

**SYNERGIA AS A UNIVERSAL PARADIGM:  
ITS MEANING(S), DISCURSIVE LINKS AND HEURISTIC RESOURCES**

“It would not be reasonable to reject out of hand the idea that the world religions... still bear a semantic potential that unleashes an inspiring energy for all of society”.  
*Jürgen Habermas*<sup>1</sup>.

**0. Mapping the territory: that is the question**

In minds of intellectual community of the present day the notion of synergy is first of all associated with synergetics. The program of our workshop is also in full accordance with this fact: it shows that almost all the presented talks are devoted to synergetics in its numerous aspects and branches. The situation makes it natural to expect that the information on what is synergy can be found in synergetics in the first place. But here comes the first paradox of my theme: if I ask the question: *What is synergy?* – I shall not be able to find the answer in synergetics. *The notion of synergy is neither used nor even introduced in synergetics.* It is well-known that the connection *synergy – synergetics* is in no way accidental: as Hermann Haken explained repeatedly, this connection has been put by him from the very start into the idea and the name of a new discipline invented by him. But Haken makes it clear at the same time that the Greek word *συνεργεία* has served for him only in its literal, etymological meaning: as a source of intuitive ideas about cooperation, collective phenomena, concerted action and interaction, etc. – so that the new discipline could be conceived as “science of cooperation”. The word has helped to form up the name for synergetics, and after this it was not needed anymore; the new science did not make it one of its terms or concepts. On the other hand, however, the fact remained that processes and phenomena studied in synergetics have the properties characterized by *synergia* even if the word is not conceptualized and is understood only in the initial intuitive sense. It means that *synergia* is in fact present in synergetics, but only implicitly. Hence the problem arises to display its presence explicitly or, in other words, to reconstruct the concept or paradigm of *synergia* hidden in synergetics.

At the same time, *synergia* had always another life as well, not hidden, but quite open, that has begun many centuries before the invention of synergetics and went on ever after till nowadays with some interruptions. This other life develops in a completely different sphere, less known and popular than synergetics, the sphere of Eastern-Christian thought. Its history here is rich, and its role quite important: *synergia* is one of the key concepts of Eastern-Christian spirituality and worldview. This concept appears in Greek patristics and early Christian ascetics and has a specific nature combining theological and practical, i.e. experiential and anthropological, dimensions. In late Byzantium it becomes one of the cornerstones of a sophisticated theological and philosophical teaching based on ascetical experience and discourse of energy instead of the Aristotelian essentialist discourse of the Western thought. After the fall of Byzantium this teaching was almost

---

<sup>1</sup> J.Habermas. Religion in the public sphere // Europ. J. of Philosophy. 2006. 14(1). P.17.

forgotten, but it makes gradually its return in the 18-19<sup>th</sup> cc., and since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> c. it is carefully reconstructed on the modern theological and philosophical level and developed further.

Moreover, in the last decades the concept of *synergia* was closely analyzed in its anthropological dimension and it was found that in this dimension it represents a certain paradigm of human constitution. This result has marked the beginning of a new anthropological theory called *synergetic anthropology* (obviously, the name *synergic* anthropology would be more adequate since the theory in question has no relation to synergetics!). Starting with the original Byzantine paradigm of *synergia* reinterpreted as an anthropological paradigm, synergetic anthropology produces a series of extrapolations or extensions of this paradigm extending it gradually to a universal paradigm of human constitution called the “paradigm of anthropological unlocking”. This paradigm becomes the generating focus of nonclassical anthropology of a new type aiming in prospect to provide an integrating discourse or episteme for all the sphere of the humanities.

Thus we find the territory of *synergia*, like that of Gallia in Julius Caesar’s book, consisting of the three big parts. The first of them is *synergia* in the original sense, the ancient paradigm of Orthodox theology and hesychast practice. The second one is the direct but far-going generalization of this paradigm in synergetic anthropology, the paradigm of anthropological unlocking. The third and last part is hypothetical *synergia* that is present implicitly in synergetics. It is the most unexplored territory so far, and its relation to the other two parts is an open problem. In what follows we describe in outline all the three domains of *synergia* and discuss this problem displaying conceptual links between all the domains. We conclude that there is one universal paradigm of *synergia* of great heuristic capacity that can be one of key elements in the emerging nonclassical and postsecular formation of knowledge.

## 1. The Domain of Theology

We must start with the common root of all the versions of *synergia*, the Greek word. Syncretic mind of the Late Antiquity was acting chiefly in the mode of the merging and synthesis, and it collected the enormous pool of words for this mode beginning mostly with the prefix *syn-*: *synousia*, *synesis*, *synaisthesis*, *syneinai*, etc. etc. *Synergia* (cooperation, collaboration, concerted activity) was a typical element of this pool, and not too popular; it was not exploited in philosophical and mystical teachings so abundant in the Late Antiquity, and it begins to be conceptualized in the Christian discourse only. From the very start it is applied to the relation of God and man, and it should be noted that its conceptualization (as pointed out, e.g., in Lampe’s “Patristic Greek Lexicon”) includes two different meanings: besides one given above, *synergia* can also mean assistance, help. The difference is not cardinal, but important both theologically and anthropologically: the second meaning implies that only one side of the relation is active, and the necessity of man’s own activity in his relation with God is one of the most disputed subjects in all the history of Christian thought. Orthodox thought accepts synergy as a necessary principle of man’s relation with God, and interprets it more in accordance with the first meaning. This is the position of Orthodox synergism: man should not be passive in his relation with God, and his free will and his energies should collaborate with God’s grace present in the world. Contrary to it, in the West both catholic and protestant theology reject the idea of human will freely collaborating with God’s grace. They reject also the principle of synergy as such so that this principle remained a specific part of the Orthodox tradition and was for a long time one of the main points separating Eastern and Western Christian thought. Now this situation is changing, however, since Western theology takes gradually more conciliatory position to Orthodox synergism.

In Orthodoxy, all its basic conceptions are provided with Scriptural roots, and for synergy there are two principal supporting points in New Testament: 1) in the First Epistle to Corinthians the God – Man relation is characterized by the term close to *synergia*: “We are fellow-workers (*synergoi*) with God (1 Cor 3,9); 2) the response of Mary to the Annunciation (Lk 1,38). In this response “Mary could have refused; she was not merely passive, but an active participant in the

mystery... Supreme example of synergy is the Mother of God”<sup>2</sup>. The next necessary level is the dogmatic basis, doctrinal formulas established by Ecumenical Councils. For synergy such basis is provided by the resolutions of the VIth Ecumenical Council stating that there are two wills or energies in Christ, Divine (uncreated) and human (created), and they are in harmony and accordance with each other. “The relation of the two energies in Christ is the ontological basis... of synergy”<sup>3</sup>.

As for the essence of the conception, synergy was conceived in Orthodoxy as a subject of spiritual experience and practice more than a doctrinal principle. Hence the teaching of synergy developed chiefly in the Orthodox ascetical tradition called *hesychasm* (from the Greek word *hesychia* meaning quietness). Having its roots in the early Christian monasticism of the Desert Fathers of Coptic Egypt and Palestine in the 4-5<sup>th</sup> cc., hesychasm developed gradually into a school of masterly articulated spiritual practice that created an original method of anthropological self-transformation directed to the union with God conceived as the “deification of man” (*theosis*) or transcension of all the human being in its energies into the horizon of Divine being. The reservation “in its energies” is important: hesychast practice transforms the set of all energies of a human being not touching upon its essence or substance; and it is stated by a special “Palamitic dogma” of the 1351 that the union with God is possible only as the union of human and Divine energies but not human and Divine essence. This union or man’s ontological transcension is considered as unreachable by man’s own energies and realizable only by means of Divine energy or grace; and it implies that *synergy*, or the contact and collaboration of human and Divine energies, *is the crucial precondition of the achievement of the goal of Christian life*. Hesychast practice is structured as a ladder whose steps ascend from the initial step of the conversion and repentance (the step of the rejection of worldly way of life, or Spiritual Gate) to the final step of the deification. The first steps are devoted to the overcoming of stubborn patterns, attitudes and structures of consciousness inherent in the worldly way of life while on the higher steps the fundamental change of the whole human being begins. All the hesychast Ladder is supposed to consist of the two big parts, of which the first is called *Praxis* (practice) and the second *Theoria* (contemplation), and the main distinction of the second part is that at its steps the action of some “outer energy” becomes noticeable, i.e. the energy perceived by man as coming from without and not belonging to him. As for synergy, it has its special place at the Ladder. It is when the contact and collaboration of human and Divine energies or wills is achieved that the transition from *Praxis* to *Theoria* takes place, and thus synergy appears on the verge between *Praxis* and *Theoria* and keeps its presence on all the further steps (cf.: “Synergy or coherence of the two wills continues at all the higher stages of the ascent to God”<sup>4</sup>). But how can it be achieved? Evidently, the contact and “coherence of the two wills” of different ontological status need some very special conditions, and it took several centuries for hesychast practice to build a path to synergy. At the period of the so called Sinaitic hesychasm (7-10<sup>th</sup> cc.) a specific anthropological mechanism has been discovered and mastered that is the key to synergy. This mechanism that I call the “ontological mover” is the combination of two activities, attention and prayer, the latter taking the special form of the hesychast incessant prayer. Here the attention secures the uninterrupted and incessant character of the prayer, and the prayer, due to such character, embraces all the levels of the human being and accumulates enormous energy directed entirely to personal communion with Christ. In this way a hesychast advances actually to synergy, and the access to higher steps of the Ladder is opened up.

At its higher steps hesychast practice takes a specific character with growing elements of spontaneity. New forms of prayer emerge called sometimes “automobile” (i.e. going on their own without any man’s effort) and a certain chain or hierarchy of new configurations of energies of a human person is generated in a spontaneous process that has an obvious resemblance to processes of self-organization. The most significant of these new phenomena is the radical change of man’s

---

<sup>2</sup> T.Ware. *The Orthodox Church*. Penguin Books. 1985. P.263, 227.

<sup>3</sup> J.Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*. Mowbrays, 1975. P.164.

<sup>4</sup> Vl.N.Lossky. *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church // Bogoslovskie trudy*. 1972, vol. 8. P.108 (in Russian).

perceptive system: the formation or “opening-up” of some new perceptions takes place. These perceptions called often the “intellectual senses” (*noera aisthesis*) are completely different from all physical senses (though they have some likeness to the sight, for which reason hesychasts call the experience of them the “vision of the Light of Tabor” considering the event of Christ’s Transfiguration on the mount Tabor as the prototype of hesychast *Theoria*). Here the integral and fundamental reorganization of the human being begins that is generated by the Divine energy acting in man and manifesting itself explicitly and visibly due to synergy. (The parallels to synergetics that are evident here will be discussed later.)

Here we concentrated on synergy in hesychasm, i.e. on the experiential aspect of the Orthodox conception of synergy. It is this aspect that is particularly important if we discuss synergy – as we do now – as the anthropological and epistemological paradigm, in the first place. However, it should be at least mentioned briefly that synergy is also closely connected with basic theological problem fields such as Christology (the problem of the two wills in Christ), the conception of *theosis*, and especially theology of Divine energies. As a result, one can find in Orthodox theology the full-fledged theology of synergy, the main contributions to which belong to Maximus the Confessor (580-662), Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022) and Gregory Palamas (1296-1357). It was given the completed form in the “palamitic synthesis” of the 14<sup>th</sup> c., and in the modern “neopalamitic” theology founded by Russian émigré theologians (V.Lossky, J.Meyendorff e.a.) its studies are renewed and continued. These two lines in the Orthodox conception of synergy, experiential or ascetic, and theological or patristic, not contradict, but complement each other (it is often said that the specific nature of Orthodox tradition is the union of patristics and ascetics that have the same spiritual foundations). Taken together, they form an integral whole having two principal distinctive features: 1) the phenomenon of synergy belongs specifically to the economy of personal being, it is a phenomenon of the meeting and collaboration of two personalistic formations; 2) synergy is characterized by radical asymmetry since the energies that reach their contact are different ontologically and play completely different roles in the contact. These features should never be forgotten in all comparisons of the Orthodox synergy with similar (to some or other extent) phenomena in other contexts and fields.

## 2. The Domain of Anthropology

Starting with the idea of synergy as it appears in Orthodoxy and chiefly in hesychasm, synergetic anthropology proceeds to a certain much more general paradigm. The advancement to this paradigm has several stages. In the first stage we analyze the anthropological aspect of synergy in hesychast practice. In synergy human energy manages to achieve the contact and coherence with the Divine energy: evidently, it should be an event with important anthropological contents. In all usual regimes of empiric being such contact is inaccessible for a human person; in other words, the person is closed or locked for it. In synergy the person achieves this contact; in other words, he/she becomes open or unlocked for it. Thus what is achieved by a human person in synergy can be described as his/her opening-up or unlocking towards the Divine energy that belongs to another ontological horizon. This is the first conclusion: *in the anthropological aspect, synergy is the ontological unlocking of a human person*. In hesychast practice this unlocking makes accessible the higher steps of the Ladder, at which the person approaches in his/her energies the union with Divine being defined as “personal being-communion” in modern Orthodox theology. According to Orthodox personology, the concept of personality is identified with the Divine Hypostasis so that personal being as such is Divine being whereas an empiric man is not considered as personality. He can, however, partake in personality and convert himself into personality in the communion with God; as Russian philosopher Lev Karsavin says, “I should regard myself as personality insofar as I am one with Christ”<sup>5</sup>. It means that the union with God in hesychast practice is at the same time man’s conversion (though not in his essence but only in his energies) into the personal mode of

---

<sup>5</sup> L.P.Karsavin. On Principiums. St.Petersburg. 1994.P.183.

being; or, in other words, the constitution of human personality. And since synergy is man's ontological unlocking towards personal being, it can be considered as a paradigm of the human constitution that corresponds to the constitution into personality conceived as Divine Hypostasis.

Now we can proceed to the first generalization of this paradigm. We turn to spiritual practices created in other world religions (such as Islamic Sufism, classical yoga, Tibetan tantric Buddhism, Taoism, Zen) and we find in them phenomena close to synergy, but not identical to it. The common feature of all these ancient schools of spiritual experience is that they are practices of human self-transformation ("practices of the Self", to use the famous term by Foucault) aiming to achieve man's union with a different horizon of being or, in other words, perform man's actual ontological transcension. In all spiritual practices this transcension is conceived as an event in the dimension of energy, or being-action, that represents the conversion of the set of all human energies into a different horizon of being. The key distinction of such ontological conversion is that it needs motive power which can only be some "outer energy", i.e. energy perceived by a man as not belonging to him or any source in his horizon of being, but coming from a certain "Source-Beyond-There" (*Vnepolozhny Istok*, one of the key concepts of synergetic anthropology). Thus, like Christian practice, any spiritual practice demands the contact and coherence of human energies with energies of a different horizon of being, and this phenomenon of the contact and coherence of two ontologically different kinds of energy could be called synergy. However, conceptions of being and all the ontological discourse in Oriental spiritual traditions are of a very specific nature radically different from European and Christian ontology. The Christian idea of personal God Whose energies collaborate with energies of a human person is deeply alien to Oriental spirituality, and so the plain transfer of the paradigm of synergy into the context of Far-Eastern spiritual practices would produce a grossly westernized and distorted view of them. Keeping in mind the first distinctive feature of synergy, its roots in personal being, *we should consider synergy as such, in its full form, as a specifically Christian paradigm*. Nevertheless, the radical divergence of spiritual practices in their ontological positions is combined with their far-going resemblance in anthropological aspects. Looking at these aspects closely, we discover that there exists an universal paradigm of spiritual practice (SP) embracing all the set of them; and its core is nothing but synergy taken in its anthropological contents. Here is this paradigm presented as a list of principal properties shared by all spiritual practices.

A. SP is a holistic practice of the Self, the goal of which is actual ontological transformation, transcension of man's mode of being. This practice deals exclusively with man's «energetic image», the configuration of all energies of a human being, and elaborates a special art of controlled and directed transformation of this image.

B. SP has progressive nature and discrete (ladder) structure: it is divided into clearly distinct steps, all the series of which is strictly ordered. Each step is a definite type of man's «energetic image», and the series goes from the initial step corresponding to Spiritual Gate to the final one corresponding to a certain «higher spiritual state», or *telos*. According to the point A, the *telos* corresponds to a mode of being different from the usual empiric being, and it is not universal, but different for each SP.

C. The ladder of SP includes the group of lower steps, which basically correspond to processes and procedures of *preparatory purification*. The purification is also holistic, including necessarily corporeal, emotional and intellectual components.

D. The central block of SP solves the key problem of building-up the anthropological mechanism for the ascent to the *telos*. Such mechanism should provide the motive power for the ascent, which amounts to opening the access to the ontologically outer energetic factor. It is always realized as a certain analogue of the "ontological mover" in hesychast practice representing some refined school of meditation or prayer that includes special techniques of concentration of attention helping to guard the meditation prayer from all disturbances. In its concrete form, however, the "ontological mover" is in no way universal, but very different for each SP.

E. With the formation of the «ontological mover» SP enters its last big block, in which there appear clear manifestations of the approaching change of fundamental predicates of man's horizon of being. These manifestations include, in the first place, the emergence of new perceptive modalities.

F. The necessary condition of the achievement of the telos of SP is (cf. the point D) the participation of some energetic factors («energies of the Source-Beyond-There») that are neither provided nor controlled by a man himself.

The last property draws a demarcation line between genuine SPs and all kinds of purely psychological practices, techniques and trainings. At the same time it shows that any SP includes the creation of a certain energetic structure kindred to synergy: man's energetic image must be transformed in such a way that human energies reach the contact with energies of the Source-Beyond-There. In non-Christian practices this outer energetic factor is something much different from Divine energy in Christian experience so that the created structure is not identical to synergy; but still it preserves its basic anthropological contents. Indeed, if human energies reach the contact with some ontologically different energies, it means that the human person becomes unlocked towards these energies, and *eo ipso* towards the corresponding horizon of being.

Thus the core of any SP is a certain modification of synergy. Like the original Christian paradigm, it is the contact and coherence of two ontologically different kinds of energy, and in the anthropological aspect, it represents the ontological unlocking of a human person. The other basic feature of the Christian paradigm is also preserved: the unlocking is a practice, in which basic structures of the human person and his/her identity are formed-up. It means that any SP is a *constitutive* anthropological practice, and the generalized synergy, like the original one, is a paradigm of the human constitution. However, the concrete form of this paradigm is different for each SP. Which personological structures are formed-up in a given SP, is determined by the telos of this SP, and, in the first place, by ontological nature of this telos. As for this nature, there is the dichotomy: the ontological horizon corresponding to the telos can represent either personal being (which is the case in Christianity and Islam) or impersonal being (which is the case in all religions and spiritual traditions of the East). In these two cases the process of SP has sharply different dynamics and forms up different anthropological and personological structures. If the telos corresponds to personal being (conceptualized as personal being-communion in Christianity), and synergy is achieved, the progress to the telos is, as described above, the process of spontaneous or self-organizing generation of an ascending hierarchy of energetic configurations. These configurations, or «anthropological ergoforms», are structures of human personality and identity that approach personal being-communion which, in its turn, can be characterized as the ontological identity of the three basic personological concepts: personal communion (between the three Divine Persons or Hypostases) – love treated as an ontological principle – and *perichoresis*, or a complete and perfect exchange of being between the Hypostases. This is the paradigm of the human constitution determined by the ontological unlocking towards personal being.

In the case of the unlocking towards impersonal being, we must say at once that the very formula «impersonal being» is not quite correct for the telos of Eastern practices. Usually these practices describe their telos in a strongly apophatic discourse characterizing it as not only non-personal, but also as non-being. All various notions used for the telos of SPs in Eastern traditions – Nirvana, Heaven, Great Void, etc. – share principal predicates, which express the absence of any dynamics and any positive contents, phenomenal or noumenal: absolute cosmic calm, void, stillness, immobility, etc. etc. Obviously, the process of approaching such telos must be very different from the ascent to personal being. With clarity and force Eastern practices stress that their way demands to reject as an empty illusion all ideas of autonomous human personality, Ego, subject, individuality, etc. By definition, any SP is man's (self-)transformation, but in Eastern practices this transformation is not so much the generation of new anthropological and personological structures as the dismantling and dissolving of the existing structures: a *sui generis* man's self-deconstruction. These practices are also based on man's ontological unlocking and the

creation of the ontological mover, but now the mover is of directly opposite nature. It is again the union of two activities, the guarding activity of attention and the main activity securing the ontological ascent; however, the main activity has now the opposite functions. In the ascent to personal being the preconditions of synergy discovered in hesychast experience were the “driving-away of visual images and heating-up of emotions” (emotions of love to and striving after God). These preconditions produced, using the temperature metaphor, the heating-up of man’s inner reality which led, in its turn, to the unlocking of this reality and the subsequent spontaneous generation of new structures. Contrary to it, in the progress to the impersonal telos the preconditions of the ontological unlocking (found also in the experience) turn out to be contemplative and meditative techniques that imply the driving-away of all emotions and so the cooling-down of man’s inner reality. It is this cooling-down that leads to the dissolving and deconstruction of all personological structures.

Thus in the personalist economy of Western practices the core of the ontological mover is the prayer as a hot discourse, and the ontological unlocking leads to the generation of new personological structures; while in the impersonal economy this core is the meditation-contemplation as a cool discourse (in McLuhan’s classification), and the ontological unlocking leads to the deconstruction of personological structures. Clearly, the second case includes also a certain paradigm of the human constitution that is opposite to the personalist paradigm and describes a specific constitution of the human being in the gradual dissolving of his/her individuality as well as all personal activities. The striking example of such constitution is classical yoga representing the approach to its telos as the state of *Samadhi*, in which “self-consciousness is devoid of its own form and is completely dissolved” (Sutra III.3 of Patanjali). – Summing up, we find that in the field of spiritual practices synergy takes the form of the paradigm of the ontological unlocking of the human person, and this paradigm has two opposite representations as the paradigm of the human constitution: the Western paradigm of the building-up of personological structures ascending to personal being-communion, and the Eastern paradigm of the dismantling of personological structures descending to absolute predicateless reality above the distinction of being and non-being.

There comes now the next level of the generalization. We have extended the Christian synergy to the paradigm of the ontological unlocking of the human person and found that it is the paradigm of human constitution. But we can go further: clearly, synergy seen as the anthropological unlocking represents a very general mechanism of human constitution. Indeed, in its inner mechanism this constitution is a relational event, in which a human being and its Other actualize their mutual relation entering into contact and interaction<sup>6</sup>. In their contact the human being should open or unlock itself to the Other, and in this unlocking a meeting of two different energies or forces takes place, in which the energies or forces of the Other exert their formative and constitutive role. And here a question should be asked: is it necessary that the Other appearing as a constitutive agent represents a different horizon of being or, in other words, is an “ontological Other”? For the right answer it should be taken into account that we discuss the constitution of the human being as such, as a general category, and not the constitution of a particular empiric individual. Particular situations and personological structures are infinitely diverse, and almost any part of social or anthropological reality can in principle find itself in the role of the constitutive Other for somebody: e.g., in the good old film “Bonny and Clyde” we see two individuals who mutually and perfectly exert constitutive influence upon each other forming a dyad locked from all the rest of the world. But evidently all these countless representations of the Other to particular individuals are not the Other to the human being as such or, synonymously, to all the horizon of anthropological reality.

---

<sup>6</sup> The treatment of the concept of constitution based on its connection with the concept of unlocking is presented in my article: S.Horujy. The constitution of personality and identity in a perspective based on practices of the Self, old and new. // *Voprosy Filosofii*, 2007, no. 1, 75-85. (In Russian. The English version can be found on the website [www.synergia-isa.ru](http://www.synergia-isa.ru)).

Nevertheless this “Other in the strong sense” is not necessarily the ontological Other, it can be conceived not ontologically as well. A human person can identify the horizon of his/her existence with that of his/her consciousness and in this case the Other will be represented as the Unconscious. The latter is never considered to be a different mode of being; its otherness is not ontological, but ontical, in Heidegger’s terms, so that the Unconscious is nothing but the ontical Other of the human being as such. It is well-known that man’s openness to the Unconscious produces anthropological manifestations of a special type called patterns or figures of the Unconscious, such as neuroses, complexes, manias, phobias, etc. From the personological viewpoint, any kind of such patterns forms up a certain human constitution (“neurotic constitution”, “manic constitution”, etc.), and different kinds must be considered as different versions or representations of a certain paradigm of human constitution: namely, the paradigm defined by the ontical unlocking of a human person towards the Unconscious as his/her ontical Other. Evidently, this paradigm is a further extension of synergy to the field of anthropology and personology. It is radically different from the paradigm defined by the ontological unlocking: the corresponding structures of personality and identity are of a specific topological nature displayed in detail by Gilles Deleuze.

Next, let us notice that a human person unlocks him/herself also in virtual practices when he/she goes out into anthropological virtual reality. Indeed, virtual reality is defined with respect to actual reality: it consists of such phenomena that are not fully actualized, which means that any of them lacks some constitutive properties or predicates of a certain actual phenomenon; in physical language, it belongs to the “virtual cloud” of the latter. Hence a human person in anthropological virtual practice is under-actualized and, in this sense, uncompleted so that we can say that it is also unlocked (although this virtual unlocking is not the unlocking towards a certain Other that acts with its energies or forces as a constitutive agent). The distance from the original form of synergy is in this case more significant. Nevertheless it is obvious that the virtual unlocking of a human person also defines a certain paradigm of human constitution: the virtual constitution is a “privative constitution” characterized by the lack of some constitutive predicates of the actual constitution of human personality. It has an unlimited number of particular representations that differ from each other according to the privative principle: they all have different sets of lacking predicates.

Thus we have found three basic kinds of the anthropological unlocking, each of them corresponding to a certain paradigm of human constitution. Synergetic anthropology advances reasons that the human being as such forms up its constitution in *extreme anthropological manifestations*: such manifestations, in which a human person starts to experience certain changes in fundamental predicates of his/her existence; the set of all such manifestations is called Anthropological Border. Evidently, the manifestations, in which the described kinds of the anthropological unlocking take place, belong to the Anthropological Border. Now, it is not so difficult to make sure that these three kinds of extreme manifestations exhaust the Anthropological Border. (In brief, the reason is that there are three ways only, by means of which an anthropological manifestation can belong to the Border: the meeting with the ontological Other, the meeting with the ontical Other and the virtual way of the under-actualization.) As a result, we come to the important conclusion: when synergy is extended to the paradigm of the anthropological unlocking it provides the universal paradigm of human constitution. This paradigm has three basic representations, or anthropological formations: the Ontological Man, the Ontical Man and the Virtual Man.

Thus in the framework of synergetic anthropology synergy, after being reinterpreted as the anthropological unlocking, becomes the core of anthropology of a new type, nonclassical, nonessentialist and subjectless. Here it serves as the main conceptual tool for the key anthropological problems: in the first place, the establishment of the repertory of the principal types of human identities<sup>7</sup> and the reconstruction of historical dimension of anthropology, i.e. the

---

<sup>7</sup> This repertory presents strikingly pluralistic view of the human being resembling to some extent postmodernist vision of human subjectivities in philosophy of Deleuze and Foucault.



historical succession of anthropological formations. But what is more important for our theme, the new role of synergy brings us right up to the verge of the next level of generalization. It is the last adventure of synergy in the field of modern anthropology: here it grows up to the status of a key principle of a new episteme for the humanities. Let us remind, first of all, that now, since the moving aside of the structuralist paradigm, the sphere of the humanities is in the period of epistemological or epistemic vacuum: it lacks an integrating methodological paradigm and epistemological *Grundverfassung*. The vacuum has many negative implications creating disunity of human sciences, difficulty in the assessment of the situation in their field and disorientation in the elaboration of strategies for human studies. And we notice that if we have a universal paradigm of human constitution, this paradigm can be used as a principle and starting-point of the transformation of humanistic discourses directed to the epistemological integration of all the ensemble of these discourses.

Indeed, all such discourses deal eventually with the human being and human person who is their common root, “common denominator”. It means that phenomena described by any such discourse are of anthropological nature even though implicitly; and there is a certain sphere of anthropological reality and anthropological manifestations corresponding to these phenomena. Taking this into account, we can choose an arbitrary humanistic discourse and develop a strategy or procedure that discloses its connection with the basic paradigm of human constitution (the paradigm of the anthropological unlocking) and carries out its reinterpretation in the prism of this connection. This procedure has two principal stages: the first of them is the “anthropological decoding” of the discourse that should describe explicitly the set of anthropological manifestations corresponding to its subject sphere, while the second stage is the “anthropological localization” that should relate these manifestations to the Anthropological Border with its three basic kinds of human constitution. Taken together, these stages perform the anthropologization of the chosen discourse providing it with a new conceptual base that goes back eventually to the paradigm of the anthropological unlocking. And if the procedure described is carried out for the most part of principal humanistic discourses one can say that this paradigm becomes the core or generating principle of a new episteme for the humanities. Anthropology based on this paradigm acquires a new function and status: now it plays the role that can be called the “science of human sciences”. In this role, it is not as much one of concrete disciplines with some particular subject sphere and phenomenal base as a meta-discourse serving as the melting-pot (to use the classical Humboldt metaphor) for all the ensemble of the humanities<sup>8</sup>.

This is the logical final of all the line of successive generalizations or extensions of the ancient Orthodox idea of synergy. It was a continuous line of the conceptual development that can be considered as the mainstream in history of synergy: one can hardly doubt that in all the field of modern thought, it is with anthropology that the original idea of theoanthropic collaboration is connected most closely and directly.

### **3. The Domain of Synergetics**

Evidently, in synergetics synergy is not conceived as an anthropological paradigm. It is a different domain on our Map of Synergy, and its contours are not clearly visible at first since synergy, as stressed above, has only implicit presence in synergetics. Thus we must try, first of all, to make these contours more precise. In explanations of Haken himself, he usually describes the subject sphere of synergetics by the most general formulas like “science of cooperation”, “theory of interaction”, “study of general laws in systems consisting of separate parts”, phenomena of “joint

---

<sup>8</sup> One should add, however, that on the practical level the separate construction of the melting-pot is needed for each humanistic discourse, and only in a few cases this anthropologizing remelting has been actually done so far. The most important case is the representation of historical process as the successive change of anthropological formations; versions of such anthropologization of history were presented in theory of practices of the Self by Michel Foucault as well as in synergetic anthropology.

activity, joint energy in performing something” etc. etc. And indeed, this subject sphere contains extremely diverse phenomena and processes as well as extremely broad theories: one usually includes into the orbit of synergetics theory of dissipative structures, theory of self-organization, theory of deterministic chaos, theory of fractals, even theory of complexity, and so on. One can bet that there is no such interpretation of synergy (or another dynamical paradigm for that matter) that could serve as a common conceptual base for all this spectrum of very heterogeneous theories. It means that in order to analyze synergy in synergetics we must first single out of all the spectrum of “*synergetic*” theories and processes “*synergic*” ones, i.e. those, in which the presence of “something like synergy” can really be found. Guided by an intuitive idea of synergy that is suggested by the etymological meaning of the word, we shall include in the sphere of synergy in synergetics, in the first place, such theories that describe phenomena and processes, in which some coherence and collaboration of two different kinds or flows of energy coming from different sources takes place.

The subclass of such “synergic theories” is also quite large, and it always was a kind of the core in all the variety of synergetic theories and conceptions. Of course, the conceptual and experiential framework for the intuitive idea of synergy present implicitly in synergetics is unavoidably the relation and interaction of inner and outer energy in open systems. A clear and simple description of this synergic or synergetic relation has been given by E.Laszlo: “Flow of outer energy going through an open non-equilibrium system in a state far from equilibrium induces the structuring of the system and its components and makes it possible for the system to receive, use and conserve growing and growing amounts of free energy. At the same time, the increase of complexity of the system takes place”<sup>9</sup>. This description can be considered as a brief exposition of the basic contents of synergy in synergetics. All the properties pointed out here can be found in the list of the ten “key principles characterizing the essence of synergetics” formulated by Haken in 1999 in the interview to Elena Nikolaevna Knyazeva (who luckily also takes part in this symposium). Cf., e.g.: “3. Among physical, chemical and biological systems it is open systems far from thermal equilibrium that are considered. ... 6. Qualitative changes take place. 7. Emergent new qualities can be observed in such systems. 8. Functional structures of spatial, temporal or spatial-temporal nature emerge”<sup>10</sup>.

Now it is clear enough which theories must be ranked among synergic ones. In the first place it is the theory of the laser radiation based on what is called the “laser paradigm” by Haken. The laser paradigm is the first example on which the existence of synergetics was discovered by him, and later he repeatedly used it to illustrate the principles of this science. Basically, it demonstrates, how “the pumping introduced into the atomic system from the outside... if the system is driven far from thermal equilibrium... produces a very pronounced coherence” of the laser radiation (Haken). Clearly, it is an ideal example of synergy in synergetics: the pumping is the outer energy factor, and the laser paradigm describes, how the action of this factor, i.e. the meeting of outer and inner energy, *syn-ergeia*, in a certain atomic system driven far from equilibrium leads to qualitative changes such as the emergence of new structures and establishment of self-organizing dynamics (“a very pronounced coherence”). The next example is provided by a large class of dynamical systems generating so called *dissipative structures*. This term introduced by Ilya Prigogine is an obvious oxymoron. By definition, dissipation means the loss of energy in a system, the increase of its entropy and decrease of its structuring; but Prigogine’s notion connects dissipation with the generation of new structures: “Under strongly non-equilibrium conditions the transition from thermal chaos and disorder to order can take place. New dynamical states can emerge due to the interaction of a given system with the surrounding milieu. These new structures we have called dissipative structures since we wanted to stress the constructive role of dissipative processes in their

---

<sup>9</sup> E.Laszlo. The Age of Bifurcation. Understanding the Changing World // Put’ (Moscow). 1995, No 7. P.118. (The back-translation of the Russian translation of the original published in 1991.)

<sup>10</sup> H.Haken. The interview to E.N.Knyazeva // Voprosy Filosofii. 1999. No 6. P.55. (In Russian.)

formation”<sup>11</sup>. With respect to the former structure of the system, dissipative structures are not simply new, but more ordered and differentiated, and their formation demonstrates the emergence of a new type of dynamics: *they are structures of self-organization*, and one of their principal properties is, according to Prigogine, a very strong coherence in the behavior of all the constituents of the system. Of course, in each case the self-organization dynamics emerges due to the “interaction with the surrounding milieu”, i.e. the meeting of inner and outer energy. Like the laser radiation for Haken, Prigogine also has a model example, on which he often demonstrates the main properties of dissipative structures. It is the Bénard (or Rayleigh-Bénard) convection, the phenomenon of coherent motion of big (macroscopic) molecular ensembles in a liquid with the vertical temperature gradient: when the gradient takes a certain maximal value, convection starts and the molecules are grouping into regular dynamical patterns called the Bénard cells, which represent a simple directly observable example of self-organizing dynamics induced by the flow of outer energy (the heating-up of the liquid). There are great many kinds of systems with dissipative structures, and many different types of self-organization processes are realized by these structures. What matters for us is that in all of them we catch the same key properties, structural and dynamic ones, that can be summed up into a definite dynamical paradigm. This “*paradigm of dissipative self-organization*” is essentially the same as the “laser paradigm” by Haken; and we conclude that synergy is, indeed, present in synergetics as a certain dynamical paradigm, which can be called the “*synergetic paradigm of synergy*” and can be summarized briefly as follows:

*in a system driven far from its usual equilibrium regimes the flow of outer energy can cause the emergence of new self-organizing dynamics that generates more coherent and differentiated dynamical structures and brings about the radical restructuring of the system.*

This paradigm can be found not in all, but in most of basic phenomena and processes studied in synergetics.

#### **4. Relations of the domains. Open problems and prospects**

Evidently, the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” can easily be related to the Greek word, but it has *a priori* no connection with the Byzantine theological concept and its anthropological development. The conceptual elaboration of this paradigm must produce a different concept and constitute a separate and independent line in the study of synergy. However, *a posteriori* we discover many links between this line and the theological-anthropological mainstream. First of all, in all its domains synergy keeps the same core, the basic structure of two energies, “inner” and “outer”, that come from different sources and have their meeting and contact characterized by coherence between them and leading to cardinal changes in the “inner” field. In the domain of theology, this structure is represented by the Divine and human energies, and their contact opens the way to the *theosis*, the actual ontological transcension of the human being. In the domain of anthropology, the meeting of the two energies is interpreted as the anthropological unlocking and the basic structure has a series of representations corresponding to different paradigms of human constitution; in this domain, the contact of the two energies opens the way to the formation of structures of human personality and identity. As distinct from these domains, in the domain of synergetics the dynamical mechanism of the action of outer energy is concretized as the mechanism of self-organization generating definite dynamical structures. It means that the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” is more technical and less general than both the theological and anthropological paradigms, which do not prescribe the exact mechanism of the interaction of energies of different nature (especially in such case as ontological transcension).

---

<sup>11</sup> I.Prigogine, I.Stengers. Order out of chaos. Man’s new dialogue with nature. Moscow, 1986. P.54. (The back-translation of the Russian translation of the original published in 1984.)

However, in order to understand the relations between the different domains of synergy comprehensively, we must also take into account that one can find numerous examples of the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” in anthropology. Presenting synergy as an anthropological paradigm, we did not describe the practices implementing this paradigm in detail. Now, if we consider these practices in a more detailed way, we discover in many cases synergetic mechanisms at work.

Let us come back to the hesychast practice at its higher steps when synergy is achieved. In our brief description of these steps in Section 1, we have already noticed their resemblance to processes of self-organization. Now we shall characterize this resemblance more precisely. In the presence of synergy, all the process of hesychast self-transformation acquires another type of dynamics. Of course, in all its parts it is always the stepwise ascent to the *theosis* by the hesychast Ladder; but now the ascent becomes spontaneous to a considerable extent, and the steps are energetic configurations of a new type: they represent specific dynamic forms emerging from each other in a strictly ordered succession and they cannot be produced separately from spiritual practice, in usual regimes and practices of empiric existence. I describe briefly the principal of them. The first one is the structure “mind plus heart” obtained by means of the procedure of “bringing the mind down into the heart” and representing a certain inseparable conjugation of intellectual and emotional energies that can be established and maintained due to synergy only. As hesychasts discovered, such conjugation provides “the helm for navigating the ship of the soul”: now the ascetic can rearrange his consciousness forming up the centre called “mind-bishop” that “sets up the laws for every activity of the soul and every limb of the body” (st. Gregory Palamas). Evidently, such united controlling centre makes all man’s energetic configurations incomparably more ordered and coherent. This structure serves as a dynamical basis for all the next steps. For the most part, they are related to new forms of prayer, in which the action of outer energy becomes more and more explicit. The main hesychast term for them is “pure prayer”. In such prayer “the mind is illuminated by heavenly light” (the Light of Tabor, i.e. Divine energy) and “pours forth the prayer effortlessly as if out of some inexhaustible source”, and this prayer “can be expressed neither by sounds of a human voice nor by movements of lips nor by any combinations of words”<sup>12</sup>. There are obvious elements of the synergetic paradigm in this energetic configuration: the human being is driven far from its equilibrium states (it is so for all the steps of spiritual practice); the configuration is formed-up due to outer energy (“heavenly light”); and it represents a dynamical form of a new type corresponding to spontaneous dynamics with new mechanisms of mental activity. In the further steps such elements are multiplied and enhanced. One of the highest steps that can be called the “step of the open book” is described as follows: “The highest prayer of those who are perfect is some ascension of mind that approaches God, and God sees all the arrangement of heart open like a book filled up with writing and expressing its will in wordless images”<sup>13</sup>. In this configuration man’s consciousness or, to be more precise, the structure “mind plus heart” is transformed into the “state of an open book” which means that it is all, up to the smallest parts, open to such contact and meeting with outer energy (God’s sight, i.e. Divine energy) that does not need gradual temporal development, but is instantaneous and complete; in other words, the meeting turns into the union. In terms of theological synergy, it means that the practice advances here from synergy to *theosis*; in anthropological terms, the configuration in question represents a maximally articulated noetic structure; while in terms of synergetics, it means that this configuration represents a maximally ordered and differentiated dynamical structure.

Finally, if we look at all the series of the higher steps we notice more of synergetic patterns. Energetic configurations of all these steps have the same basic structural elements: the dominating orientation of the energies (towards the communion with Christ), the formation out of the two

---

<sup>12</sup> St. John Cassian. Works. Sergiev Posad, 1993. P. 340. (In Russian.)

<sup>13</sup> St. Nilus of Ancyra. To Magna, the deaconissa of Ancyra. On inacquisitiveness. // Dobrotolyubie. Vol.2. Sergiev Posad, 1992. P.229. (The text is here attributed to st. Nilus of Sinai, as many texts by st. Nilus of Ancyra were till recent time.)

conjugated activities, attention and prayer (“ontological mover”) and so on. It means that the practice in this higher block is the spontaneous step-by-step ascent, in which the basic structural elements remain invariant and every next energetic configuration represents more differentiated and ordered dynamical form. Clearly, this description corresponds to the dynamics of self-similarity (though the dynamical structures are not spatial formations now, and the formal definition of self-similarity through scale invariance cannot be applied to them). Thus the block of the higher steps of hesychast practice reproduces closely one of principal synergetic patterns (represented, in particular, in deterministic chaos): spontaneous generation of a hierarchy of self-similar dynamical structures. It is obvious that the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” is present here.

As a result, we find that the higher steps of hesychast practice represent the overlapping or the common part of all the three domains of synergy, theological, anthropological and synergetic. On this common territory the corresponding paradigms of synergy are perfectly in accordance with each other. The synergetic paradigm can be considered here as a particular case of the anthropological paradigm concretizing the dynamical mechanism of synergy in a definite class of anthropological practices. The presence of a common territory, on which all the three paradigms of synergy essentially coincide, makes it possible to conclude that there is one universal paradigm having the theological, anthropological and synergetic paradigms of synergy as its representations or branches.

This conclusion can be supported by other examples of synergetic phenomena in anthropology. One example is provided by the initial steps of the hesychast Ladder which are conversion and repentance. Their goal is the change-over, in which a human person passes the Spiritual Gate: rejects all former regimes of his/her usual existence and begins to follow the strategy of ontological alternative striving with all his/her energies after God. Although in this initial part the practice did not yet reach synergy, the ascetic tradition basing on its rich experience states that some presence of Divine energy, even though implicit, is necessary to an adept in order to take the road directed to Divine being (in philosophical terms, the event of the ontological choice is a genuine ontological event, it is endowed with actual ontological contents). It means that repentance, at least when it is the start of spiritual practice, presupposes a kind of “pre-synergy”, a certain initial and implicit form of synergy. Let us remember now that Orthodox and especially ascetic repentance is a large set of very specific techniques cultivating a rich spectrum of sharply negative emotions and sensations: intense and insistent self-condemnation, contrition, compunction, remorse, all this taken to the extreme limits; tears and various kinds of physical self-torture... so that all these “repentance labors” were usually regarded by positivist science as a kind of madness. These two features taken together form the conceptual frame of hesychast repentance: its goal is the start of an *ontologically* alternative strategy and its means for reaching this goal are the concentration of many extreme, unusual and painful practices. But this combination has an obvious synergetic interpretation: the goal of repentance means radical restructuring of man’s inner reality and behavioral patterns; the “repentance labors” drive his inner reality far from its usual regimes of stability and equilibrium; and then even the implicit action of ontologically outer energy (pre-synergy) generates the desired restructuring. This restructuring is, however, not followed by the generation of all the hierarchy of new dynamical forms, i.e. the establishment of full-scale synergetic dynamics; and this fact is another manifestation of the mutual accordance of the two paradigms of synergy: the phenomenon, in which anthropological synergy is present only as a certain “pre-synergy”, in the aspect of its synergetic properties shows only some “synergetic pre-synergy”.

Similar example can be found in Zen, and we shall consider it briefly so as not to restrict our discussion by hesychasm alone. We shall see that the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” is the basic mechanism behind the famous phenomenon of *satori*, the culminating event of Zen practice. It is a complex event integrated into a subtle spiritual practice that has, in its turn, its doctrinal fundament in certain schools of Buddhism. Here we shall omit all the doctrinal aspects and concentrate only on dynamical mechanisms of *satori* as an anthropological phenomenon (the detailed exposition of the

phenomenon and our interpretation of it is presented in the work<sup>14</sup>). In a very simplified description, satori or “illumination” is sudden breakthrough of man’s consciousness to some new Truth or Light or Being related directly to the final goal of all the practice. What is considered as the main distinction of satori is not so much the result of the break-through (which is close to mystical experience of many other spiritual traditions) as specific strategies and techniques developed for reaching it. The way to satori is not the stepped advancement and ascent: instead of the ladder paradigm found usually in spiritual practices we see here the *deadlock paradigm*. Man’s consciousness must be driven to the deadlock, and this deadlock must be felt most keenly, and it is only out of such deadlock that the break-through to the illumination is possible. Specific techniques invented for producing the necessary deadlock state belong to the most striking and famous elements of Zen. Very roughly, these techniques are of two kinds: 1) the actions of the Zen master with respect to the disciple who wants to reach satori, 2) the meditation on the *koans* (literally, riddle or absurd situation), special paradoxical problems that have no logical solution. The actions are sudden and unexplainable, absurd, and often shocking, rude, aggressive (e.g., in one famous episode the master has broken the leg of the disciple); *koans* plunge adept’s mind into the protracted deadlock state that brings him to the extreme limits of exhaustion and despair.

As a result, a certain psychological scheme comes into view. Man’s consciousness is driven to an extreme state full of sharp negative affects (disorientation, despair, anxiety, helplessness...); it is excited to its very limits: it knows that it is in the deadlock, and knows that it is not able to break it. In this state of maximal and unbearable inner strain the consciousness is ripe for any radical change – and at this moment some outer factor interferes suddenly: some action of the master or simply an unexpected disturbance, sound and so on. And the action of this outer force provokes the sudden breakthrough in the consciousness that is the long-awaited satori. This is the psychological mechanism or the *pattern of satori*, and we easily recognize its synergetic nature. Evidently, in the described practice the consciousness can be considered as an open system driven far from its equilibrium regimes by means of the “deadlock paradigm”, and under the conditions of this paradigm outer energy induces a radical restructuring of it. Hence we can assert that the “synergetic paradigm of synergy” is represented here. The specific feature of this representation is that outer energy acts as a momentary impulse; but similar variations of the basic synergetic mechanism are known in physical and chemical systems as well. However, like in the case of conversion and repentance in Christian practice, the event of the restructuring is not followed by the generation of the hierarchy of new structures, and we conclude that in the phenomenon of satori the synergetic dynamics is also present not in its fully developed form. In our terms, it means that it is only “synergetic pre-synergy” that is represented here. This conclusion is in accordance with the parallel between satori and the Christian conversion that has been drawn by many authors. And what matters for us, the accordance or coherence between the anthropological and synergetic paradigms of synergy is preserved too.

\*\*\*

Now our map of the territory of synergy is outlined fully. Let us add just a few concluding remarks. First of all, one must go a bit deeper into the relation of the synergetic and anthropological domains of the territory. Synergetic and anthropological (personological, philosophical, theological) discourses are very different and distant from each other, and it was important for us to disclose the areas of their mutual closeness and accordance: it made it possible to demonstrate essential unity and universality of the paradigm of synergy. However, it is equally important not to lose sight of the fundamental difference of their epistemological nature. In no way numerous applications of synergetic discourse in the sphere of the humanities withdraw the fact that this discourse can play only an auxiliary part in this sphere. Its concepts and methods belong to natural sciences and general theory of open systems. Indisputably, they form a rich conceptual and epistemological fund, but all this fund cannot describe constitutive properties of anthropological phenomena or

---

<sup>14</sup> S.Horujy. Zen as an Organon // Diogenes’ Lantern. A synergetic anthropology project in the modern context of the humanities. Moscow, 2010. Pp. 522-572. In Russian.)

philosophical subjects because all phenomena and subjects related to personal being possess specific dimensions and aspects absent on other levels of reality and irreducible to the characteristics of these levels. For this reason, synergetic mechanisms can express and explain only some particular and secondary aspects of anthropological and spiritual reality, but not its constitution. The constitution of a human person cannot be described by the synergetic paradigm, and so are all phenomena which express this constitution directly. In contrast to the anthropological paradigm of synergy, the synergetic paradigm is not a personological paradigm. It means that anthropological phenomena (and, indeed, phenomena from any sphere of the humanities) can have only some *not constitutive* properties or aspects describable adequately by means of synergetics. For no field in the sphere of the humanities synergetic discourse can serve as the basic discourse, it can only be used as a supporting discourse, and the limits of its validity must be determined on the basis of its relation to the basic humanistic discourse. (In our examples from anthropology, synergetic elements are present exactly in this supporting and auxiliary role.) Thus any statements that some or other anthropological, religious, etc. phenomena “can be described on the basis of synergetics” are essentially incorrect. They express reductionist and scientific bias or trend that ignores specific and irreducible nature of personal being and always accompanies the attempts to introduce new achievements of natural sciences into the sphere of the humanities. Manifestations of such trend abound in synergetic literature, and we hope that our map of the territory of synergy with clear borders between its domains may help to keep the proper relationship of synergetic, anthropological and theological discourses.

On the other hand, our map did not include some fields of lesser scale where synergy is also present. The most important of them is the field of biology. The phenomenon of life as such is based entirely on the fundamental principle of the energy and matter exchange between the living organism and surrounding milieu. Evidently, this principle presupposes the meeting and the concerted action of two energies, inner and outer, of different type and source, and so it represents a certain version of the paradigm of synergy; because of its central role in all living systems, one can even say that biology is the sphere of synergy *par excellence*. But what is the “biological paradigm of synergy”? It is equally evident that it should be close to the synergetic paradigm of synergy, but it has also many special features of its own: they are reflected, e.g., in such mechanisms as the diaphragms and such theories as the autopoiesis. So does it go entirely in the synergetic paradigm of synergy? This is *a priori* not known; and the analysis of the biological paradigm of synergy is today an interesting open problem.

Another open problem is the study of the phenomenon of so called *violent synergy*. It is a specific modification of synergy used in ideological/anthropological practices of totalitarian regimes. In this case outer energy is represented by the totalitarian terror machine that inculcates on man’s consciousness the basic contents of the totalitarian dogma embracing all the principal aspects of man’s existence, ideological standings, emotional reactions, behavioral patterns and so on. Exerting all means of extreme, unbearable pressure on the consciousness, the totalitarian message performs a kind of the breaking-open the consciousness, it enters deeply into it and acts incessantly; so that eventually the consciousness starts involuntarily to respond to this message. It starts to convince itself that the message is acceptable, is good after all, and so it develops gradually the collaboration with the outer energy of the terror machine. The final result is unmistakable synergy, the coherence and collaboration of the two energies, but the way to it was the breaking-in and violence. So in what domain of the territory of synergy are we here? There is no answer yet since the phenomenon was just briefly described so far in my recent works.

The last but not least, there is one more subject that should necessarily be mentioned. Synergy is inseparable of energy, any definition or description of it goes in terms of energy, and so its conceptual analysis cannot be complete if it does not include conceptual analysis of energy. Unfortunately, we are exactly in this situation. In both the theological and anthropological domains there is no concept of “human energy”, although this term is used abundantly (only Divine energy has got a proper conceptual elaboration in Orthodox theology of energies). Classical conceptions of

energy by Aristotle and Plotinus do not fit the context of anthropological practices and activities of consciousness, and the term “energies” (or “human energies”, “psychic energies”, etc.) used in this context – in psychology, ascetics, and other discourses – is nothing but conventional name for some reality that successfully resists conceptualization so far<sup>15</sup>. This lacuna is in no way accidental. Energy, like Being, is a great *topos* of philosophical reflection; but, in contrast to Being, it was left out of sight in the Western philosophical tradition. It is only in the 20<sup>th</sup> c., due to the powerful effort and influence of Heidegger, that the problem of energy comes back to the forefront of philosophical thought as one of its cardinal open problems. As for the paradigm of synergy, it constitutes an ancient and important *sub-topos* in the great *topos* of energy. Studies of synergy must be coordinated with the modern advancements in this *topos*, and the conceptual lacuna in the synergic discourse must be reflected upon thoroughly.

Surely, this brief discussion does not exhaust all open problems in the sub-*topos* of synergy. As our survey shows, the situation in this sub-*topos* is in active development, and the ancient paradigm of synergy still has rich heuristic resources. Avoiding the use of the classical essentialist discourse, it is of fully nonclassical nature. Providing a synthesis of concepts and methods of secular and religious discourse, it can contribute to the development of modern postsecularist ideas. And both these aspects show that it can play an important part in the formation of the new vision of reality that is emerging now.

#### ABSTRACT

The talk presents a systematic analysis of the concept of synergy in principal spheres of its usage, both in history and contemporary academic discourse. It is found that the “territory of synergy” formed by all its meanings includes three main domains, resp., in theology (chronologically, the earliest appearance of synergy), anthropology and synergetics. Corresponding versions of synergy are described, and their mutual relations are elucidated. It is shown that of all versions, the most important role belongs to synergy in anthropology: the original theological notion of synergy can be translated to anthropology as a paradigm of man’s “ontological unlocking” and then extended to a general paradigm of human constitution that is a core of anthropology of a new type, nonclassical, nonessentialist and subjectless. What is more, we describe a program that makes it possible to develop the line of anthropological extensions of synergy even further converting synergy into the methodological principle of a new episteme for the humanities. Analyzing the relation of this “anthropological mainstream” in the usage of synergy to synergy in synergetics, we find overlapping parts of the two domains.

The general conclusion is drawn that all the territory of synergy corresponds basically to one universal paradigm with ramified structure and great heuristic resource which is not yet exhausted by far.

---

<sup>15</sup> In synergetic anthropology and other anthropological and psychological theories that try to preserve correct and rigorous discourse, one avoids the use of the term “human energies” finding various substitutes and correlates (e.g., *katexis* in Freud’s works); synergetic anthropology uses “anthropological manifestations” as the basic term.