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**ENERGY AND PERSONALITY IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN MEYENDORFF  
AND IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY**

Contemporary man... should be more receptive to the basic positions of Byzantine thought, which may then acquire an astonishingly contemporary relevance.

*Fr. John Meyendorff*

Many ideas and positions propounded and maintained in the works of Father John Meyendorff are taken now by us as evident and well-known, as *commonplaces*. We must, however, make an effort to see them in the right way: before Meyendorff, they did not belong to commonplaces, and they have become universally recognized due to him. In cultural process the fate of commonplaces is unenviable. Although they are exploited permanently, they are never appreciated and are treated with no respect; and when one looks for something new and original, one chooses often the easy way of denying and rejecting of commonplaces (or things that seem to be only commonplaces).

Such cases can be found nowadays in Orthodox theology too, including the reception of Meyendorff's work. Most often, looking for a new vision of the theological process, one uses standard paradigms of cultural and intellectual development, in which the basic mechanism of development is identified with the generation of new phenomena and trends that are characterized as "neo-" or "post-" forms of the old trends. In this line, voices are heard today, which qualify the work of Lossky, Florovsky, Meyendorff as obsolete, and claim the necessity to overcome this stage, to go to "post-patristics" and so on. Such tendencies give rise to doubts, however: they do not take into account the specific nature of spiritual tradition, which is different from the nature of cultural or scientific traditions. Spiritual tradition is rooted in spiritual practice and long since conceived in Orthodoxy as the "Living Tradition"; and it has its own paradigms of growth and creative continuation, which are different from producing "neo-" or "post-" formations. Christian martyrs were not "post-apostles" and st. Gregory Palamas was not a "neo-Cappadocian"! Cultural and scientific paradigms describe a *discrete series* of successive modernizations or revolutions, while for spiritual tradition the aim and norm of its existence is the *continuity* of the transmission of the authentic Christian experience, which always remains the same, identical to itself as the experience of communion with Christ, although it may take various changing forms and empiric existence of the tradition may have interruptions and periods of decline. Thus Meyendorff wrote as follows: "In no way facts of our contemporary situation

mean that we need what is called usually “new theology” that breaks off with the Tradition and continuous succession”<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the custody and identical transmission of the originative generating experience of Christianity is the unchangeable main task of Orthodox consciousness and Orthodox spiritual tradition. It is in the light of this task that we should appraise the current situation of the Orthodox thought and determine its strategies. The universalized interpretation of Greek patristics presented by Florovsky (the core of which is nothing but the ancient idea of the Living Tradition) tells us that Orthodox patristics should be conceived as a phenomenon that is not restricted to the limits of a certain period, but represents a definite type of consciousness and mode of thought: namely, the consciousness that accepts the above-mentioned task and gives it the central place. Clearly, for this interpretation even *neo*-patristics is a rather questionable and not quite adequate term, while *post*-patristics is simply synonymous to post-Orthodoxy. And similarly the work of Meyendorff in its basic ideas and results, as I shall try to show, not so much belongs to some or other transitory and changing theological or philosophical trends as reveals anew some important aspects of the unchanging foundations of Orthodoxy for modern consciousness and in its language.

Here I shall discuss this work in its philosophical aspects only. For Fr. John these aspects were not the principal ones, but in this field his works have also opened new perspectives, which were then developed in contemporary philosophy. The subject matter of these works is connected, in the first place, with the study of Byzantine theology and st. Gregory Palamas’ thought. One can say without any exaggeration that Meyendorff has presented a new reception of this thought, thorough and well-founded. From the philosophical viewpoint, the essence and principal significance of this reception can be seen as follows: together with the preceding works of Fr. Basil (Krivoshein) and Vladimir Lossky, it paved the way for the renaissance and new development of what is called often *Orthodox energetism*. It is preferable to understand this popular formula not in the narrow sense of some concrete theological or philosophical teaching, but in the large sense of a certain type of mentality, which makes the cornerstone of the living experience of the connection with God and perceives reality as the arena of action of God’s grace and man’s response to the grace. It is the ancient Orthodox-ascetic way of the vision and perception of reality, but there were long historical periods when it was overshadowed and pushed aside, and did not find any explicit and articulated expression. In the middle of the last century Orthodox consciousness has successfully overcome one of such periods, long and difficult, and Fr. John Meyendorff has contributed greatly to this success.

Now, it must be said that what Meyendorff points out as the main general characteristics of Orthodox mentality and theology is usually not energetism, but *personalism* (“Christian personalism, “theological personalism” etc.). It is also conceived not as some concrete doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> John Meyendorff. Orthodox theology in modern world // Id. Orthodoxy in modern world. N.-Y., 1981. P. 167. (In Russian.)

or theory, but in the large sense of a certain general approach to problems of the conceptualization of the God – man relation and all the divine-human economy. The distinction of this approach is that the first and immediate subject of discussion in the teaching on God is Divine Hypostases, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from which one proceeds then to the consideration of Divine Essence. (One adds usually that in the Western theology, whose approach is called “essentialist” by Meyendorff, the consideration proceeds in the inverse order.) For our theme two features of this personalist perspective as it is presented by Meyendorff are particularly important.

The first feature concerns the relation of this perspective to philosophy. It is well-known that the conceptions of the hypostasis and the personality conceived as the hypostasis are absent in ancient metaphysics and are alien to its discourse: they have been created by the Cappadocian Fathers and have become the origin and foundation of a cardinaly different discourse, that of Christian dogmatic theology. Because of this, the popular thesis repeated often, among others, by Fr. Georges Florovsky: “The idea of personality was the greatest contribution of Christianity to philosophy”<sup>2</sup>, – should be made more precise. Meyendorff points out justly that the Orthodox personalism, the primacy of the idea of personality in Orthodox thought, was the factor, which made this thought not closer to, but more distant from philosophy and also, to some extent, from Western theology. Classical metaphysics, both in antiquity and modernity, was in no way metaphysics of personality. Its notions of the subject and the individual are deeply different from the Orthodox theological notion of the personality-hypostasis and all its discourse called also essentialist by Meyendorff is inadequate for rendering the personalist character of Orthodox experience.<sup>3</sup> Thus Orthodox spirituality in all its history found some philosophical expression only rarely and partially. A more systematic attempt for such expression is found in the thought of the Religious-philosophical renaissance in Russia in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.; but, in the whole, this thought still belonged to classical metaphysics and, as a result, the attempt had rather limited success (although many prominent and bright thinkers took part in it). Fr. John was reserved and a bit skeptical about this thought and in some of his texts he criticized one of its main trends, sophiology. In the light of this long negative prehistory, it is not unimportant that in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. some preconditions have arisen for positive changes in the relations of Orthodox thought to both philosophy and Western theology. In theology, Meyendorff himself noticed it when he wrote: “There is a return to an existential and experiential approach to the doctrine of God”<sup>4</sup>. As for philosophy, it has “overcome” classical metaphysics and this

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<sup>2</sup> G.V. Florovsky. *Patristic Age and eschatology: An Introduction* // Id. *Selected theological articles*. Moscow, 2000. P. 239. (In Russian.)

<sup>3</sup> The relation of the Cappadocian triadology to philosophy is typically characterized by Meyendorff as follows: “There is no claim here for philosophical consistency, although an effort is made to use current philosophical terms. The ultimate meaning of the terms, however, is clearly different from their meaning in Greek philosophy, and their inadequacy is frankly recognized. This is particularly true of hypostasis, a term crucial in Trinitarian theology, and in Christology”. (*Byzantine theology. Historical trends and doctrinal themes*. Mowbrays, 1975. P. 182.)

<sup>4</sup> John Meyendorff. *Byzantine theology. Historical trends and doctrinal themes*. Mowbrays, 1975. P. 181. Such return Meyendorff saw especially in the theology of Karl Rahner, saying that the latter “is the closest of all contemporary Western theologians to the mainstream of patristic Tradition” (John Meyendorff. *Orthodox theology in modern world* // Id. *Orthodoxy in modern world*. N.-Y., 1981. P. 178. (In Russian.)

overcoming has considerably changed its positions in the problem of personality. After the big epistemological event of the “death of the subject” European thought has entered the phase of the intense search, the main theme of which is expressed by the title of the important collection of essays published by a large group of influential Western thinkers (Derrida, Deleuze, Nancy, Marion e.a.): “*Who comes after the Subject?*” (1991). The search develops over all the vast conceptual space from the Cartesian subject of knowledge to the Christian man forming up his identity in the openness to God and communion with Him, and below we shall discuss its results and prospects.

The second feature of the personalist perspective is its closest connection with the conception of Divine energies. According to Meyendorff, it is only in the “energetism” of the Orthodox teaching on God and man that the “personalism” of this teaching is implemented concretely. The divine personal (hypostatic) being, both *ad intra*, in its Trinitarian life, and *ad extra*, in its actions in the world, is realized by means of divine energies. In their turn, these energies as they are described in Orthodox theology are closely connected with the economy of the Hypostases so that all the conception of divine energies can be formulated only in the framework of the “personalist” vision of divine reality. Thus Meyendorff writes: “Le personnalisme théologique est le trait fondamental de la tradition à laquelle se réfère Palamas: nous y trouvons la clef pour comprendre sa doctrine des énergies divines”<sup>5</sup>. Orthodox teaching, as he sees it, is characterized by the permanent intertwining of these two basic principles and approaches. The personalism of Orthodox thinking is combined everywhere with the energetism: the first principle describes the general character of things and processes, while the second one discloses, as far as it is possible, the inner life, dynamical relations and mechanisms of these things and processes.

On the theological side, such permanent intertwining of personalism and energetism has generated a big circle of problems concerning the vast and complicated theme of interrelations between the Hypostases of the Holy Trinity and divine energies. Many of these problems were not discussed in Palamas’ works; Meyendorff draws attention repeatedly to “le caractère manifestement inachevé de la pensée du docteur hésychaste” and the commentator of the Russian translation of his “Introduction” (V.M.Lurie) adds here that “the impression of the incompleteness of the teaching of st. Gregory Palamas was created mainly by the absence of clarity in the relationship of the energy of God to His Hypostases”<sup>6</sup>. But our theme prompts us to consider this intertwining from another side, philosophical. Leaving aside theological controversies, we notice first of all that from the purely philosophical viewpoint, the union of personalism and energetism is an original configuration of principles unusual for philosophical tradition. Energy and Personality are two fundamental subjects of philosophizing, which both have their long history and their discourse in European philosophy, but these histories and

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Meyendorff. Introduction à l’étude de Grégoire Palamas. Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1959. P. 292.

<sup>6</sup> V.M. Lurie. Comments // Life and works of st. Gregory Palamas. Introduction to the study. St.-Petersburg, 1997. P. 455.

discourses were almost completely separate from each other. There is one important common moment between them, but of negative character: both Energy and Personality found extremely little attention and understanding in classical European metaphysics. If we define, following Heidegger, the principal feature of this metaphysics as the “*forgetting of being*”, one can continue that the main components in this forgetting were exactly the *forgetting of energy* and the *forgetting of personality*. In both cases the forgetting took the form of the substitute. As Heidegger argued in great detail, the substitute of energy in the Western thought was the “act” (because the Greek *energeia* was translated in Latin as *actus*), and the meaning of the two terms is so radically different that the substitute caused the catastrophic loss of all the profound originality of the ancient Greek thinking. The “subject” (the Cartesian subject of knowledge with all its correlates and derivatives) can be considered as a similar substitute for personality, and one can say perhaps that *mutatis mutandis* the consequences of this substitute were also similar as they led to the loss of the profound originality of Christian vision.

Nowadays classical metaphysics has already gone, however. The “overcoming of metaphysics” is essentially completed and European philosophy proceeds in post-classical space, trying to find there its new principles and paradigms. In the époque of post-classical thinking history of energy and history of personality both enter a new stage. Both fundamental principles did not belong to the old classical foundations of philosophical discourse and now they are seen as underestimated and misunderstood formerly and hence demanding a new interpretation. They attract increasing attention, and who knows? perhaps they might become basic principles of post-classical philosophy.

In this situation, the Orthodox teaching as presented by Meyendorff opens one of possible ways to a new modern treatment of both energy and personality. The main distinction of this way is the closest inner connection of the two principles, which was in no way inherent in their former philosophical treatment. Of course, there are no prepared philosophical notions and conceptions here, but a certain kind of experience is opened here to philosophical mind, the experience, for which energy and personality are the key generating and organizing principles. Reflection of this experiential base can provide ideas and reference points for philosophical interpretation of these principles. Now we are going to discuss briefly the arising interpretation of energy and personality in comparison with the treatment of these principles in contemporary philosophy.

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Contemporary philosophy could say perhaps that in Orthodox theology, both in Meyendorff and Palamas himself, the principle of energy did not obtain sufficiently high status and central place. After the “forgetting of energy”, as if trying to compensate for it, modern thought, starting with Heidegger, represents energy as the fundamental principle of ontology, of equal significance and status with the principle of being. According to Heidegger, in Plato being is conceived as idea, and in Aristotle it is conceived as energy; in his early Marburg lectures of

1924 he writes already: “In Aristotle’s teaching on being, energy appears as, probably, the most fundamental characteristic of being”<sup>7</sup>. However, in Orthodox energetism the situation is a bit different. Introducing the principle of energy actively in both Triadology and Christology and, in philosophical aspect, in ontology, it does not give the primary role to it in any of these spheres. Energy enters the triad of divine principles, *Hypostasis – Ousia (or Nature) – Energeia* as the last, final principle that discloses as far as it is possible ontological dynamics of divine reality *ad extra*, in its relation to man and world, as well as *ad intra*, in its Trinitarian life.

At the same time philosophical outlook should notice that Orthodox energetism brings forth new elements and connotations into our understanding of energy. The most important of these connotations relate energy to the principle of love and to the paradigm of *perichoresis*. As Meyendorff writes, “Through the “energy”... the divine hypostases appear in their co-inherence (perichoresis): “I am in the Father and the Father in me” (Jn 14:11) ... The perichoresis expresses the perfect love, and, therefore, the perfect unity of “energy” of the three hypostases...The “energy”, because it is always Trinitarian, is always an expression and a communication of love”<sup>8</sup>. Interpreting Palamas’ words about the love between the hypostases in God (“150 Chapters”, Ch. 36), Fr. John concludes: “Love unites the three divine hypostases, and pours out, through their common divine “energy” or “action”, upon those worthy to receive it”<sup>9</sup>. But these and others conceptual connections should be considered just as particular details with respect to the key factor already stressed by us: the specific distinction of Orthodox energetism is, in the first place, its connection with personality and its integration into the personalistic description of both divine and created reality. *By Orthodox teaching, energies implement the economy of personal being and bear an imprint of personality.* “The Aristotelian dyad, nature-energy, was not considered sufficient in itself when applied to God, because in God’s nature, the decisive *acting* factor is hypostatic; hence, divine “energy” is not only unique but tri-hypostatic, since the “energy” reflects the common life of the three Persons. The personal aspects of the divine subsistence do not disappear in the one “energy””<sup>10</sup>. Actions of divine energies in man and world are also of profoundly personal character. Meyendorff stressed many times the importance of the Orthodox principle of the direct personal communion with God: “In Christ man meets God “face to face”... This God-giving-Himself is the divine “energy”; a living and personal God is indeed an *acting* God”<sup>11</sup>. Being involved into this personal communion with God, created human energies also acquire the impress of personality, and integration into the economy of personal being.

As we can see already, these features of Orthodox energetism distinguish it from the original Aristotelian conception of energy as well as from all modern conceptions that intend to preserve and develop the ancient Greek vision of energy. Comparative analysis of the Orthodox-

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<sup>7</sup> M. Heidegger. Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie. Gesamtausgabe, Band 18. Fr. a. M. 2002. S.44.

<sup>8</sup> John Meyendorff. Byzantine theology. P. 186. (Author’s italics.)

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.* P.185-186.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.* P.187.

palamitic understanding of energy and the ancient Greek one is a big and complicated problem. We cannot treat it in depth here, and instead of it we discuss just one significant distinction, which is, in its turn, the source of other less essential ones. In Palamas' and then similarly in Meyendorff's works energy is characterized as a *dynamic* principle, in the first place; Meyendorff insists always that the theology of energies has been created in order to make explicit the "dynamic understanding of God", "world's own created dynamism", the "understanding of man as aimed dynamically to further progress in God" and so on and so forth. However, "dynamic" means related to *dynamis*, that is possibility, capability, force, motion, while Aristotelian energy includes important aspects making it close not to *dynamis*, but to *entelecheia*, that is complete realization, perfect accomplishment and fullness; and quite often, in many contexts energy and *entelecheia* are identified. Already in the beginning of the Book IX of his "Metaphysics", where energy is treated, Aristotle says "Possibility and actuality (*dynamis* and *energeia*) embrace not only what is in motion" (1046 a2; we see here that possibility is also not restricted to the area of motion). The aspects of energy, which are not connected with the motion and change, take an important part in Aristotelian ontology; in particular, they provide the basis for the conception of the immobile Prime Mover (*to proton kinoyon*), one of the cornerstones of this ontology (surely, the Prime Mover possesses energy, however, it is not the energy of dynamics and motion, but the energy of perfect fullness and rest). Thus an not unimportant question comes up: are such aspects of energy represented in Orthodox energetism, the aspects, in which energy, were it divine or created, is not connected with any dynamics, motions and changes?

The answer is not evident and needs careful study. As a preliminary remark, we only notice that such study may produce different answers depending on the ontological situation: namely, in the cases when energy is acting, respectively, in divine or created being. By definition, divine being should be devoid of all motions and changes; and so energy in divine reality should represent the perfect fulfillment and completeness, i.e. it should be exactly "energy of the rest". It was quite usual for Church Fathers to apply the concept of the Prime Mover to God<sup>12</sup>; but here our discussion must be a bit more precise. Divine being is Trinitarian being provided with the relations of the generation (of the Son by the Father) and the procession (of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son); and the three divine Hypostases are also interrelated by the *perichoresis* realized exactly by means of divine energy. These relations are often and with sufficient grounds characterized as ontological (not temporal) dynamics; and taking all this into account, we must say that divine reality can only be conceived antinomically as "moving rest" and "resting motion". As for energy in the intra-Trinitarian economy, it can be interpreted as the "energy of the moving rest", a *sui generis* antinomial generalization of the Aristotelian energy of the rest.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf., e.g. in Nemesius of Emesa: "There is an action, that takes place in immobility as well, and God is the first who acts in this way since the Prime Mover is immobile". On Human Nature. Moscow, 1996. P. 120. (In Russian.) Similarly, in Maximus the Confessor: "God... is completely immobile by His essence and nature... and moves all existing things". The Ambigua to John, LXXX (XVIII). Moscow, 2006. P. 234. (In Russian.)

In the sphere of created being we find, however, a different situation. In its actions in the world divine energy is directly connected with openly dynamical manifestations: it performs ontological changes in man, his actual ascent to *theosis*. Here it does certainly not represent the accomplished fullness and complete actualization, it is not the energy of the rest, and all the radical “dynamism” in the Orthodox theology of energies refers exclusively to this sphere. One can agree that in this sphere, in the teaching about communion with God and the deification of man, which is directly rooted in the experience of hesychast practice, Orthodox energetism is indeed different from the energetism of Greek philosophy. But it is easy to see that such difference in the character of energy is implied with necessity by the difference between Christian and ancient Greek ontology. Due to the ontological split between divine and created being, created fallen being is not self-sufficing and complete in itself and it obtains its ontological fulfillment and completeness only in dynamics, in the “going-out of itself”. And since it has no accomplished fullness of being in itself, it has also no energy corresponding to this fullness, i.e. energy of the rest. On the contrary, for ancient Greek mind, being is just unique and perfectly accomplished throughout, and in such being energy of dynamics and motion is necessarily preceded by energy of the rest, and has its foundation in this energy. Here the discourse of equilibrium/disequilibrium is pertinent: while Greek Universe was conceived as a global reality that is in perpetual equilibrium, in Christianity created Universe is conceived as a kind of reality that is rather in global disequilibrium. The element of disequilibrium is introduced already with the act of Creation; then it is enhanced by the Fall, and is definitely consolidated by ontological drama initiated by the Incarnation. Evidently, conception of energy corresponding to global disequilibrium reality cannot be based on the primacy of energy of the rest. Greek thought kept always strong influence in the teaching on the world and due to this the intuition of global disequilibrium reality remained poorly articulated. But it was present implicitly in many subjects, and one can say, perhaps, that Palamas’ theology of energy is one of its main intrusions into the theological and philosophical discourse of Orthodoxy.

All this makes it clear that modern philosophizing when it intends to stay fully on the ground of the Aristotelian conception of energy comes to divergence with the palamitic teaching on energy. We see a striking example of such divergence in the work of Vladimir Bibikhin (1938-2004), the most significant Russian philosopher of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., who was also the translator of Palamas’ “Triads” into Russian. In his large lecture course “Energy” Bibikhin presents a detailed analysis of the conceptions of energy of both Aristotle and Palamas, but also of a wide circle of related problems, including even the semantics of divine names in the Vedic poetry. He adheres firmly to the Aristotelian concept, and stresses especially the primary role of energy of the rest in this concept: “Aristotelian energy ... is more primary than motion and change... It is the Prime Mover... The Prime Mover is the fullness of energy, but it is immobile. Any force and potency is after it. It is the rest, the energy of the rest”<sup>13</sup>. According to Bibikhin, “For Aristotle, energy is exactly the goal, and not the means ... it is the final goal, actualized

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<sup>13</sup> V.V. Bibikhin. Energy. Moscow, 2010. P.321. (In Russian.)



being, which is full in itself, full with itself, and it is itself the goal for itself”<sup>14</sup>. On the other side, in the Orthodox teaching, according to Meyendorff, in the economy of the God – man relation, “the divine energy ... was that which made it possible to see God and to share in the divine nature”<sup>15</sup>; and here as well as in other “dynamical” formulas, energy is evidently not “being which is full in itself and is itself the goal for itself” (although God is wholly present in each of His energies, He is not energy, but the “triangle” *Hypostases – Ousia – Energeia*). In the most evident way, this economy is realized not in the element of self-sufficing achieved and resting completeness, but in the element of reciprocal openness and self-giving of God and man when energy is “communication of love” (Meyendorff). As a result of his study, Bibikhin comes to the sharp and categorical rejection of the palamitic distinction between energy and essence. Here are some of his conclusions: “With the separation of Divine essence from His energy, *energy of the rest* was forgotten, it was forgotten what it is, energy of the rest... Energies in God *cannot* be different from essence... The distinction between essence and energy in God... is unfounded, and, what is the main thing, *it is not needed*... The distinction between essence and energy in God ... is a fiasco of palamitic thought... The palamitic dogma is a dogmatic failure”<sup>16</sup>.

Our discussion above clarifies the logics that can lead to such conclusions. Bibikhin notices shrewdly the key point that was not accentuated enough in the discussions of theology of energy: if we accept that this theology must preserve fully the Aristotelian primacy of energy of the rest (i.e. energy should be nothing but the “final goal, actualized being, which is full in itself, full with itself, and it is itself the goal for itself”), then palamitic statements on the partakable energy and unpartakable essence, and on the distinction of essence and energy in God are groundless. Indeed, in this case the partaking in energy is the partaking in actualized being and the perfect fullness of being, and there is nothing that could be above or beyond the limits of such partaking so that the latter should coincide with the partaking in essence. But the main thing is that here the point of divergence of Aristotelian energetism and Orthodox one is located. The latter does not reject the conception of energy of the rest, but it restricts the primacy of this energy in the sphere of created being and Divino-human economy. In the prism of history of thought, which puts aside the hesychast experiential sources of Orthodox energetism, it is difficult to admit the very possibility of such divergence. In this prism, the Greek conception is easily seen as the only possible one, and scholars in history of thought choose often antipalamitic positions till nowadays. Philosophical analysis of palamitic *non-Aristotelian energetism* remains an open problem, to which different approaches are thinkable. A priori, it is possible that principles of such energetism can be formulated without the radical rejection of the Aristotelian basis: e.g., by means of the extension of the latter increasing the difference between *energeia* and *entelecheia*<sup>17</sup> (in Bibikhin these notions are practically identified with each other).

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<sup>14</sup> Ib. P.333-336.

<sup>15</sup> John Meyendorff. Christ in Eastern Christian thought. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press. 1975. P.144.

<sup>16</sup> V.V. Bibikhin. Op.cit. P.137-141. (Author’s italics.)

<sup>17</sup> Such treatment of energy is considered in my work: S. Horujy. On things old and new. St.-Petersburg, 2000. (In Russian.)

Bibikhin's positions in the energy problem are close in many points to the positions by Heidegger (he was the translator of Heidegger's principal works in Russian, and his general philosophical standpoints were also close to Heideggerian ones). Heidegger did not discuss Palamas' teaching; but the very scale of his thought as well as his fundamental studies in the energy problem embracing all its historical stages prescribe the horizon and level for the contemporary vision of the problem and make it necessary to take them into account. First of all, as mentioned above, Heidegger states that the energy problem is of key importance for ontology and for philosophy as such; cf., e.g.: "For Aristotle the question about *dynamis* and *energeia* is not the question about categories... it is the question about the entity (das Seiende) as such... to question about *dynamis* and *energeia* is exactly what genuine philosophizing is"<sup>18</sup>. The base for the comparison with the positions of Orthodox energetism is provided mainly by the lecture course of 1931 devoted completely to the uniquely scrupulous analysis of several pages of Aristotle's "Metaphysics" (Book IX, ch.1-3) where the relation between capability and actuality (*energeia*) is treated. The principal theme of this analysis is the same as the theme put later into the centre by Bibikhin: the character and limits of the connection of *dynamis* and *energeia* with motion. Heidegger develops a generalized understanding of this connection, according to which the connection in question includes necessarily also the connection with immobility and rest. Discussing one of the Aristotelian examples of capability, "what can walk does not walk, and what can not walk walks" (1047 a24) he reasons as follows: "What has the capability to walk, but does not do the walking, how is it actual as the capable? The not-walking considered from the side of motion is the rest, immobility. So this immobility allows us to catch the characteristic presence ... of the capable as such? Surely, it is a necessary moment, but it is not sufficient... The immobility of the capable-to-walk as such is obviously conceived as a certain way of that movability, to which it has the capability as the capable. Thus the actuality of the capable is *co*-determined by the possessing-the-capability (vermögbar) actuality, which brings itself into actualization... How should we conceive this *co-determination*, the fact that the possessing-the-capability actualization in the way of its actuality is translucent (hineinstrahlt) in the actuality of the capable as such?"<sup>19</sup> Heidegger shows that the rest is related to accomplishment and actualization, and he illustrates the character of this relation by an example describing an immobile sprinter before the start, when he is completely in perfect readiness, in the "state to run" (im Stand loszulaufen). He discusses such a state again in 1936, in the program text "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes", and here he finds very clear formulas: "The rest is such opposition to the motion that does not exclude the motion, but includes it into itself... If the rest absorbs the motion, then such a rest is possible that will be the inner concentration of the motion, i.e. it will be the highest mobility"<sup>20</sup>. His reasoning makes it clear that the rest, and the accomplished actualization play the decisive role in the conceptual contents of both *dynamis* and *energeia*. As a result, we may conclude that the Heideggerian treatment of energy as well as the later

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<sup>18</sup> M. Heidegger. Aristoteles, Metaphysik IX 1-3. Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft. Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 33. Fr. a. M. 1981. S.9-10.

<sup>19</sup> Ib. S.217. (Author's italics.)

<sup>20</sup> Id. Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes // M. Heidegger. Holzwege. Fr.a.M.1963. S.37.

treatment by Bibikhin follows essentially the Aristotelian conception and sticks firmly to the ontic primacy of energy of the rest. One can suppose that the thought on energy in the work of these authors was advancing to a certain new ontology of radically nonclassical character; some contours of such ontology can be seen or rather guessed in philosophy of the event (Ereignis) of the late Heidegger.

As for Orthodox theology of energies, one can see in it the approaches to its own original conception of energy, which integrates the principle of energy into personal being and draws on the experience of the hesychast practice. Such conception cannot coincide fully with either Aristotelian or neoplatonic conception. However, it has no proper philosophical concept of energy so far. Advancing to its creation, it is necessary to take into account both the ancient Greek foundations of the idea of energy and contemporary studies that we have briefly described.

Now I must say if only a few words on the problem of personality. From the philosophical viewpoint, the personalist perspective so consistently advocated by Meyendorff offers a new nonclassical paradigm of the constitution of man, a new personological and anthropological model. In his presentation of this paradigm and model Fr. John is not a discoverer, he follows the line of the modern Orthodox theology of personality developed by many authors, the first of which were L.P.Karsavin, V.N.Lossky and G.V.Florovsky. In the philosophical aspect, this line presents the conception of personality, which proceeds from principles of patristic theology and is based on the identification of the notions of personality and divine hypostasis: “Personality is... the divine principle and God Himself”<sup>21</sup>, – wrote Lev Karsavin, one of the originators of the present stage of this conception. Taking into account this principal distinctive feature of the latter, I call it the *theocentric personological paradigm* (TPP; Meyendorff uses a close term, *theocentric personalism*), as distinct from the *anthropological personological paradigm* (APP) elaborated in classical metaphysics and applying the notion of personality to human individual.

A concise description of the TPP at its present stage can be found in my recent work<sup>22</sup>; here I say only that Meyendorff discloses and stresses, in the first place, the energetic character of the TPP. This character represents its second principal feature. Man in his relation to God is presented here as an energetic formation: as Meyendorff puts it, the key property of created nature is that it is endowed with “its *proper* energy, its proper purpose and its proper dynamic identity” as well as “its proper goal (*skopos*), which consists in striving for God, entering into communion with Him... The true purpose of creation is... communion in divine energy, transfiguration, and transparency to divine action in the world”<sup>23</sup>. In fact, these words express the

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<sup>21</sup> L.P. Karsavin. Church, personality and state. Paris, 1927. P.6. (In Russian.)

<sup>22</sup> S. Horujy. Personalistic dimensions of neo-patristic synthesis and modern search for new subjectivities // Theologia (Athens). 2010, 81(4). P.407-424.

<sup>23</sup> John Meyendorff. Byzantine theology. P.133.

energetic contents of the TPP in its part relating to man: man acquires his own personality and identity partaking energetically in personal divine being. Evidently, there is here a certain paradigm of the constitution of man: structures of man's personality and identity are formed up by divine energies, the encounter with which man strives to achieve in synergy. It is also evident that it is an ontological and energetic paradigm, and both these properties make it radically different from the human constitution in the APP: in classical metaphysics man is constituted in the process of his actualization of the universal essence of man. The "essence of man" as well as "subject" and all others basic concepts of the APP are not used here at all, which means that Orthodox personalism and energetism develop completely nonclassical paradigm of the human constitution. The key principle of this paradigm is the "openness upward" (by Palamas' expression) of man: man forms up his constitution in the unlocking of himself and directing all the energies of his being towards God.

Another property of this paradigm, the importance of which is stressed frequently by Meyendorff, is its "holistic" or "integral" character: the actualization of the constitutive relation of man to God should be performed by the whole human being, and not just by man's mind or consciousness; all levels of the human organization including the bodily ones, are involved in this actualization. Meyendorff wrote much on this subject, opposing holistic "Biblical anthropology" and dualistic pagan anthropology and developing Palamas' thesis that "body together with soul treads the spiritual path". In the framework of the TPP a certain original hermeneutics of human body emerges, and it attracts attention in modern secular society since the issue of human body is one of the most topical and actively debated in modern culture.

The new non-classical approach in personology and anthropology opened by Orthodox energetism is undoubtedly of interest in the present philosophical situation. As said above, after the "death of the subject" we find in the focus of the attention of contemporary postclassical thought the personological (and epistemological) question: *Who comes after the subject?* It means that this thought turns actively to the problems of human personality and identity, trying to find new foundations and new discourse for all this field of problems. Doing this, it declines the strategy of constructing new abstract theories; the key task is seen now as follows: one must put into the focus of philosophical reflection all the total fund of past and present anthropological experience in order to discover and identify in it new personalistic formations and modi of subjectivity. Today such search for non-classical modi of subjectivity has already brought some results, the most significant of which belong to poststructuralist anthropology of Foucault and Deleuze. The special attention should be paid here to the theory of the "practices of the self" of the late Foucault. In this theory the profound analysis of stoic and other anthropological practices of late antiquity leads to a very general project of non-classical anthropology. Both logics and methodology of this project have obvious resemblance to Orthodox personology relying on hesychast experience: in both cases the core of the personological conception is the paradigm of the constitution of man in some practice of strictly directed holistic self-transformation (although the choice of the basic practices is different, and Foucault's paradigm does not include any

ontological transcension)<sup>24</sup>. It should be noted, however, that the drawing of energetic conceptions into the Orthodox approach enriches anthropological discourse considerably, opening additional possibilities to see personalistic structures in their dynamics. For example, in the personological aspect, the patristic paradigm of the *perichoresis* can be interpreted as the ideal paradigm of personal identity: evidently, in their personological contents, the perfect mutual interpenetration and exchange of being mean complete mutual ascertainment and confirmation, which is the basis of personal identity. Thus we have here a concrete model of perfect and complete identity, the *Trinitarian identity*, to which all other paradigms of identity can be compared. Obviously, the presence of such model is valuable for contemporary personology, even secular one.

Thus we see that Orthodox conceptions of personality and energy lead to new non-classical anthropology based on the energetic paradigm of the human constitution; and so they can make a valuable contribution to the anthropological search of contemporary philosophy. The active propagation of postsecular ideas that takes place today removes gradually ideological barriers and stops conflicts and confrontations, which used to create obstacles to the collaboration between secular and religious thought. The postsecular context possesses useful collecting and uniting capacity, and in the postsecular dialogue that unfolds now in the space of contemporary culture the ideas and fruits of the work of Fr. John Meyendorff can find their new life.

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<sup>24</sup> The detailed comparison of the conception of practices of the self and contemporary Orthodox personology is presented in my work: S. Horujy. The last project of Foucault. Practices of the self and spiritual practices // Id. Diogenes' lantern. A critical retrospection of European anthropology. Moscow, 2010. P.492-684. The English translation of this text is now in print in Fordham University Press (USA).