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PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GATE AS A GATE TO METAPSYCHOLOGY

At first, let us make clear the tasks of this text, as they are on several plans. Our initial aim consisted in the analysis of Repentance, the phenomenon inherent, first of all, in the judaeochristian tradition, but having also many analogues in other religious worlds. This concrete aim required to fix up a definite experiential field and base of empirical material and we have chosen the Eastern Christian mystico-ascetic school, the hesychasm, as such a field (planning to draw other traditions as well for the interpretation of our conclusions). Remarkably, this concretisation of the empirical field pushed us to put more general questions. Repentance in hesychasm (and not in hesychasm alone) is not an isolated event, it is incorporated into an integral whole, the process of *Spiritual Practice*, as one of its stages, or steps: namely, the initial, opening stage, on account of which it has been long given the name of *Spiritual Gate*. Hence it can be properly conceived only in the context of this process and this demands, in its turn, some general conception of the latter.

Thus a new problem comes out: we should present a certain conception of the hesychast practice; and this problem entails another, still more general one, the problem of the meaning and constitution of spiritual practice as such. Clearly, this problem takes us rather far away from the initial concrete theme, but there is no accepted definition of spiritual practice as an anthropological and religious phenomenon, which we could refer to. As we shall see, the problem of the definition of spiritual practice leads to a certain meta-psychological model describing the topography of the whole set of anthropological strategies, practices of and processes in the consciousness, which touch upon the "Anthropological Border". Here the spiritual practice appears, to a certain extent, as the opposite of and alternative to processes which are identified in psychoanalysis as manifestations of the Unconscious (neuroses, complexes, psychoses, etc.): these "figures of the Unconscious" and dynamical structures generated in spiritual practices will occupy the opposing areas in the topography of the border.

I. Topography of the Anthropological Border

"Man's being cannot be conceived apart from madness", -- states Jacques Lacan. "Man's being cannot be conceived apart from *theosis*", -- states the Orthodoxy. How are the two statements related? At first sight, they look diametrically opposite, but philosophically they are of the same nature. They both refer for grasping man's being to some phenomena lying out of the horizon, beyond the boundary of normal, habitual human experience and existence and represent limiting, border phenomena for this horizon. As we shall say, they refer to the *Anthropological Border*: the border of the very kind and mode of man's being and area of such phenomena, in which the fundamental predicates of this mode of being start changing (although the Border in the two areas in question is not of the same character: only in the case of theosis it is ontological in the exact sense). A philosopher may notice also that both statements

follow the traditional method of defining by means of distinguishing: to define a thing or phenomenon amounts to pointing out its borders or, equivalently, its Other, i.e. things and phenomena from which it differs. In physics, for instance, the area of usual, macroscopic phenomena could only be identified as *classical* physics, when its border has been perceived due to the discovery of the area of *quantum* phenomena.

Referring to the Anthropological Border, the two positions see it completely differently, however. Except the border nature, can *theosis* and madness have anything in common? We have here two alternative views of the Border and it is important that both of them are in no way based on unproven postulates. Lacan's thesis is ascertained by all the practice of psychoanalysis and similarly the Orthodox thesis is supported by all the system of the hesychast spiritual practice. Having firm experiential grounds, none of the two theses can be rejected, thus drawing us to the conclusion that the border itself is not elemental and uncompounded. There are two (at least) different paradigms for the Border strategies and processes. Thus there should be a certain topography of the Border, embracing both the Border-as-Madness (perceived in the psychoanalytic experience) and the Border-as-Theosis (perceived in the experience of the spiritual practice).

Now, let us proceed to the constitution of spiritual practice. In our approach (Horujy 1999)^{i ii}, spiritual practice is conceived as a methodical psycho-intellectual or more frequently holistic (i.e. involving somatic dimensions as well) process of the successive, structured into stages advancement or ascent to a certain preassigned "higher spiritual state", or "telos" of this practice, the state in question belonging to the Anthropological Border (as exemplified by the state of theosis in hesychasm). Such a definition fits the experiential base satisfactorily, but in some important aspects it is too empirical. In order to grasp the essence of spiritual practice as a Border strategy, one has to put the question about its own borders: why and how does it arise? What for, by virtue of which properties its outworldly telos is accepted as the supreme goal, the object of all man's strivings?"

For the sake of generality, we try to avoid relying on particularities of the hesychast tradition, but still we shall usually have in mind the hesychast type of the practice, which takes theosis as its telos. This type displays most clearly ontological contents of spiritual practice: the Orthodoxy treats theosis as an actual ontological transformation, an event, in which the nature of man is transformed and which consists in the perfect union of all human energies with the Divine energy, or grace; and it is the latter that is the driving force of the transformation.¹ Such a practice should deal with the fundamental predicates of man's mode of being and must be rooted in the most basic, primary factors of human existence. Tracing the motivations of spiritual practice down to their deepest sources, we find the latter in man's mortality, in basic elements of man's relation to death. But the crucial role of this relation usually remains hidden.

¹ It is important that this ontological nature of the practice which gives to it the exceptional status among all anthropological strategies, was understood and stated explicitly within the practice itself. Already in the ancient period (4-6 cc.), "monastic literature differentiates between <human being> and <monk>... Monks categorize themselves as <humans becoming angels> or <divine beings> or any number of similar descriptions. The experience themselves outside the primary category <human>. (R.Valantasis. *Daemons and the Perfecting of the Monk's Body.: Monastic Anthropology, Daemonology and Asceticism // Semeia 1992, v.58, p.49*).

The core of all the vast and diverse economy of man's relation to death is the elemental and deep-lying negative reaction of the human consciousness and organism, of the whole human being, to its impending annihilation. It is a primordial, organic and involuntary impulse of repulsion and denial (or, more precisely, inacceptance) of death as one's own absolute non-being, total and final annihilation of the subject world; and we shall call it the "Primal impulse of the denial of death".² *Ex definitiione*, what this Primal impulse strives after is the deliverance from the described prospects, i.e. "overcoming of death". (Manifestations of the Primal impulse take lots of forms including perverted ones, which look like striving for death, but one can always identify such forms, including those related to the so called "death instincts", as inversions of an original repulsion.) But this object of the Primal impulse cannot be constituted as a well-defined phenomenon of consciousness, since it can in no way be present within the horizon of lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*): already "my" death, not to mention the overcoming of it, cannot be present in this horizon. Moreover, the consciousness in its usual routine activities is not inclined to make the primal impulse more explicit and bring to light its object and its sources; it has been repeatedly demonstrated (the analytic of "*Sein und Zeit*" is the best example) that the consciousness dominated by stereotypes of everyday routine life tries to evade the experience of death, to repress it or reduce it to marginality. As a result, in usual regimes of human existence the primal impulse of the denial of death remains very vague, and its object, the overcoming of death, still more so.

Nevertheless one can see clearly that the constitution of the Primal impulse and the character of the processes in which it actualises itself show common features with drives (*Triebe*), as they are described by Freud and Lacan. According to their theories, the object of desire or drive turns out to be inaccessible (except for the category of empirical objects, which are accessible, easily changeable and replaceable). This cardinal inaccessibility is a direct consequence of the genesis of the drives which are rooted in the Unconscious. In its turn, it is one of principal preconditions of the generation of a large repertoire of specific structures of the consciousness and behavior (neuroses, complexes, etc.) which are identified and studied by psychoanalysis as a science and which psychoanalysis as a therapy tries to monitor and deconstruct. Now, the constitution of the primal impulse also shows the inaccessibility of the object. Clearly, human existence as it is does not lead to any actual and factual, ascertainable and non-illusory "overcoming of death", so that the destiny of the Primal impulse turns out to be similar to that of drives: like them, it realizes itself in processes representing cyclic repetition of certain dynamic stereotypes or patterns (repetition being one of the "four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis", according to Lacan). But now the psychoanalytic paradigm (represented symbolically by Lacan as a cyclic motion around the voidness of an absent object) does not exhaust the phenomena and processes initiated by the Primal impulse.

The repeating non-achievement of the fulfillment or "satisfaction" of the Primal impulse produces not only those effects (chiefly of the frustration type) which psychoanalysis associates with drives. It is fully evident and amply demonstrated by philosophy, psychology and arts that the experience of death is the only kind of experience which is unavoidable for each and other and is at the same time

² The concept of the "Primal impulse of the denial of death" is introduced and analysed in our forthcoming book "The Discourse of Synergy".

ontologically pregnant, confronting one with man's being as a whole. As stressed especially in the existential analytic, the phenomenon and experience of death take the unique place in man's situation; they are related directly to the ontological status of man, since they provide the principal manifestation of the fundamental predicate of finiteness which determines the ontological horizon of man's being, "being-there" (*Dasein*). The consciousness – its higher activities, those of mind -- notices this unique role and, as a consequence, besides the tendencies to the repression of the experience of death, opposite tendencies are being formed too, prompting the comprehension of this experience. However these tendencies may and do develop in two different ways.

In one of these ways, the consciousness puts in the centre of its comprehending work the mortality itself, unavoidable death as the limiting phenomenon of human existence which has and provides meaning(s). One sets the task to grasp the human existence in the light of this phenomenon: task of getting to the meaning of life through the meaning of death. This is an ancient way originating in archaic cults and going from the orphism to Platon and platonism and then to later philosophy right up to Heidegger. Its motto is the famous maxim in "Phaedon": "To be engaged in philosophy means doing exercises in dying" (Phed 67 e). Thus man's attitude to death becomes here the object of special "exercises", which turn out to coincide with philosophizing. Following P. Hadot, we can say that the consciousness adopts here the strategy or paradigm of "spiritual exercises", aimed at "The contemplation of time and being in their wholeness ... elevation of thinking to the level of the universal" (Hadot 1981)ⁱⁱⁱ. – But what is the destiny of the Primal impulse in this paradigm? It is easy to see that "spiritual exercises" imply its taming or deconstructing: by means of the "elevation of thinking" "I should curb my initial organic inacceptance of death and transform it into a "philosophical acceptance".³ Clearly, what we witness here is a kind of sophism, an attempt to stifle and change to the opposite an organic and authentic impulse of human nature. No surprise, hence, that despite all the support of philosophy the paradigm of spiritual exercises could never develop into a full-fledged anthropological strategy.

In the other way, on the contrary, the consciousness puts in the centre and starts to look for the meaning not of death but of the denial of death. Now a different logical scheme is put forward which perhaps interprets man's situation more profoundly. Death as such is just something natural and self-evident: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt*, this is all too comprehensible! -- but what rouses an acute puzzle is this denial of death having its seat deeply and ineradicably in me. The philosophizing paradigm of spiritual exercises treats it slightly, here the inacceptance of death is itself subjected to inacceptance: it is claimed to belong to the sphere of the unreasonable, "wild" in man, and man ought to reject or repress it. But when it comes to the test, this philosophical verdict turns out to be too hasty, it overlooks an alternative. If the consciousness decides to take seriously its own inacceptance of death, the relevant conceptual structure becomes not dual (Man and his Death), but triple: Man – his (unavoidable) Death -- his (ineradicable) Denial of death. The knot of the problem of

³ Here the antique and especially late-antique typology of the paradigm of spiritual exercises is strikingly seen. The ideal of man's attitude to death is conceived here according to the stoical dialectics of domination vs. slavery and barbarism vs. education: the "elevation of thinking" is available to everybody including even a slave; and a slave (a mortal) who elevates his thinking achieves the equality with and even the superiority over his master (death). But this dialectics was unable to stop the downfall of slavery and in the same way the paradigm of spiritual exercises as a model of man's attitude to death never became too popular.

death (or mortality) is shifted: the consciousness now tends to see it less in death as such than in its own denial of death. It starts with the awareness of the conflicting and frustrating situation, in which the immanent presence of the ineradicable Primal impulse is combined with the permanent non-satisfaction of this impulse, non-achievement of its aim and object. This situation makes it to put the primal impulse into focus and question its status. If the Primal impulse never gets fulfilled, what for and where from is it in me? Is it true that it is rooted only in the unreasonable, in the “wild part of a human being” (Platon)? and eventually it is nothing but an eternal vain craving doomed in advance, my failure inherent in my nature itself? Can it get fulfilled even if only theoretically, “in principle”? -- All these questions mean that the consciousness realises an intentional relation to the Primal impulse, turning the latter into an intentional object. Evidently, it is a specific object given only incompletely, as noted above, and this intentional relation cannot produce a full-fledged intentional act in the Husserlian sense. But in no way it is fruitless.

First of all, putting the Primal impulse into its focus, the consciousness can advance (though not to the very end) in the constitution of its object and aim. It becomes clear that the fulfillment of the primal impulse cannot be identified with simple removal or absence of death, i.e. the indefinite prolongation of biological existence dragging on indefinitely in the same forms. What can be said to be necessarily included into the sought for, demanded by the Primal impulse is not so much the *absence* of death as the *change of the nature* of death, the overcoming of the end-as-annihilation of human personality. Such a change can be described generally as an end-as-transformation. Certainly, one cannot fully make explicit the contents of such a transformation, already for the reason that this task involves the solution of cardinal problems of formulating a definition of self-identity of personality and criteria of the preservation of self-identity: which problems are still extremely vague for both philosophy and psychology. However, the kind of the transformation is evident: the “change of the nature of death” is nothing but a change of the fundamental predicates of the horizon of man’s being, a genuine *ontological* transformation. Hence a further conclusion follows with necessity: the actual fulfillment of the Primal impulse is achievable only if this impulse is not subjected to these predicates, i.e. if it is not just spontaneous and independent of my will and reason, but actually originates “out there” and “beyond there”, has its source outside the world of lived experiences and horizon of being-there. In other words, it is the impulse of the “*Source-Beyond-there*”, of a “different nature”, and if it is really so, then following such an impulse a priori is capable to bring about the actual change of my nature, “change of the nature of death”.

Thus an important new concept comes out and we should describe it as clearly as possible. One cannot say that we come to perceiving the Source-Beyond-there in an intentional act or deduce the Source-Beyond-there by means of logical conclusions. *Per definitionem*, what is beyond the horizon of the consciousness and lived experiences cannot be either perceived or deduced. By means of my intentional relation to the primal impulse I in no way perceive the Source-Beyond-there itself, but only ascertain the following statements related to it: a) I cannot identify and localise the source of my Primal impulse anywhere within the horizon of my consciousness and, in this sense, it is a “source in the without”, or “source-beyond-there”; b) the fulfillment of the primal impulse is possible only in the case when its source is *ontologically* beyond-there: in order to “change the nature of death” it is necessary to “change the nature of life” or, more exactly, to achieve an ontological transformation, and to this

end an ontologically different acting factor or “energy” is needed, i.e. energy belonging to a source which is ontologically beyond-there; c) I cannot either perceive or prove that the source of the Primal impulse is, indeed, ontologically beyond-there, but I also cannot either perceive or prove the opposite.

In order to see what conclusions draws my consciousness from these data, one more result of the intentional relation to the Primal impulse should be noted. It is easy to see the crucial role of the consciousness in the fulfillment of the Primal impulse, irrespective of the exact nature of its source. The Primal impulse is acting in my consciousness, hence its fulfillment can be implemented only via the consciousness. *The consciousness is the only immediate agent of the Primal impulse.* Since the fulfillment of the Primal impulse is an ontological transformation, the consciousness should become the agent of this ontological transformation, i.e. global transformation of man’s being-there. Following and obeying the Primal impulse, the consciousness should get transformed itself and, in addition, it should work out and carry out the strategy of this global transformation, which is, obviously, also a global, all-embracing activity. In other words, *the fulfillment of the Primal impulse is thinkable only if the consciousness is entirely directed to following the Primal impulse and wholly concentrated on its fulfillment.*

It is clear now that in the usual mode of existence, without adopting this special strategy, the fulfillment of the Primal impulse is certainly impossible, but in the case of its adoption this impossibility cannot be established. The attitude of the consciousness with respect to the source of the Primal impulse is clear too. Should the consciousness accept this source as one which is ontologically “beyond-there”? -- In any case, the complete concentration of the consciousness on the fulfillment of the Primal impulse is the precondition of this fulfillment. That the source of the Primal impulse should be ontologically “beyond-there”, is the other precondition. Whence it follows that concentrating on the fulfillment of the Primal impulse has any sense for the consciousness only if the consciousness considers this last precondition as satisfied. Summing up, the fulfillment of the Primal impulse demands that my consciousness should concentrate entirely on this fulfillment and, in addition, the consciousness in all its strategy should treat the source of the primal impulse as the Source-(ontologically)-Beyond-there. Obviously, it is the situation of the choice, or bifurcation for the consciousness, since a priori this nature of the source can in no way be verified. (But it does not mean that there can be no verification a posteriori.)

Another significant conclusion provided by the intentional relation to the Primal impulse refers to the structure of the consciousness. The impulse aiming at the ontological transformation should identify and discern fundamental predicates of man’s being-there, which means that it should act, in the first place, on higher activities of the consciousness, on man’s mind. In this case it should be articulated and audible to the mind, i.e. intelligible, which properties of the Primal impulse make it possible to characterize it as a *call* or *appeal* of the Source-Beyond-there. This dialogical terminology proves to be most adequate to the processes we discuss.

Thus the Primal impulse of the denial of death should be a call of the Source-beyond-there. This is its necessary property, but it does not yet secure the fulfillment of the Primal impulse. Any advancement to the fulfillment can take place only if the call is apprehended -- and evoked an agreeing response -- and what the call appeals to started to get done. But this call appeals to something utterly unique, the ontological

transformation. If the consciousness has apprehended and accepted the call as originating from the Source-Beyond-there, then such an appeal is not a priori absurd and impossible anymore, but even in this case following the call is an absolutely special and unique task. First of all, this following should be global, all-embracing: being perceived, in the first place, by man's mind, the call appeals, however, to man as a whole, in its entirety. Hence following the call concerns the whole human being. This being is structured hierarchically, including many levels of composition, organisation and activity and, generally speaking, each of these levels should undergo a certain transformation of its own. As a result, the following by the call proves to be a process involving all the human person in its entirety, in other words, it is a certain all-embracing, holistic anthropological strategy. Being directed to the transformation of man's being-there, this strategy is incompatible with the usual, "natural" mode of human existence, which reproduces man's being-there and does not accept the primal impulse as the call of the Source-Beyond-there. The total following by the call is an alternative, or "counterprogram" to the natural order of existence, based on the Primal impulse of the denial of death as on a cornerstone.

Thus, putting the Primal impulse into focus of the consciousness and establishing an intentional relation to it, we do not conclude that it is rooted wholly in the "wild" and unreasonable and its fulfillment is a priori absolutely unachievable. But equally we do not conclude that this fulfillment can be achieved. The output of our quasi-intentional act is of a different kind: we discover a certain specific strategy or paradigm of human existence which is radically distinct from the "usual" (i.e. not accepting the Primal impulse as the call of the Source-Beyond-there) paradigm and the realisation of which is the advancement "in the direction of" the fulfillment of the Primal impulse. One cannot state that in this strategy the fulfillment is unachievable and one cannot state that in this strategy the fulfillment will be achieved. This means that it is an anthropological strategy with an open outcome. Let us call it the strategy or paradigm of *Spiritual Practice*.

This definition of Spiritual Practice, philosophical and deductive, displaying its ontological roots, complements the empirical definition given in (Horujy 1999) basing on the material of concrete practices, both Eastern and Western. Albeit the generating role of the Primal impulse may be deeply implicit in these practices, it is possible to make sure that both definitions describe the same type of holistic processes oriented to the Anthropological Border, embrace the same phenomenal sphere and hence define basically the same anthropological strategy. In the new approach, tracing the roots of Spiritual Practice down to man's situation in being, to his mortality, we discover the genesis of this strategy and see that the start of Spiritual Practice involves putting a clean-cut border separating from usual strategies of human existence. In our description, this initial key stage – the launching of the process, or "gate" of the Practice – has a double structure, including two phases: *to hear the call* (by establishing the intentional relation to the Primal impulse, perceive and accept it as the call of the Source-Beyond-there) – *to respond the call* (decide to turn all one's energies and activities to the following by the call). This double paradigm defines an ancient phenomenon of spiritual life known as the Conversion. It will be analysed in the next section.

Our analysis of Spiritual Practice produced a certain discourse and a set of notions which could be applied as well for describing other similar phenomena, i.e. anthropological strategies and practices involving the Anthropological Border, On this

basis, one can try to describe all the field of such strategies and practices, thus reconstructing what might be called the “energetic topography of the Border”. Such possibility already could be anticipated from the noted above conceptual parallels between the discourse of Spiritual Practice and psychoanalysis. But the main elements which these two discourses have in common come to light only now, when we have introduced the concept of the Source-Beyond-there, energies of which constitute the Primal impulse of the denial of death and act in the consciousness like a call. Let us have a closer look at the character of this action. We do not know what “consciousness” is but we know that in its activity it shows a hierarchical structure: it is organised vertically, so that “higher” and “lower” levels can be distinguished clearly. These levels as well as the consciousness as a whole must be conceived not substantially, but energetically, as certain types of activities which are distinguished from each other by the degree of articulateness, informative and communicative capacity of these activities. The highest levels are those using the language, the levels of verbal and speech activities, and they are structured as well, the highest level of them corresponding to the discursive mode of speech.

Inasmuch as the Source-Beyond-there acts like a call, appealing for the ontological transformation, for the identification and transcending of man’s being-there, this source acts in the consciousness starting from its higher levels and then using these levels to spread its action over the whole organisation of a human being. This is in complete accordance with the hesychast paradigm of the “Mind-Bishop”⁴ which transcribes the Call into detailed instructions for the holistic ascent to theosis and then passes these instructions down by the man’s hierarchical organisation. And this means that the Source-Beyond-there which constitutes Spiritual Practice can be characterised more precisely as the source acting “from above”, or the *Supra-Source-Beyond-there*.

The notion of the *Supra-Source-Beyond-there* which takes into account the vertical hierarchism of the consciousness leads naturally to conceptual generalisations. We note that by analogy with the action in the consciousness from beyond-there and *from above*, the action from beyond-there and *from below* is a priori possible, which would start in and propagate from levels of the consciousness characterised by the lowest articulateness. In other words, a priori the Source-Beyond-there could act like the source “from below”, or the *Sub-Source-Beyond-there*. And it is evident immediately that this aprioristic possibility is actually realised. That is how Lacan characterises the sphere and subject of the psychoanalytic theory: “Freud has created ... a theory, the field of which embraces a certain amount of human realities, chiefly, psychopathological ones: *subnormal* phenomena, which are of no concern for usual psychology: dreams, blunders, failures, which violate so called higher functions” (Lacan 1998)^{iv}. This is, of course, just one of usual formulations of trivial facts: that psychoanalysis deals exactly with activities which propagate from unarticulated or, which is the same, subnormal levels of the consciousness and have the source which is supposed to lie beyond the horizon of the consciousness. In our terms, this source of the subnormal activities is exactly the *Sub-Source-Beyond-there*, while in the terms of psychoanalysis it is, as we know, nothing but the Unconscious. Standard formulas

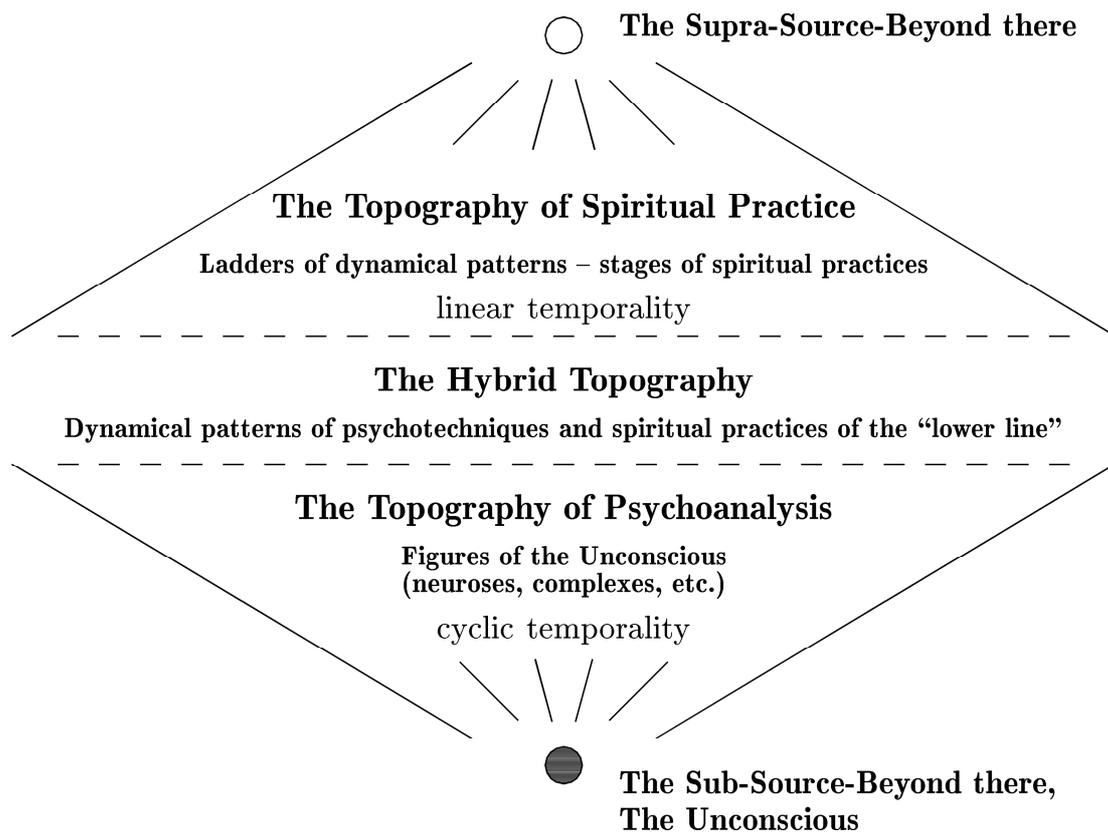
⁴ Here is a concise formulation of this paradigm: “By means of our mind acting like a supervising bishop, we prescribe laws to each ability of our soul and each member of our body ... Who will achieve this, will gain and behold in him the grace”. St. Gregory Palamas. Triads in the Defense of the Saint Hesychasts. I,2,2,.

describing the Unconscious characterise it, as a rule, exactly as a (sub-)source beyond-there with respect to the consciousness, the source of definite energies which manifest themselves in the consciousness and human practice. This is just one typical example: “Contents of the Unconscious, highly charged with energies of the drives, tend to come back to the consciousness and manifest themselves in the behavior” (Laplanche 1996)^v.

The notion of “topography” being common in psychoanalysis since Freud himself, we shall consider these manifestations (symptoms) together with the processes and dynamical patterns (neuroses, complexes, etc.) which the symptoms manifest as constituting a certain topography: the topography generated by the Unconscious as the Sub-Source-Beyond-there. Similarly, the processes and regimes of activity of the consciousness emerging as stages of spiritual practices can be considered as constituting another topography, one which is generated by the Supra-Source-Beyond-there. It is obvious that any other, third kind of the Source-Beyond-there is impossible. Thus we obtain the whole picture of the topography of processes, dynamic patterns and paradigms of the consciousness which are formed under the influence of energetic sources-beyond-there and so must be considered as limiting or border phenomena of the consciousness and human existence. It is obvious too that these results can be interpreted as the unfolding of our concept of the Anthropological Border. This unfolding turned out to correspond exactly to the dyad of theses above: Man’s being cannot be conceived apart from madness. – Man’s being cannot be conceived apart from theosis. Interpreting both “madness” and “*theosis*” in a generalised way, we relate them to the two kinds of the Source-Beyond-there and give to the dyad a new formulation: the Anthropological Border is formed by the two opposite regions or topographies, the topography of the Supra=Source-Beyond-there (including processes constituted by its influence, i.e. spiritual practices) and the topography of the Sub-Source-Beyond-there (including processes constituted by the influence of the Unconscious). More precisely, we should also single out an intermediate region, lying in-between these two topographies: the “Hybrid topography”, embracing all sorts of reductions and imitations, simulacres of spiritual practices. Typically, they are strategies and procedures which try to reproduce the ascending structure of Spiritual Practice (as defined in (Horujy 1999)), but are constituted under influences on the consciousness from below, from the Sub- and Unconscious. This type includes many modern psychotechniques, psychopractices of archaic cults, like shamanism, the “lower line” in sufism, described in (Horujy 1999), etc.

The final result can be represented as the following

CARTOGRAM OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL BORDER



Clearly, this cartogram is quite pregnant heuristically: it arouses questions, suggests new viewpoints and revealed new correspondences between the border phenomena and practices. First of all, it suggests that one should describe more carefully the relationship between the upper and lower topographies. They look symmetrical on the cartogram, but in fact corresponding types of processes are radically different, since the Anthropological Border involved in Spiritual Practice and the border separating our consciousness and behavior from the Unconscious are of different nature. With respect to my consciousness, the Supra-source-Beyond-there belongs to another ontological horizon and Spiritual practice constituted by it is the generation of dynamical structures or patterns following in the strict order and forming an uninterrupted ascent to the actual ontological transformation (any interruption may cause falling down back to the start). This ascending succession is associated with the linear and directed temporality, the “arrow of time”, and the start of this ascending dynamics needs a special starting act, the Conversion, which draws a clean-cut dividing line between Spiritual Practice, and the usual mode of human existence and demands a deliberate decision, and effort. Now, turning to processes induced from the Unconscious, we find that they share with the patterns of Spiritual Practice only the principal property of the limiting processes: they are also constituted in the paradigm of “synergy”, i.e. coordination, collaboration and coherence of two energies with the sources of different nature, namely, the energies of the Source-Beyond-there and those of some “inner” source, controlled by the consciousness. In these processes already the starting phase is diametrically opposite to what we have in Spiritual Practice: the influence of the Sub-Source is such that the “figures of the Unconscious” for the start

of their formation need not the deliberate decision focussing on the Source-Beyond-there (like in the Conversion), but, on the contrary, the maximal unawareness and hiddenness of the Source-Beyond-there for the consciousness. Cyclic and global character of these processes (in the mature stages, a neurosis, complex, etc. dominates fully the consciousness and behavior) makes it possible to interpret them, in terms of Spiritual Practice, as a certain variety of “passions”, i.e. patterns, the removing of which is the main task of the initial stages of Spiritual Practice. Hence an important conclusion follows: the two Sources-Beyond-there alternative or, what amounts to the same, the Source-Beyond-there is essentially unique: well-developed dynamics of Spiritual Practice is possible only in the absence of well-developed processes induced from the Unconscious. The synergy with the Supra-Source-Beyond-there excludes the synergy with the Sub-Source, and vice versa; *the consciousness can be actively connected only with one – or none – Source-Beyond-there*⁵. Moreover, the connection in the two cases has a directly opposite character: the active connection with the Supra-Source can be set up only by means of a special strategy, but breaks easily on its own; the active connection with the Sub-Source sets up easily on its own, but can be broken only by means of a special strategy.

To sum up, our cartogram suggests one to make a comparative study of a certain spectrum of psychological problems, resp., in the paradigm of psychoanalysis and in that of Spiritual Practice. One of topical themes for such a study is provided by intersubjective problems, starting with the comparison of the basic forms of intersubjectivity, resp., the transfer in psychoanalysis and spiritual paternity in Spiritual Practice. The key principle which should be followed, according to our approach, is tracing the constitutive role of the Source-Beyond-there in all the limiting phenomena.

As for this text, we shall consider briefly the phenomenon of the Repentance, or “Spiritual Gate”. It opens up the path of Spiritual Practice and has no parallel in the paradigm of psychoanalysis: hence its examination might give a good idea of the character of distinctions between the upper and lower topographies of the Anthropological Border.

II. Conversion – Metanoia – Repentance

By its structure, Spiritual Practice is a stepwise paradigm. Hence our interpretation of this paradigm implies, generally speaking, a certain interpretation for each of its stages taken separately. For the start, we reconstruct here such an interpretation for the initial stage.

The first problem we confront is that of the terminology. What does the way of Spiritual Practice start with? Even if we restrict ourselves to a concrete tradition, the hesychast one, the answer is not quite clear. “Spiritual gate”, repentance, conversion, the “change of mind” (conceived as the loan translation of the Greek *metanoia*) are all used in this context. They cannot be considered as synonyms: for each of them the semantic field includes some meanings and connotations not shared by the other terms. We shall try to derive benefit from this terminological vagueness: to give such an

⁵ Here we are again meeting Lacan’s thought, since this conclusion is parallel to his well-known thesis: “The true formula of atheism is not *God is dead*... the true formula of atheism is *God is unconscious*” (J. Lacan. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Penguin Books, 1987. P.59).

interpretation to each term that all the notions would be clearly distinct from each other and taken together would cover all the properties and representations associated with the initial stage of Spiritual Practice.

“Gate”, or “Spiritual Gate”, this term has only the meaning of an entering or transition act, the contents of which are in no way concretized or restricted. Hence it is the most suitable choice for the general, all-embracing term, signifying the initial stage as a whole; and many traditions use it exactly in this sense. But its semantics is far from trivial: it does not include anything pointing to some *inner* structure, but it certainly does point to a dual, double-sided relation to *outer* reality. It is assumed that passing through a gate, one gets from a place or space to another one which has different properties or a different destination. On the two sides of the gate there are different worlds or different regimes, modes of existence and therefore the passing through a gate is dual, double-sided act, joining in itself the end of the relation to one world (the act of egress) and the beginning of the relation to other world (the act of ingress). Hence the “gate” is a double-sided concept, provided with the double relation, resp., to the ante-gate and post-gate worlds, and closely connected with the notions of boundary (or border line) and transition. The last association brings forward also the aspects of event, dynamics and motion.

All the aspects we noted should be exhibited and fixed up by means of the other related terms. The double-sided nature of the Gate can be expressed easily. One readily agrees that the “Conversion” signifies mainly the relation to the ante-gate world, the necessary breaking-off and leaving. On the contrary, the “Repentance” means clearly such an attitude to oneself and to reality which corresponds to the post-gate world (e.g., by Webster’s Dictionary, repentance is the attitude of “one who ... has abandoned his former way of life and *is following a new standard*”). A person repents only so far as he has adopted views and norms of this other world, since by the views and norms of the ante-gate world the repentance is something artificial or even pathological, and yielding nothing. Thus it is reasonable to accept that the “Conversion” is the beginning of the Gate, its initial phase, focussing on the change of the relation to the ante-gate world, while the “Repentance” is the final phase, the meaning of which is the entering and integrating into the post-gate world, starting a new life according to its norms and rules. As for the “*Metanoia*”, it is adequate to conceive this term as a *sui generis* middle point, where the essential contents of the Gate are present in a well-balanced way. The event is characterised here solely as the “change”, and this change, as well as the Gate itself, is double-sided, it unites in itself the double decision and attitude of one’s mind, “turn-away-from” and “strive-to”, i.e. the initial change implied by the Conversion and the final change implied by the Repentance. As a result, all the conceptual contents of the Gate represent as an ordered triple structure: **Conversion – Metanoia – Repentance**.⁶ Let us give a brief analysis of this structure.

Conversion was always seen as an event of crucial importance in spiritual life. This is well-justified, since it is the decision concerning man’s situation in being and the start of an alternative anthropological strategy, the counterprogram to the usual mode of human existence. The essence of this new strategy is man’s self-realisation in the

⁶ Besides hesychasm, such a structure of the initial stage is seen in Sufism, where the gate is represented as “*tauba*” (translated usually as “repentance” or “compunction”), the first out of ten “stops” (*macam*) which form Sufi’s Way.

solution of the problem of death (like in the paradigm of Spiritual Exercises), however, in such a solution which is focussing not on the relation to death as such (contrary to the paradigm of Spiritual Exercises) but to the Primal impulse of the denial of death, perceived and accepted as the call of the Source-Beyond-there. This subtle logic stands out strikingly in the fact that the crucial role of the culmination event is assigned in Christianity (especially in the Eastern Orthodoxy) to the Paschal event, Christ's victory over death.

Our description of the Conversion in Section I displays the dialogical nature of the act which is again double-sided: "to perceive the call (its appeal) – to respond the call". Hence the constitution of the Conversion should be based on this dual Appeal – Response structure, both parts of which take now highly specific forms, however. In the first part, the ontological core of the act must be stressed: the call must be perceived and accepted as not originating anywhere in the horizon of man's being-there, but coming from a source which is "beyond-there" in the full-fledged ontological sense. As for the second part, the Response, it should represent some active strategy, which a priori might be conceived in different ways. The semantics of "conversion" includes meanings, in which "converse" means the same as "ob-verse" or "re-verse", i.e. the opposite to a preceding state or thing. Such meanings, preserved chiefly in natural sciences nowadays, are dominant in the antique interpretation of the Conversion. In the greek thinking, especially in the (neo)platonism, this event played a prominent role, being conveyed by the famous concept *epistrohe* and interpreted as the return of the Soul to its true Self or, equivalently, to its Beginning (*arche*) and Source, which are identified with the First Principle so that the return coincides with the ascent to the latter. Describing a closed, circular path, this paradigm of the Conversion-as-Return is closely connected with the paradigm of the cyclic motion.

This interpretation is not adequate in our context, however. The concept of the Conversion-return is deeply rooted in the greek ontology of one, unsplitting being: there is no ontological break between the Soul as it is in itself, an sich, and its *Arche*, Source-Beginning, to which it returns. In our case, however, the main characteristic of the Source-Beyond-there is exactly its ontological difference and distance. We cannot state that this source is the Source-Beginning and the response to its appeal is a "return to oneself"; as the source of the Primal impulse of the denial of death, it is not archeological, but eschatological. Hence the conversion is no more the "Conversion-Return" and has no relation to the cyclic paradigm. Instead of this, it is only the complete, intense, all-embracing turning-away from the given mode of being and to the call of an ontologically different Source. In such an act, the crucial moment is the sharp, radical character of the break with the old mode of being. Conditioned by the Christian ontology of splitted being, this moment leads to a different and more complicated structure of the event.

Comparative analysis of the neoplatonist vs. hesychast paradigm of Conversion is presented in (Khorouji 1998).^{vi} One can say that for the greek way of the return, the initial stage, or the "Gate", coincides with the Conversion-Return, the latter being a complete and self-sufficient act. But in Spiritual Practice as we define it, the Conversion is not self-sufficient, it should be immediately continued by the Repentance and only their union secures and constitutes the real start of the ontological dynamics, its gate. The reason is that here the withdrawal from and break with the old mode of being should be so sharp, radical and all-embracing that they would not be secured by the Conversion alone. Being of the ontological nature, they can only be secured with

the help of the Source-Beyond-there and therefore the crucial additional element in the structure of the Gate is the entering into active contact with this source. This exactly the function of the repentance and also the final goal of the Gate as a whole.

Thus the Repentance has to withdraw a person from all habitual, “natural” regimes of human existence, as sharply and radically as possible, and put the start of a different order of existence based on the complete following by the call. Both tasks involve highly specific attitudes and activities⁷, of which we note here only the basic features. Firstly, since the Repentance has to produce extreme, unusually sharp reactions, the principal role in it should belong to emotions and affects, volitions, moral impulses, etc. The consciousness of a repentant collects all the signs and effects of the predicates of mortality and finiteness into the ascetic notion of the “(fallen) world” or “worldly life” and tries to incite the maximal repulsion of the “world” by all ways and means. It blackens and vilifies the “world”, presents the image of worldly life as odious, debased, pernicious, in sharp self-accusations blames one’s own submissiveness to this life. A large spectrum of acute negative emotions is produced, burning pangs of grief, remorse, sorrow; a rich repertoire of special states and methods is elaborated, like the “fear of God”, “memory of death”, extreme contrition (*penthos*), “gift of tears”, etc. (see (Horujy 1998)^{vii} for the abundant empiric material). By means of all this arsenal a specific atmosphere is created, emotionally dense and intense to the extreme, irresistibly efficacious, and so the desired radical upheaval takes place, the shaking, loosening and destroying of all the old stereotypes of consciousness and behavior.

The two tasks of the Repentance are inseparable and the working on the radical upheaval is combined with and helped by perceiving the call and responding to it, in other words, entering the “post-gate world”. (In practical terms, the main sphere of the Appeal – Response economy is, of course, the prayer; and “world”, as usual in this text, is meant in the discourse of energy or “being-action”, as a “strategy” or “mode of activity”). The constitutive property of the post-gate world is the active connection with the Source-Beyond-there, man’s complete concentration and focussing on this connection and, as a result, the action of the energy of this source in man’s inner reality. And there are at least one distinctive feature by which the presence of this energy manifests itself: it induces a certain element of spontaneity, “auto-mobility” (the hesychast term) in such processes and forms of activity which usually do not show this element.⁸ It means that the strategy constituting the “post-gate world” can be described as a stepwise anthropological dynamics in which the spontaneous generation of a series of dynamical patterns or forms directed to the Anthropological Border takes place. And the task of the Gate, the first of these patterns, can be now defined as the launching of this dynamics.

As a final remark, let us note that our brief description of the Gate reveals one more aspect of Spiritual Practice, the synergetic one. Among others, the following properties of this practice were found: it is a stepwise process, the steps of which are not static structures or states, but dynamic patterns (modes, regimes); for the start of

⁷ It should be noted that the hesychast concept of the Repentance is not identical to the Western (Roman Catholic) one which is not supposed to pursue the ontological ends we describe.

⁸ Clearly, these elements of spontaneity which emerge in the prayer demand the reliable identification establishing their distinction of all “natural” phenomena. This is a problem referring to criteriology and hermeneutics of Spiritual Practice (see our book (Horujy 1998)).

the process a radical shaking and withdrawal from the usual stable regimes is needed; the dynamics of the process is spontaneous generation. All these properties are characteristic of synergetic processes, such, for example, as generation of the structures of the classical chaos. And the most drastic elements of the Practice, like the penthos or gift of tears, being the most deviating from the usual regimes, are exactly the key elements in the launching of synergetical dynamics. This new aspect of Spiritual Practice might find interesting applications. For instance, the synergetic patterns inherent in the processes constituted by the Supra-Source-Beyond-there, distinguish these processes from those related to the Unconscious. Hence, by identifying these patterns, we may obtain criteria, usable in the typology of ecstatic states and making it possible to tell authentic spiritual practices from their simulacres in the Hybrid topography.

ⁱⁱ (Horujy 1999): S.S. Horujy. Notes to an Energetic Anthropology. "Spiritual Practice" and the "Opening of the Senses": two Concepts in the Comparative Perspective // *Voprossy Filosofii* 1999, No 3 (in Russian).

ⁱⁱⁱ (Hadot 1981): P.Hadot. Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique. Paris 1981. PP.54,56.

^{iv} (Lacan 1998): J.Lacan. Seminars. Book 1.. Moscow 1998, p.161 (in Russian).

^v (Laplanche 1996): J.Laplanche, J.-B.Pontalice. The Dictionary of the Psychoanalysis. Moscow 1996, p.71 (in Russian).

^{vi} (Khorouji 1998): S.Khorouji. Synergie hesychaste et conversion philosophique. In: Annick Charles-Saget (ed.). *Retour, repentir et constitution de soi*. Paris, 1998.

^{vii} (Horujy 1998): S.Horujy. The Phenomenology of Ascesis. Moscow, 1998. (in Russian).