine the prospects for the resurrection or reanimation of the body, i.e. the ways and means, and real chances, for the creative life of religious philosophy in Russia.

Rules of the philosophical discourse state, however, that our study of these problems should be preceded by the precise identification of the subject of the study. The subject or phenomenon under consideration is, as we said, "Christian Philosophy in Russia" or, as it is usually called, "Russian religious philosophy". (The first formula, following Scheler's *Begriffsbildung*, is somewhat more precise; whenever I use the second I shall always mean the first). But as soon as we try to pinpoint its identity, we stop short, perplexed. The phenomenon belongs to the history of philosophy, and so in the first place we must fix its historical borders; but this attempt fails. Among various authors and presentations the initial date for the history of Russian philosophy varies across a phantastic range. Some take the border to be the philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev; for others, it is situated in the thought of the slavophiles or freemasons; while for a third (and rather numerous) group it lies squarely within the activity of the slavonic enlighteners, Methody and Cyril, all the more so given that the latter was nicknamed the Philosopher. The phenomenon designated Russian Philosophy clearly does not belong to the depths of prehistory, but its datings diverge by exactly a millennium – from the 9-th to the 19-th century. The question about the beginnings of Russian philosophy turns out to be unanswerable, and the constitution of this philosophy as a *bona fide* historicophilosophical phenomenon has never been completely achieved. Let us note this as a factor which could possibly be of significance for the present destiny of the phenomenon.

Turning now to this destiny, we could summarize it in a very laconic formula: failed hopes. We know, however, that this formula is valid for all spheres of postcommunist life in Russia; the task is to examine how it has come to be actualised in philosophy.

The pre-revolutionary period of the Russian philosophy had at its centre the celebrated Religious-philosophical renaissance. By all criteria it was, indeed, a powerful philosophical movement. In a very short time, a considerable number of prominent and original thinkers appeared whose names are now known to everybody. An active philosophical community arose; a professional philosophical press flourished publishing all kinds of philosophical and especially religious-philosophical literature. Philosophy was definitely ready to replace literature in the role of the leading branch of national culture. It is also significant that all this intense development possessed a well-defined core, central current or school, which it did not borrow but produced itself. This core was sophiology and the metaphysics of Total-Unity, originating in the philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev.

It is indisputable that this philosophical movement as well as its religious-philosophical core were not in decline at the time of the bolshevik turnover. Quite on the contrary, they continued their rise bringing forth more and more ripe fruit. The

capital works of the Russian Religious-philosophical renaissance began to appear in the years just prior to the revolution: "The Pillar and Foundation of the Truth" by Pavel Florensky (1914), "The Object of Knowledge" by Semion Franck (1915), "The Meaning of Creativity" by Nicolas Berdyaev (1916), "The Unfading Light" by Sergey Bulgakov (1917) and so on. The end of the Religious-philosophical renaissance was the violent break-up. After the revolution the culture divided into two parts in which the breakup took different forms. In the diaspora religious thinkers could continue their work, though in the absence of an adequate medium and proper response, while in Russia any religious and very soon any non-marxist thought were forbidden and persecuted. In such a situation, not only creative work in religious philosophy was rendered impossible, but cultural links and continuity with the past, even the immediate past, were quickly destroyed. In-depth knowledge of the thought of the Silver Age and all the Russian religious-philosophical tradition was lost surprisingly quickly (a characteristic and dangerous feature of the sociopsychological and cultural dynamics under totalitarianism). What came in its place was just casual scrapes of information and vague ideas strongly flavoured by myth. Gradually an image formed of the Russian Christian philosophy and especially emigre' thought as a kind of forbidden land of spiritual treasures and truth: the truth about God and man, Russia and the revolution, the evil nature of bolshevism, and so on. In other words, this philosophy was believed to possess double powers – to provide philosophical wisdom as well as solutions to the most acute social problems. Of course, this image belonged, in the first place, to the nonconformist, dissident consciousness, but it should be stressed that, in the late soviet period, it was more and more shared by the common soviet consciousness as well. The power of the Russian Christian philosophy was the common belief of dissidents (like myself) propagating texts of religious thinkers and KGB men punishing them with prison terms for this propagation. There was hardly any doubt that as soon as Russia's freedom would be restored, it would find in this philosophy perfect foundations for the *Weltanschauung* of its future democratic society. And it was equally doubtless that this philosophy would be the basis for a new rise and flourish of creative religious-philosophical work.

We know that these hopes failed; but, as in other spheres of the postcommunist life, the failure has not so far been properly analysed and understood. My remarks to this effect will be preliminary and present my own views. The hopes were of the dual kind, as I said, and so we have to explain the dual failure. Why has Russian Christian philosophy not become either the ground for a new philosophical development or a pool of valuable ideas for postcommunist society? The latter issue does not altogether lie within my theme, for which reason I shall be rather brief with respect to it.

The mind of the Russian intelligentsia was always haunted and preoccupied by social tasks and problems, and the Silver Age thinking, being somewhat less *engage'*, still was faithful enough to the traditional preoccupation. From the first attempts at rapprochement between the intelligentsia and the Church in the Saint-Petersburg Religious-philosophical meetings (1901-03), through the stormy disputes about the nature and role of the intelligentsia raised by the celebrated "Landmarks" (1908-10), to the discussions about the nation and the war in 1914-15, and finally to the collective verdict of Russian philosophy concerning the Russian revolution in the essay-collection "De Profundis" (1918), -- a huge store of ideas and strategies was gathered, to which another sizeable contribution was later added by the diaspora. The storehouse comprised theories of the state and law (Novgorodtsev, Struve, Ivan Il'in), systems of social philosophy (Berdyaev, Frank, Karsavin), reflections on Russian history,

mentality, and spirituality (Berdyayev, Rosanov, Vyach.Ivanov, Fedotov et al.), the analysis of the key socio-cultural oppositions such as "Church and Culture", "State and Civic Society", etc. But for the most part, this store has been found to be inadequate to postcommunist realities and remained not used.

Very likely it will be said that the ideas of Russian religious philosophy have simply proved to be too good for postcommunist Russia. In socio-political aspects, these ideas were basically a certain synthesis or mixture of Orthodox and slavophile views, such as the concept of conciliarity (*sobornost'*) and the organic foundations of social life, along with certain principles of Christian humanism and Western democracy. In the spirit of enlightened liberalism, predominant in Europe before the First World War, one tried here to reconcile and unite progress and tradition, religion and the freedom of mind in a sublime harmony, albeit joined – especially in the arts – to sombre apocalyptic anticipations of a coming catastrophe. But in present day Russia, where one has in parallel the decay of the economy, desintegration of national and cultural identity, break down of social consensus and the disappearance of ethical norms, - such views are powerless to bring forth any sound solutions. For a consciousness which is not in an anticipation of, but perfectly within the catastrophe, ideas like this are by far too abstract and idealised, too optimistic and utopian. Neither the system of ideas nor even the system of values proper to Russian religious philosophy have any chance to be adopted today.

It should be mentioned, perhaps, that the Eltsin regime, in trying to make up for its loss of charisma, has *malgre' tout* promoted attempts to work out a new ideology, for its own purposes, on the basis of Russian religious philosophy. Some projects were launched and remunerated lavishly; very characteristically, leading figures in them were mainly former marxist ideological functionaries who very recently had been criticising and persecuting this philosophy. All these attempts have come to nothing. Under conditions of crisis and catastrophe, the public consciousness clings only to the most simplified and habitual or extreme positions including, in the first place, nationalism and fundamentalism, blended with traditionalist and ritualistic religiousness. Various versions of such positions make the rounds today and, most often, they too borrow some scattered ideas of Russian religious philosophy. Thus the destiny of its heritage is not to be rejected completely, but rather be subjected to ideological selection and exploitation. As the most popular objects of such exploitation, the philosophy of Ivan Il'in and the Eurasian doctrine could be named. The latter is now especially influential. Due to Eurasianism's geopolitical orientation and strong overtones of xenophobia and isolationism, the crisis consciousness easily identifies with its reactions and fears, and its various parts and elements are now used by nearly all the opposition camps, from communists to fascists.

The situation within philosophy itself should be considered more carefully. During the soviet period, philosophy has been part of the totalitarian machine, so that although an enormous caste of official philosophers arose, creative thought advanced only minimally, none of the advances having anything to do, of course, with the religious sphere. Thus there was no new stage in the development of religious philosophy in Russia; nor was there any substantial critique of the last stage, the philosophy of the Silver Age.

Why was it that this last stage, which was disrupted forcibly, could not be fruitfully continued in the post-soviet period? The question is not an easy one, and a complete answer has to take into account many factors: structures of the post-communist consciousness, the general philosophical situation of modernity and

postmodernity, and, by no means least of all, specific features of the philosophical discourse of the Silver Age. I shall indicate a few basic reasons which all add up to the general conclusion: the thought of the Silver Age in its totality, as a special type of philosophising, was too intimately connected with its epoque. Hence in a different epoque it turned out to be outdated and only a few, disjointed elements could survive as alive and topical.

The culture of the Silver Age is a peculiar phenomenon. The unprecedented intensity of its short life, its bright foresights and courageous breakthroughs in literature and the arts, its strivings to a far-reaching synthesis, combining the most diverse and conflicting elements... -- all these features express the same thing, the impact of its unique time, the time preceding the catastrophe of Imperial Russia. Philosophers of culture classify this epoque as belonging to the Alexandrian type, that is, the type created by another pre-catastrophe epoque; and, indeed, the philosophy of the Silver Age is easily seen to demonstrate an unmistakably Alexandrian typology. Its most general feature is syncretism, which can be seen everywhere: in the prevailing ideas, methodological principles, spectrum of influential teachings and doctrines, and in the very type of the discourse. In a recent study ¹ I try specially to display the syncretism of Russian sophiology which is probably the most characteristic product of the Silver Age thought. And it is not only in sophiology but in Russian religious philosophy as a whole that we find a syncretic type of the discourse in which philosophy and theology merged with the result that discourse did not follow either philosophical or theological methodological rules. It became standard to mix Western metaphysical postulates together with Orthodox mystical intuitions, Church dogmas and folklore, syllogistical proof and narrative talk... Limitations imposed by genres were obeyed as little as those proper to method. It has often been noticed that the philosophy of the Silver Age stands unusually high with respect to its literary qualities. The great majority of its authors was endowed with genuine literary and stylistic talent, and "The Pillar and Foundation of the Truth", "On the Feast of Gods" or "The Meaning of Life", not to mention the writings by Rosanov or Vyacheslav Ivanov, are not just philosophical, but brilliant literary works. But this brilliance had unavoidably a reverse side. In texts in which the constitution of a philosophical object could pass freely into preaching or confessional, essayistic and lyrical discourse, this constitution had small chances to be rigorous and complete. – As a consequence, the elaborations of Russian religious philosophy, often brilliant and rich in ideas, were at the same time quite poor in indisputable achievements, in precisely formulated and firmly established results². The syncretism was accompanied by an overheated atmosphere of intellectual frenzy, by the bent to constructions based on arbitrary hypotheses and shaky logic, and all these features taken together produced a typological affinity to the gnostic discourse, the most striking specimen of Alexandrian syncretism. With such a typology, thinking in the Silver Age failed to reflect on its own foundations, that is, its "archeology": gnostic discourse is known to adopt eagerly the eschatological perspective and neglect the archeological one. It failed to produce any conception of its historico-philosophical situation and status and did not achieve the self-

¹ Wanderings of Russian Sophiology. *Novaya Rossiya* 1997, '11. (In Russian. Included also in my book: *O Starom i Novom*. Sankt-Petersburg 2000).

² Cf.: "To put the matter bluntly, they {Russian philosophers} may seem to make assertions about what is the case without giving any convincing reasons for believing that reality is what they claim it to be". F.C.Copleston, S.J. *Philosophy in Russia. From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev*. University of Notre Dame, 1986, p.354.

determination with respect to principal philosophical traditions and types. As a result, it did not bring itself out of its particular conditions into the global context of the philosophical thought *per se*, thus remaining in this context a kind of vague and diffuse, unidentified philosophical object (UPO).

All the properties mentioned conspired to bring it about that the philosophy of the Silver Age, notwithstanding its richness and creative potential, turned out to be a "dated" phenomenon, one bounded by its specific time frame. Taken as a whole, in its philosophical significance it failed to transcend the borders of its "Alexandrian" epoche. In particular, it failed to become a solid basis for the next stage of Russian thought, which had to develop in the midst of the post-Alexandrian decline. But at the same time, it remains and will remain, like its great prototype, an inexhaustible source of intriguing ideas, enchanting stories and personalities to feed the imagination -- and PhD studies -- in times to come.

Quite similar criticisms of Russian religious philosophy have repeatedly been voiced in the last years. In fact, as early as 1992 all the main points of the above critique were already stated in a paper I presented to the Conference "The Renewal of Russian Spiritual Life" in Hanover, USA. Though unpublished the talk was nevertheless quoted. Discussing it, the Editor of the volume "Russian Thought after Communism" remarks that "Khoruzhii's pessimistic assessment ... is not universally shared" ³. As a matter of fact, today most points of view disagree with mine in an opposite way, being not just more pessimistic, but nihilistic. The disagreement comes, however, not over the assessment of the situation; today it is rooted in evident facts and can indeed be said "universally shared". The divergence concerns the next and more important step: what conclusions shall we draw from our critique? which prospects for philosophy in Russia shall we see in the situation described? In most discussions -- for instance, by Evgeny Barabanov or Boris Groys, both well-known in the West -- conclusions are definitely and wholly negative. The path of Russian religious philosophy is represented as a dead end and any possibilities for continuation are made to depend on union with some school or other of contemporary Western thought -- in particular, both authors mentioned are especially in favour of the psychoanalysis. Quite irrespective of this particular sympathy, I find this logic superficial and deeply unphilosophical. To be sure, there is nothing wrong in taking part in this or that current trend; but recommendations of such kind have nothing to do with our problem concerning structures and paradigms of the philosophical process. The destiny of a spiritual phenomenon -- or rather any phenomenon -- cannot be properly understood without turning to its essence and entelechy or, in a different vocabulary, its constitution. It was noted above that Russian religious philosophy itself has so far not executed this turn. This means that it remains to be its task without the fulfillment of which the question about its prospects cannot be answered. And it has to be seen that this fulfillment coincides with the universal paradigm expressing the nature and destination of mind, *nous*: the (re)turn to its own source, *retour `a soi, epistrophe*'. Remembering that Russian Christian philosophy in its active life could not identify fully its own sources, one could well expect that it was then rather distant of them and that hence, in its return to them, it should undergo profound changes. With the regard to the present passive period, as that of a certain non- or semi-being, the

³ Russian Thought after Communism. The recovery of a Philosophical Heritage. Ed. by J.P.Scanlan, M.E.Sharpe: Armonk, NY, 1994, p.9.

return can be considered as a renewing transformation, *die Wandlung*, going through death, in accordance with the classical Goethean motto: *Stirb und werde!*

This way of the return can already now be characterised quite concretely. The discussion of the true sources, and hence the true context, of Russian religious thought has already been initiated and the return to them stated to be a matter of the inner necessity for this thought; as we know, this was the program of Neopatristic synthesis by Father George Florovsky. Florovsky identified the sources as lying in the work of the Eastern Church fathers and developed the idea of the return to these sources in the sphere of theology. Taking the same line, in my recent texts I complement and clarify the concept of the source and analyse the idea of the return in its philosophical implications. These implications turn out to be variegated and deep-reaching. I shall briefly describe three main topics belonging to this vast field.

First of all, there appears now a new situation and new perspective in the historico-philosophical problem. Complementing Florovsky, modern Orthodox theology has firmly established that Eastern Christian thought is quintessentially *the synthesis of the patristic and ascetic discourse* or the experiential thought linked permanently to the practice of the communion with God, in the refined, profoundly elaborated form given to this practice by the Orthodox ascetic tradition, hesychasm. This synthesis is a special type and school of thought, viz., *Eastern Christian discourse*, which has its basis in the work of St Maximus the Confessor in the 7th century and which has had, since then, a rich and complicated history. Hence the initial task is to understand the type and structure of this discourse. The structure turns out to be dichotomic, since there are two different paradigms which are both of basic importance for Orthodox thinking. The first one, the paradigm of *deification* (theosis), is represented mostly in the ascetic tradition, in hesychasm; it is the leading principle and type of thought concentrating in and around itself the main specific elements of Orthodox spirituality. The second one, the paradigm of *sacralisation*, was to a large extent inherited from the Roman religion and was traditionally predominant in the Orthodox attitudes to the state and worldly authority (the Emperor cult) as well as in the liturgical sphere (the sacral symbolism). The dyad "Deification -- Sacralisation" is akin to the well-known opposition "Historic consciousness -- Cosmic consciousness" and the entire history of Eastern Christian discourse can be viewed as the evolution of the changing relationship between the competing paradigms. The leading paradigm, formed on the basis of ascetic practice, is responsible for the principal distinction of the discourse, its direct reference to spiritual experience. Later on, as a result of the theological reflection on this experience, another principal distinction emerged: according to the Church dogma introduced in the 14th century, the God -- man connection, which is to be achieved through deification, is the union of the Divine and human energies. Thanks to this dogma, energy becomes the central and dominant category of the discourse so that the latter can be characterised as the *discourse of energy*. The main distinctions, in their turn, imply many others, for instance, in epistemology, in the treatment of basic philosophical categories and so on.

The concept of Eastern Christian discourse is the key to all the historico-philosophical issues. Taking this discourse into account, problems relating to the genesis and character of Russian philosophy appear in a new light. All the former discussion of these problems developed in the horizon of binary oppositions: Russia versus the West, the authentic Russian (*samobytnoye*) versus the borrowed, and so on. But now analysis should incorporate a new structural level. Eastern Christian discourse comes forth as the third level mediating the relation "Russia versus the West" and for

this reason both the situation and our analysis of it go beyond the plane of binary oppositions. What matters here is not just the appearance of another structural level; still more important is the fact that the relationship between Eastern and Western Christian discourse can never be represented as a binary opposition. This relationship is based on shared scriptural and patristic origins and is structured into a large variety of concrete subject fields, in any of which it represents not a mere opposition but a profound and substantial dialogue, even if the tone of this dialogue sounds fairly confrontational at times.

This ancient and endless dialogue alone provides the only proper context or world – *die Welt* of phenomenology – for the correct constitution of the phenomenon of Russian philosophy. Involving an intricate analysis of evolving relationships between the three structural levels, it is a complex constitution only the main lines of which can be alluded to here. Of course, the Russian consciousness adopted from Eastern Christian discourse both its basic paradigms, but the principal one, the theosis paradigm, has been translated to Russia only in an incomplete and reduced form. The contents related to this paradigm consisted chiefly in hesychast practice and its theological correlate, the Byzantine (palamitic) theology of energies. The latter, with all its rich intellectual software, remained practically unknown in Russia, and as a consequence the leading line of the Orthodox mentality was restricted to the sphere of monastic and folk spirituality, influencing Russian culture only in various indirect ways. Whence it followed, in turn, that Russian thought had no other source for the language of culture and theoretical thinking than the Western intellectual tradition. The sacralisation paradigm was closer to this tradition and its language, as Western philosophical discourse was based predominantly on essentialist categories, while the sacralisation paradigm expressed itself in a mixed essentialist-energetic type of the discourse, originating in neoplatonism. – Taken together, these factors constitute a basic feature of Russian philosophy: it emerged as a synthesis of Eastern Christian discourse and the Western conceptual framework, and this synthesis incorporated from Eastern Christian discourse only those contents which are related to the sacralisation paradigm with its neoplatonist ontology. In typical works of the Religious-philosophical renaissance, that is, in sophiology and the metaphysics of Total-Unity, this feature shows up very clearly. However, the absence of the principal paradigm of Eastern Christian discourse limits severely possibilities of this line of development. A new beginning is necessary, and it can only be found in the (re)turn to the experiential sources of the discourse where the proper philosophical language corresponding to the discourse of energy should be discovered. Thus the return to the sources, passing through death -- *Stirb und werde!* -- comes to be filled with a new and concrete meaning.

The next consideration arises as we note that the powerful presence of the ascetic component in the structure of Eastern Christian discourse implies the basic role of experience, the experiential nature of the corresponding philosophy. It is equally important that experience in the hesychast ascesis is carefully structured and reflectively examined according to a certain well-developed method. This mystico-ascetic experience is organised as an assenting process, in which the ascetic mind actualises a certain intention characterised by the concept of deification. These features of the discourse produce a far-reaching similarity to the structures of intentionality in phenomenology, although this similarity between the phenomenological intentionality and the structures of the ascetic mind is complemented with profound differences

which arise out of the specific nature of mystical experience⁴. Thus it becomes crucial to display and study the phenomenological aspects of Eastern Christian discourse. It is a philosophical theme which opens up new avenues of dialogue between Eastern and Western thought. A preliminary analysis of this theme I have tried to present in my recent book "The Phenomenology of the Ascesis".

Finally, an entire web of new problems comes forth when we look more closely at the concept of energy, central to the mystical and ascetic experience of Eastern Christianity. It turns out that this concept is distinct from the usual aristotelian notion, the only one known to philosophy so far. The main distinctive trait of this non-aristotelian energy is, loosely speaking, its much greater freedom and autonomy with respect to essence and entelechy. Thanks to this trait, it can describe more open or even virtual reality. The energetic orientation and the distinctive original concept of energy create promising prospects for the Eastern Christian discourse in the modern intellectual situation. Energetic or energy-based thinking is the theme of our time arising independently in all the principal sectors of contemporary knowledge. In physics, it is brought forth by synergetics and quantum relativistic theory; in psychology by the energetic nature of such basic notions as desire, drive, will, as well as by the ever-growing interest to spiritual practices and holistic techniques; and in philosophy, among other factors, it is paramount in the late Heidegger whose work in its entirety can be best characterised as a *sui generis* meditation on energy. Eastern Christian discourse can make a substantial contribution to this theme, as already demonstrated by the situation in theology. The Orthodox (palamitic) teaching on divine energies which was semi-forgotten for a long time, has been rediscovered in recent decades and actively studied in the Orthodox theology. At first the only response to this work in Western Christianity was hostile criticism on the part of a few Catholic theologians. However, over the last years the situation has changed drastically. The subject is now regarded as one of profound interest for the Christian dogmatic doctrine as a whole; and in the growing number of its studies, protestant theology is actively joining the Orthodox and Catholic work⁵. The Orthodox teaching on energy became a kind of *topos*, the meeting point for the creative development of all the confessional branches of the Christian thought.

Here another and wider aspect of the subject comes to light. The dialogical encounter in the investigation of principal theological-philosophical problems means a kind of *reunification* of European Mind; and reunification was traditionally propounded by western-oriented authors, including the most recent ones, like above-mentioned Barabanov and Groys. Henceforth, however, the reunification is seen in light of a very different model. What the Westernizers suggest has always *corresponded* to a passive acceptance of or absorption by Western discourse, an

⁴ The presence of the intentionality structures in religious experience and, first of all, in the prayer practice, was noticed repeatedly by contemporary authors – cf., e.g., B.Casper. *Das Ereignis des Betens. Grundlinien einer Hermeneutik des religiösen Geschehens*. Verlag Karl Alber. Freiburg-München, 1998. However, no systematic analysis is available which would display differences as well as similarities in structures of consciousness or the dependence of these structures of stages and kinds of prayer.

⁵ Here are only the most substantial monographic studies by non-Orthodox scholars in the last few years: T.Mannermaa. *Der in Glauben gegenwärtige Christus. Rechtfertigung und Vergottung. Zum oekumenischen Dialog*. Hannover, 1989. Luther und Theosis. Hrsg. v.J. Heubach. Erlangen, 1990. C.Künkel. *Totus Christus. Die Theologie Georges V. Florovskz.* Göttingen, 1991. J.Lison. *L'Esprit repandu. La pneumatologie de Gr'egoire Palamas*. Paris, 1994. R.Flogaus. *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther*. Berlin, 1997.

approach that can be called the *Anschluß* model. Leaving aside all the substance matters, one cannot help noticing that this model has some undesirable social psychological overtones. Like any *Anschluß* prospect, it provokes a defensive reaction and feeds the besieged fortress mentality – dangerous phenomena which are already all too evident in Russia. The dialogue I have described corresponds to a completely different model in which the European Mind reintegrates Eastern Christian discourse as a long lost but essential part of its own history and its integrality. This model implements the dialogical paradigm and the principle of responsibility for the Other, i.e. the basic principle of Levinas' ethics, the last word of European ethical thought.

In sum, we can see real possibilities for the renewing transformation of Russian religious philosophy. The anticipation of profound changes involved in this transformation comes true as well. Should these possibilities be realised, the very nature of this philosophy will change. I do not mean its "Russianness": this ethnic characterisation, alien to philosophy as such, should not be attached even to its present form, for which reason I deliberately started with the Scheler-type formula "Christian philosophy in Russia". The real change should come about in its religious aspect. As soon as religious philosophy acquires its own rigorous method based on organized and controlled experience or as soon as it takes an active part in the many-sided, interdisciplinary *dialogue on energy*, the very notion of religious philosophy becomes transformed and acquires new meanings. It no longer corresponds anymore to its old image as a kind of arbitrary and diffuse genre, existing at the margins or even outside of authentic philosophical discourse. Instead it comes to occupy a new place certainly within this discourse, as thinking starting from an extended anthropological and ontological perspective and appealing to its own experience and method to achieve a genuinely philosophical conception of this perspective.

However, my description of possibilities is in no way an optimistic forecast of the "radiant future" of yet another Russian utopia. For these possibilities to be realised, special and difficult conditions are needed, which cannot be met by means of rational programming. They depend on us, but they also include something which is not within our will and power. Orthodoxy uses the word *synergy* for them, while in the Greek and Western discourse the likely corresponding term is *kairos*. Forecasting these conditions is of no avail. One can only strive for their presence: *parousia*.