The Tragedy of Philosophy

(PHILOSOPHY AND DOGMA)

SERGIJ BULGAKOV

Translated by Stephen Churchyard

Foreword by John Milbank

Angelico Press

Copyright © Angelico Press 2020
Foreword © John Milbank 2020

All rights reserved:
No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, without permission

For information, address:
Angelico Press, Ltd.
169 Monitor St.
Brooklyn, NY 11222
www.angelicopress.com

978-1-62138-558-5 pb
978-1-62138-559-2 cloth
978-1-62138-560-8 ebook

Book and cover design
by Michael Schrauzer
Cover image:
Kazimir Malevich, *Dynamic Suprematism* (1915)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE AUTHOR

(*Preface to the German edition of* 1927)

THE WORK WHICH IS NOW PLACED BEFORE THE reader was written about five years ago (in 1920–21) in the Russian South. Although its contents represent a kind of culmination of my work in the field of philosophy, it may be proper to mention that its execution is marked by the external conditions under which it was written, and that it was particularly affected by my having only limited access to the relevant literature. Nevertheless, I retain it in its original form, with only minor corrections. Its real theme—which it shares with many of my earlier works, and, in particular, with *Unfading Light*—is the nature of the relationship between philosophy and religion, or the religious and intuitive basis of *any* philosophizing. This connection, which was, for me, already immutably fixed in its general outlines, is set out more concretely here; the history of modern philosophy is presented in its fully religious nature as a Christian heresiology. Modern philosophy is a tragedy of thought which cannot find a way out of its difficulties. The present work differs from Irenaeus's *Against the Heretics*, Athanasius's *Against the Pagans*, and so on, in its material and in its form, and it pertains to a different historical epoch, but it belongs in the same line as they, and is dedicated to what is essentially the same topic. Christian dogmatics as both criterion and *measure* of the veracity of philosophical constructions—such is the immanent judgement upon philosophy passed by philosophy's own history, and in the light of which, as Hegel writes, *die Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht* [world-history is the world's court of judgement].[1]

The Author.

Prague, March 1925.

1 "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht" is a line from Friedrich Schiller's poem "Resignation. Eine Fantasie" (1786), and the remark was later quoted and commented on in Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. — *Trans.*

I

Types of Philosophical Construction

1

The Nature of Thought

THERE EXISTS A COMPLEX OF PROBLEMS NATURAL to philosophical thought, together with aporias which are inescapable for philosophy, or from which it can exit only at great cost, by falling into the one-sidedness of "abstract principles," into philosophical heresy—if by "heresy," αἵρησις [*hairēsis*], we mean the arbitrary election, the choice, of some single thing or part instead of the whole: that is, precisely, a one-sidedness.[1] This election, this heresy, determines the theme and the characteristics of a philosophical system; it makes a system into both a thesis and an antithesis with respect to other systems, and incorporates it into the chain of dialectical thought, just as Hegel attempted, not without reason, to incorporate the whole history of philosophy into his own work. All philosophical systems known to the history of philosophy constitute such "heresies," such conscious and deliberate one-sidednesses, in that in all of them one side wishes to be everything, to extend to everything. A preliminary answer can be given to the question of what gives rise to this sort of one-sidedness or monothematism, from which the variety of the whole is then derived and developed. It is not difficult to suggest the reason, which lies readily to hand. It is the spirit of *system* and the pathos of system; and a system is nothing other than the reduction of many and all into one, and, conversely, the deduction of all and many out of one. Logical continuity, or, what amounts to the same thing, the continuous logical deduction of all from one, making the whole system circle around a single centre which can be passed through in any direction, and which admits of no hiatus or discontinuity of any kind: this is the task which human thought naturally and inevitably strives to complete, not stopping short of violence and self-deception, of evasions and illusions. Logical monism, which is a natural requirement of reason—*ratio*—and which already presupposes the possibility of an accurate and non-contradictory conception of the world, forms an ineliminable feature of every philosophical system, each of which claims, dimly or

1 The phrase "abstract principles" alludes to V.S. Solovyov's work *Critique of Abstract Principles* (1880) — *Trans.*

distinctly, instinctively or consciously, timidly or militantly, to be the absolute philosophy, and each of which regards its own sketch of what is as the system of the world.

The crucial question is this: is such a monistic system of the world at all possible? Is an absolute philosophy possible? And what is the foundation for such a faith in reason, in the power of reason, and in the correctness of reason's own way of understanding its role? This question is usually answered in a spirit of scepticism, of relativism, or of shameless repartee, *à la* Pontius Pilate: "what is truth?" Quite apart from the fact that scepticism too is, in its way, an absolute philosophy which lays claim to a very great deal, scepticism runs counter to reason's self-consciousness, to its seriousness, its persistence, its relentlessness, or, to speak more precisely, to reason's inescapable problematic. Reason cannot be corrupted by scepticism, for it is conscious of its own strength and of what it wishes to achieve. So great is reason's seriousness that it cannot be affected by sceptical frivolity, and authentic and deliberate scepticism has, historically speaking, been a rare phenomenon. Usually scepticism is mixed with various shades of relativism, that is, of a primitive, crude, scientific dogmatism, which can never be far removed from scepticism (such, for example, is contemporary scientific positivism). Reason attempts, and cannot not attempt, new flights; but each such flight is attended by a fall, and the history of philosophy is not only the story of these flights, but is also a melancholy tale of inevitable descents and of destined misfortunes—even if the creators of philosophical systems themselves do not notice these misfortunes, having exhausted themselves by their exertions, and remaining, like Schopenhauer, in love with their systems, or imagining, like Hegel, that they have comprehended Truth itself. So much the worse for them, since history dispels their illusions all the more thoroughly, and brands them as blind twice over. How, indeed, is it possible to keep going in the face of the plurality of systems, whilst establishing the absolute value of one's own? By branding one's rivals as idiots and charlatans, like Schopenhauer? This comes too cheap, and just reveals poor taste and a bad character. Or by interpreting them, like Hegel, as one's dialectically necessary predecessors, who are completely absorbed into the absolute system, so that the whole history of philosophy essentially turns out to be the history of Hegel's own philosophy in its dialectical self-unfolding? This signifies, without a doubt, the suppression of the

very question, and this claim too is rendered comical by the subsequent history of philosophy. Each such system wants to be the end of the world and the culmination of history; for all this, though, history continues. Like Chronos devouring his own children, the history of philosophy judges all the efforts of reason to be either nonsensical or premature. A bleak prospect—unless we are saved from it by scholarly antiquarianism, with its predilection for collecting the history of philosophy and turning it into a museum housing uncommon articles of superior intellectual elegance. If we reflect, though, that it is not shells and trinkets that are collected in this *Kunstkammer* [cabinet of curiosities], but the results of the highest efforts of human reason, we can see that a museological approach is quite inappropriate, and even blasphemous.

The history of philosophy is a tragedy. It is a tale of the repeated falls of Icarus, and of his further flights. This tragic aspect of philosophy, which is also the fate of each individual thinker, was keenly felt by certain minds, such as Heraclitus and Plato. Kant arrived at the brink of the same abyss in his doctrine of antinomies, and came to a halt. The essence of tragedy consists in a person's suffering through no fault of his own, and in the fact that even though he is in the right individually, and submits his own needs to dictates from above, he at the same time inevitably comes to grief. The philosopher cannot not fly; he must ascend into the ether; but his wings inevitably melt in the heat of the sun, and he falls and breaks into fragments. On this flight, however, he sees something, and his philosophy speaks of this vision. The true philosopher, like the true poet (who, in the end, are one and the same), never lies; he does not make anything up, and he is completely sincere and truthful. Nevertheless, his fate is to fall. For he *has desired a system.* In other words, he has wished to create a (logical) world out of himself, out of his own principle—"you shall be as gods"—but such a logical deduction of the world is not possible for a human being.[2] It is impossible, first and foremost, because of something which lies beyond the human will and the powers of reason: the world is not rational, as "deductive" philosophy, philosophical system as such, a philosophy which found its classic and most extreme expression in Hegel, wants to take it as being. More precisely, although reason governs the

2 Bulgakov quotes the words of the serpent to Adam and Eve in the garden: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5)—*Trans.*

world, it is not possible to say that everything which is actual is rational, as Hegel believed. This does not mean that the actual is non-rational, much less irrational: the actual is not only rational, but also extra-rational, and reason is by no means the single, exhaustive, and all-powerful constructor of the world for which it is involuntarily taken by any philosophical system, whenever the latter might be setting about constructing the world. Reason, in a certain sense, is only a reflection on the world, not its origin. In comprehending the world, therefore, reason is dependent on the testimony of being, on some mystical and metaphysical experience which philosophy never really renounces, since philosophy always seeks to find the origin by contemplating, beholding, and disclosing it. This disclosure is by no means an act of thought. It does not yield to intellectual exertion, nor to a chain of deductions; it is a revelation of the world itself in human consciousness, a kind of knowledge.

Another question arises at once. Knowledge of that which is, the self-revelation of that which is, is ignited within reason, but can reason master and assimilate what is being revealed? Can reason bind it into a unity, a system? It is self-evident that reason does this, and cannot not do it. Such is reason's nature; "its ideal is architectonic," to use Kant's language.[3] Yet if reason itself is empty, and incapable of creating by itself or out of itself, how can it be strong enough to bring together into a unity—that is, into a system—everything which is revealed to it? It is evident that if the world, actuality, is not a single, purely rational being, it cannot be exhaustively disclosed, even if it is revealed to reason. The world always only discloses itself, since it is in essence a mystery which contains within itself the source of new cognition and revelation. It is impossible to shine the light of reason into all the hidden corners of the universe, to abolish all mysteries, and to make them all transparent to reason, as Hegel—and, in his person, all philosophy—supposed. Hence there is only one possible outcome—a singular empiricism, freed from the narrow and vulgar idea of empiricism, and capturing living and mystical experience in all its depth. Empiricism is the true epistemology of life. It is a revelation

3 "Human reason is by nature architectonic." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), 429 (A 474/B 502). References to this work will hereafter be given as CPR, followed by the page number and references to the page numbers of the first ("A") and/or second ("B") German editions of the text, as appropriate. — *Trans.*

of mysteries, as knowledge of reality and reflection upon reality always are. At the same time, philosophy cannot by any means remain mere empiricism—which, however, is in any case impossible, because reason, which makes what is plural one, and *vice versa*, understands everything as connected to everything else. Therefore reason cannot begin itself from itself, nor generate thought out of itself, for thought is born of what truly exists, and in relation to what truly exists. Thought is born in the self-revelation of that which truly exists; reason, meanwhile, reports to itself and legislates for itself on its path and in its work.

If reason is not a First Thing, but a Second, if reason is not primordial or self-engendering, but arises from and is born of something ontologically prior to reason, then its power is also relative to that from which it was born, and which serves as the object of its knowledge. The condition of reason, like the condition of the thinking human being, is capable of varying, and possesses differing levels. After all, if we can distinguish, within philosophy, between common sense or ordinary practical thinking, understanding, and, finally, reason (a distinction made with particular clarity by Hegel), then this shows that there are degrees of reason, and that reason can be more reasonable or less reasonable. The understanding is an unreasonable reason, whose wisdom, when compared to reason, is narrow-minded. Yet understanding is at the same time, nevertheless, a power of thought, of mind; one and the same rational element is at work in reason and in the understanding. Why not postulate, then, going further still, an ascent into super-rational [*zaumnye*] realms, realms which, although they are not yet accessible to reason, are attainable in principle, and are by no means inaccessible, according to the testimony of Christian ascetics?[4] Sickness, corruption, the perversion of all human existence which presented itself in original sin, also, in other words, afflicts reason, and makes it impossible for reason to gain access to the tree of heavenly knowledge, since access is denied by the fiery sword of the cherubim—the antinomies. And wisdom in any case itself requires

4 Bulgakov's adjective also recalls *zaum* or "trans-sense," a term associated with the slogans of the Russian futurists, whom Bulgakov briefly discusses in his *Philosophy of the Name*: see "Filosofiya Imeni," in Bulgakov, *Pervoobraz i obraz: sochineniya v dvukh tomakh*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Iskusstvo and St. Petersburg: Inapress, 1999), 5–241; 40–41. Compare *La philosophie du verbe et du nom*, trans. Constantin Andronikov (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1991), 43–44—*Trans.*

reason to have self-knowledge, not only in the Kantian sense of the dismantling of a machine so that it can be cleaned and then put back together again, but in the sense of a comprehension of the real limits of reason, which have to be acknowledged, even if they bring reason up against antinomies. Hence it follows that the fundamental aspiration of reason itself, the aspiration to logical monism, that is, to a logically coherent and consequent interpretation of the world from a single beginning, turns out to be impracticable, and an absolute system of philosophy impossible. This, of course, does not change the fact that, if philosophy is impossible, philosophizing is both possible and necessary, and that reason's work of reflection and comprehension is therefore every bit as significant even as reason's own mistaken and inflated self-appraisal believes it to be.

Reason, in striving towards monism, towards a logical construction of the world out of itself, executes, in fact, an act of arbitrary will. It chooses this or that beginning from those available to it and experienced by it, and so enters upon the path of philosophical heresy, in the sense explained above. The revelation of the world is God's revelation of himself. Religious dogmas—"myths," in an epistemological sense—are also at the same time problems for reason, which reason assimilates and interprets.[5] The religious foundation of philosophizing is an indisputable fact, whether or not it is acknowledged. The history of philosophy can, in this sense, be set forth and interpreted as religious heresiology. In the history of Christian theology, what distinguishes heresy, philosophically, is precisely the fact that a complex, many-faceted, and antinomical doctrine is simplified so that reason can understand it; the doctrine is rationalized, and is thereby distorted. All fundamental heresies embody such a rationalism in their approach to dogmas. Rationalism, as such an abuse of reason, has its source in a pride in reason: pride understood not in a personal sense, as if individual philosopher-heresiologues, say, were proud, but in an objective sense, as a failure to know one's own proper nature, limits, and condition. Consequently one may say, in the language of contemporary philosophy, that philosophical heresiologues are guilty of dogmatism. They lack a critical awareness of the limits of reason.

There are three fundamental self-determinations of thought which shape thought's outcome and determine its orientation. All philosophical

5 Compare the introduction to *Unfading Light*.

systems arrange their basic principles with reference to these three frontiers: (1) hypostasis, or personhood; (2) the latter's idea or ideal form, logos, thought; (3) substantial being as the unity of all moments or states of being, as the self-actualizing whole. *I am Something* (potentially, everything): this formula, expressing a judgement, not only provides in abbreviated form a schema of what truly exists, but thereby provides a schema of the history of philosophy too. This tripartite formula, which contains within itself a logical triunity and triplicity of moments which are indisseverably connected, is incessantly cut apart in different directions by whoever is philosophizing. Philosophizing thought produces heresies through the arbitrariness of these disseverations, and through its choices of discrete beginnings; and the style of philosophizing is determined by the way in which this dissection is made. This triplicity of moments forms the basis of self-consciousness, as of every act of thought, and is imprinted upon it; it is a triunity which finds expression in the simple proposition *I is A*. If we state this in universal logico-grammatical terms—subject, predicate, and copula—it can be said that at the basis of self-consciousness lies a proposition. The spirit is a living proposition which realizes itself without ceasing. Every subject [*podlezhashchee*], whether it is a "substantive" or a word which substitutes for one, exists in the image and likeness of the first person pronoun, the subject *par excellence*, both grammatical and philosophical: the first person splinters and multiplies into innumerable mirroring repetitions.[6] The first person pronoun, a mystical verbal gesture, has a completely unique nature, and is the basis on which any given thing can be a substantive. Every proposition can be traced back to the model of the combination of the I with its predicate; it can even be said that the real subject of the sentence is the I, since the sentence in its entirety is a predicate of the I—for in relation to the I everything, all meaning as such, is a predicate, and every new judgement is, in its substance if not in its form, a new self-determination of the I. Every judgement derives, ontologically, from the universal relation of subject to object, which are no other than the I, the hypostasis, and its nature, which reveals the content of the hypostasis, its predicate; the judgement connects the predicate with the subject through the copula of

6 The basic thesis about the word which is referred to here is developed in my study "On the philosophy of the name" (in manuscript). (This was later published as *Filosofiya Imeni.—Trans.*)

being. The judgement-form contains the mystery of thought, the nature of thought; this form is the key to the comprehension of philosophical constructions. The self-enclosed I finds itself on an island inaccessible to any kind of thinking or being, but discovers within itself a certain image of being, which it expresses [*vyskazyvaetsya*] using the "predicate" [*skazuemom*], and which it recognizes as born of itself, as a revelation of itself, as is the copula too. In this sense our whole life, and therefore all of our thinking too, is a continuously self-realizing proposition, a proposition which consists of a subject, a predicate, and a copula. This, however, is precisely why philosophy concerns itself least of all with the proposition or the judgement as the universal form of thought, the form which is implied by thought in and of itself; and even logic and grammar address it only in their own way, through a narrow framing of the question. Not even Kantian critique remarks on the universal significance of the judgement or proposition. The proposition contains the essence and the image of being, and bears the mystery of being within itself, for there it keeps hidden the image of triadicity. The proposition bears witness that this essential relation resists any monism or philosophy of identity which would try to disintegrate these three members by reducing them to one, by reducing them to a subject or a predicate or a copula. Every philosophical system, in so far as it is a philosophy of identity, is governed by an attempt of this kind: the subject, or the copula, or the predicate is announced as the single beginning, and everything is made to derive from it or to lead towards it. Such a "deduction," whether of the subject from the predicate, of the predicate from the subject, or of both from the copula, in fact presents philosophy with its principal task, and, thereby presents an insoluble difficulty to philosophical thought, which strives towards monism, strives to reduce everything to a first unity, no matter what. To take as its point of departure a primordial unity which denies the triadic nature of the proposition: such is the root of every philosophical system, and of its tragedy. This unity is not merely something which thought postulates, but is also the axiom from which thought begins, and this axiom underlies the whole history of philosophy.

Nevertheless, *this axiom is untrue*, which is why all the efforts of philosophy are in vain, and cannot but represent a series of tragic failures, characterized by the following model: the heat of the sun inevitably melts the wax which holds Icarus's wings together, whichever direction he might

be flying in. For as the subject-predicate form testifies, reflecting, in this, the structure of the real itself, the basis of reality is not unitary, but triune, and the false monism to which the philosophy of identity pretends is a delusion, the πρῶτον ψεῦδος [primary falsehood] of philosophy. Substance is one, yet three, and this interconnected unity and multiplicity of the moments of substance can never be surmounted, which is why such an overcoming ought not to be attempted. The hypostasis, the person, the I, exists in so far as it has a nature of its own, that is, an unceasing predication, a revelation of its own which it can never exhaustively utter. "Substance" exists not only "in itself," as a subject, but also "for itself," as a predicate, and, moreover, "in and for itself," in the copula, as existence. And these three beginnings are by no means merely dialectical moments of a unity, negating each other and being sublated into a synthesis; no, they are, simultaneously and with equal dignity, three, like three roots of being which in their joint result make up the life of substance.

The hypostatic I is, in and of itself, essentially indefinable. Everyone is an I, and knows what is being referred to, even if this cannot be spoken (but only implied). The essence of the hypostasis consists precisely in the fact that it is indefinable and indescribable; it stands beyond the limits of the word and of the concept, which is why it cannot be expressed by word or concept, even though it continually reveals itself in them. Face to face with the Hypostasis, it is most becoming to be silent; only a mute mystical gesture is possible, a gesture which does not have a name, but which is marked, "instead of a name" [*vmesto imeni*] by the "pro-noun" [*mestoimeniye*], *I*.[7] This indefinability is not, however, a void, a logical nullity; on the contrary, the hypostasis is the precondition of logic, the subject of thought. It is a mistake to think that thought stands on its own two feet, that it supports itself. Thought arises from and consists in that which is not thought, but which at the same time is not foreign to thought's nature or alien to it, something out of which thought arises, and around which thought continuously entwines itself. If anywhere, the Kantian separation of noumenon from phenomenon is appropriate just here, to characterize the mutual relationship between the hypostasis and its nature, between subject [*sub"ekt*] and object, between subject [*podlezhashchee*] and predicate. For the *I*, the hypostasis, is indeed a thing in

7 More on this can be found in the work on the name mentioned above.

itself (a noumenon), and, as spirit itself, remains by its nature forever transcendent to thought, transcendent to any attitude or relation which thought might have towards it. But the transcendent is always also inseparably linked to the immanent; the transcendent becomes immanent. The subject, the hypostasis, is always revealed, always expresses itself, in the predicate. It goes without saying that the hypostasis in this sense is not the psychological I, psychological subjectivity, which already defines the hypostasis as a predicate, not as a subject: spirit is not psychological, nor is the hypostasis in any way a psychologism. Nor is the hypostasis the epistemological *I*, which Kant thinks of as the unity of transcendental apperception. This too is merely a placeholder "I," its "transcendental" predicate, and it is a mistake to think that the immeasurable depth of the hypostatic spirit could be reduced to this point of light, to a torch of cognizing consciousness. This is testified to, for one thing, by the fact that Kant in all his critiques takes notice of the fact that the hypostatic and noumenal I is an indissoluble unity, a unity which is realized not only in cognition, but also in the will, in feeling, in action, and in the whole of life. It connects "pure," "practical" and "aesthetic" (evaluative) reason. The hypostatic I is a living spirit—but "living" and "spirit" are in any case synonyms—and its life force cannot be exhausted by any definition. It reveals itself in time, but is itself not only above time, but above temporality itself. For the hypostasis there is neither origin nor demise, neither beginning nor end. Atemporal, the hypostasis is at the same time supra-temporal. Eternity belongs to the hypostasis; it is eternal in the same sense as eternal God, who Himself breathed His own Spirit into humanity at the latter's creation. The human being is the son of God and a created god; the image of eternity is an inalienable and indelible part of him. Therefore man can neither think nor desire his own annihilation, the extinguishing of the I (suicide attempts represent a kind of philosophical misunderstanding, and are directed not at the I itself, but only at the way in which it exists, directed not at the subject, but at the predicate). The hypostatic I is the philosophical and grammatical Subject of all predicates; its life is this predicate, endless in its breadth and depth.

But are we not, here, introducing into metaphysics as a founding principle something which cannot be defined in any way, since it is something which is in principle transcendent to thought? Are there not misunderstandings, mistakes, absurdities here? How can the unthinkable

be thought? How can the unutterable be expressed? Is the verbal and mystical gesture of the pronoun really a word? Or is the I really a concept, when, by virtue of its own uniqueness and singularity, it destroys every concept, destroys, that is, the universal, the idea? Do we not, in sum, come up against a critical *veto* so strict that only those who are completely philosophically naive are not afraid of it?[8]

Such fears are the result of a timorous epistemological imagination. They are linked to the prejudice which holds that thought possesses the power to give birth to itself, that it has for its object something immanent to itself, that is, itself: a thinking that thinks itself, at once subject [*podlezhashchee*] and predicate. In reality, thought originates in a subject [*sub"ekt*]; thought is thought by a hypostasis, which continually reveals itself in thought. But this hypostasis is beyond the bounds of thought, and, as fully transcendent to thought, is a zero for it; whatever is perfectly and completely transcendent to thought, that is, simply does not exist for thought. Yet such transcendence is nothing other than a mathematical limit, which it is never possible for thought to make real, and the *Ding an sich*, the thing in itself, is still τὸ νοούμενον [*to nooumenon*], the intelligible. That which thought conceives of as transcendent to thought is, precisely, *non-thought*, and is in this sense alien to the nature of thought; it is, however, at the same time akin to thought, accessible to thought, revealed in thought. Transcendence is, by definition, a concept correlated with immanence, and in this sense it is possible to regard as transcendent that object of thought which is at the same time thought's philosophical subject, its hypostasis, or its grammatical subject. What is transcendent to thought is not that which is unthinkable, because it contradicts, destroys, and tears thought apart (besides, such a thing does not exist for thought; it is for thought an "outer darkness," a pure zero), but non-thought — or, more precisely, that which is not *only* thought, yet which is realized by means of thought. The whole problem of the conceivability of an object of thought consists, as we can see, in this problem of transcendence. One can expand the field of categorial synthesis at will, and can at will see, in things, categories of thought; but this fundamental question, of the conceivability of that which is not thought, or which is not only thought, retains all its force, and is thereby only transposed to another place.

8 "Veto" is in Latin in the original text. — *Trans.*

It is clear that thought cannot, from its own resources alone, give an answer to the question of how something transcendent is to be thought, how that which is *non-thought* can enter thought, can become thinkable, how the light of the *logos* can be diffused over a realm hitherto unknown to light, or how the matter of thought could be captured using the net of logic or categorial syntheses. Some sort of pre-logical constatation takes place here; a boundary separates thought from that which is non-thought. In this way, at the basis of thought lies a living act, testified to by the living image of thought, i.e., the proposition; and this act has three moments, which are linked, but not reducible, to each other. These moments are the pure hypostasis, the *I*, which is the philosophical and grammatical subject; the nature of the I, which reveals itself in and to the hypostasis, which is the predicate; and self-knowledge, self-ascription of one's own proper nature to oneself, the act of realizing oneself in one's proper nature, which is being or the copula, the *I* as living self-knowledge and self-affirmation. The eternal *I* has (potentially) everything, or the world, as its predicate, and in the act of this consciousness, it lives and recognizes its own being. Hypostasis, intellectual form, being (nature)—such is the triunity of substance, its statics and dynamics; but thought, in this triunity, is the predicate and only the predicate. All three members are inseparable from each other, for the hypostasis is not thinkable in isolation from its nature, just as no substantial nature exists without the hypostasis whose nature it is, and the hypostasis's taking-possession of its nature, the disclosure of this nature, is an act of being, is being as such, is life, and this is why it is by no means a concept or a logical definition, even though it is closely contiguous with the logical. For this reason, what truly exists [*sushchee*] is a *prius*, and stands before being or existence; existence is a continual enacting of the hypostasis's synthesis with its own nature, a self-revelation in the act of being. Philosophical thought has always looked for a definition of substance without finding one, for the reason that (if we except Christian dogmatics, with its doctrine of triadicity) it was seeking a bad, abstract unity, a simple and single substantiality. All the efforts of logical monism, which determines the task to be performed by philosophical systems, and which is an axiom universally implied by these systems, amount to reducing the triadicity of moments, the triunity of substance, to a unity; thought strives to assimilate to itself that which lies at the basis of thought but which

is, however, unthinkable—or which, in logical language, is "irrational," is a kind of $\sqrt{2}$.[9] The "law" of identity, whose inverse counterpart is the law of contradiction, is fundamental; it is thought's self-definition and self-cognizance, which secures thought's continuity and keeps its immanent course free from leaps and hiatuses. Yet this law—or, more accurately, this postulate—of identity, which is applicable to everything which falls within the boundaries of thought, is nevertheless completely inapplicable to the origin of thought. It founders upon the basic form of thought, the judgement or proposition. Kant set up an entirely arbitrary and untrue distinction between analytic and synthetic judgements, a distinction which possesses a very great significance for his system. In reality (as Hegel remarks in the *Science of Logic*) all judgements are both synthetic and analytic in their form; under the guise of what is familiar and self-evident (analytic) they constitute a leap over an impassable gulf, and unite what that gulf divides (synthesis).[10] "**I** am A": this cell of thought signifies a fundamental denial of the very principle of the law of identity. The latter could only at best lead to mere iteration: **I—I—I—I...—I**, and so on, a fruitlessly self-repeating or self-consuming I. However, it is necessary to point out that the second I in the proposition "I—I," the predicate, is not the same as the unutterable, hypostatic I which is the philosophical or grammatical subject; this second I, as a predicate, already contains an idea within itself (and in this sense it is already a *not-I* in relation to the hypostatic I of the subject).

Subject and predicate—and this is the whole point—by no means constitute a logical analysis, a deduction, a syllogism, or a demonstration

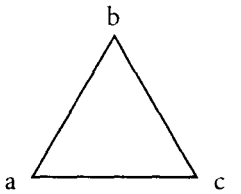
9 The square root of 2 is a so-called "irrational" number. Cf. *OED*, 3. "*Math.* Of a number, quantity, or magnitude: Not rational; not commensurable with ordinary quantities such as the natural numbers; not expressible by an ordinary (finite) fraction, proper or improper (but only by an infinite continued fraction, or an infinite series, *e.g.*, an interminate decimal). Usually applied to roots (denoted by the radical sign $\sqrt{}$, or in *Algebra* by fractional indices) whose value cannot be exactly found in finite terms of the unit, or to expressions involving such roots; the same as *surd*." — *Trans.*

10 On the non-absoluteness of the analytic-synthetic distinction, see, for example, the section on "The absolute idea" in G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969), 838: "though the method of truth which comprehends the subject matter is, as we have shown, itself analytic, for it remains entirely within the concept, yet it is equally synthetic, for through the concept the subject matter is determined dialectically and as an other." From this point onwards this work will be referred to as "SL." In all translations from this work, "concept" has been substituted for Miller's "Notion" as a translation of *Begriff*. — *Trans.*

(which are possible only in relation to a combination of propositions already present) but a completely non-logical, or, more exactly, an *extra*-logical synthesis. **I** is not-**I**, **I** = not-**I**, I is revealed in the not-I and through the not-I, which thereby becomes the I. The proposition always contains a synthesis of *I* and *not-I*. How can the subject be defined by the predicate, I by not-I? There cannot be a logical answer to this question, even though this definition possesses the force of a fundamental logical fact by virtue of which thought is possible as such. Conscious, self-legitimating thought, which is immanent and continuous in its movement and development, cannot comprehend itself in its own birth, in its very first cell. The relationship between the subject and the predicate cannot be defined as necessary and continuous thinking, but only as a self-generation: just as the word is born out of that which is not yet a word, so thought, too, is born in a place where there is not yet any logical connection, where such a connection is only just coming into being. This relationship is expressed in the naive chatter of philosophical empiricism and positivism, which quite rightly feel both the inexpressibility of the real, and logic's powerlessness to ground concrete knowledge. Here, of course, there arises the question whether all judgements of the type *A is B*, in all its modalities, can fairly be reduced to the type *I am A*. Are these not two completely different kinds of judgement? Although they are of course different in their content, they are identical in their structure. The epistemologically (and anthropologically) prior and typical form is, without doubt, *I am A*. From the I emerge the second and third person pronouns, and all forms of judgement spring from the latter by way of a personification of the concept. At the same time, it can be said that every judgement about an object can itself be regarded as a predicate of the I, as the I's self-definition: even if the independent grammatical subject ("this table is black") provides such a proposition with a likeness of hypostaticity, a likeness which is incessantly created by our I in innumerable mirroring repetitions, every proposition of this type is essentially (epistemologically and metaphysically) only a predicate of the I: I see, I think, I sense this black table. This judgement succinctly expresses the being of the table in itself and, *like the I*, for itself: this table is black. The original source of the thought, in each case, is not here, is not in these object-like grammatical subjects, but is in the initial formula: I am something, I am not-I (as Fichte, with exceptional perspicacity, noticed).

The I, as a hypostasis, is self-enclosed and inaccessible; it must bring about its own revelation of itself within itself, within its own depths and its own nature—a revelation which would already be an other with respect to the I, and which in this sense would be a not-I, but which would at the same time also be a revelation of the I. The copula, *is*—an "auxiliary verb" so familiar and so innocent in grammar, and so enigmatic and so significant in philosophy—testifies to and announces this. This IS, which is the chief instrument of the operations of thought, is also, logically, completely impossible, since it combines as equal and identical what is different and other. *A is A* is either a nonsensical, redundant expression, devoid of definite content and of effective significance alike, or it is a synthesis of the same with the different, of the other with the identical. Every *is* has originally not a grammatical or a logical, but an ontological, meaning. The hypostasis's self-revelation takes place in the *is*. *Is* is a bridge over the abyss, unifying what truly exists [*sushchee*] with being, subject with predicate, confirming their reality and existence. It is by means of the *is* that the image of what truly exists [*sushchego*] can be posited in being, that this image is brought to life and lives. The copula, IS, is the life of that which is. Therefore, substance—that is, spirit—is that triunity of the subject, the object, and the link between them which exists *in actu*, is their being; all three moments belong to this movement without separation and without confusion. No hypostasis exists without a nature which is the basis of its objectivity, and there is no being without a subject [*podlezhashchee*], without that which truly exists [*suschego*], or without its predicate, its nature. That which truly exists [*sushchee*] posits existence; being is the actual presence of that which truly exists [*sushchego*], which remains, in its self-sufficiency, higher than being. The inseparability of these moments is of itself, it would seem, clear; yet their inconfusibility must be equally so. Philosophy errs in both respects when it renounces triunity for the sake of unity. Each of these three moments, moreover, contains and preserves both of the others as actually present in itself. Pure hypostaticity cannot become an object of thought without being defined in respect of its being, that is, without having a predicate or a context in being. Bare hypostaticity, natureless and beyond being, is a pure zero, which can be arrived at only as a remainder, after every possible content of thought has been removed by an operation of intellectual abstraction. The copula, *to be*, which binds

the hypostasis, the subject, to the predicate, is so durable that no power whatever, whether in heaven, on earth, or in the nether world, is able to rend it asunder. And this copula combines the hypostasis with its nature in the act of living, the act of being. Each sees itself in the other; they are correlated so that each, with the help of the copula, leads to the other. The hypostasis is not even a hypostasis without an object [*ob'ekt*] or without a predicate; it is necessarily a hypostasis of someone and for someone, just as no determination or predicate can be a *res nullius* [nobody's], can lack a hypostatic face. And it is self-evident that being, or the copula, necessarily has members which it links, the subject and the predicate, that the copula is someone's and something's being. In this way, substance is like an equilateral triangle



whose angles may be placed in any order, but in which each of the three necessarily presupposes both of the others.

Substance is thus a metaphysical triunity which finds expression in the proposition. This triunity must be strictly distinguished from Hegel's (putatively) dialectical triad, whose moments constitute either the simple analysis of a synthetic thought, or the moments of a single simple thought, in which each predecessor moment is absorbed or annulled by its successor, and in which, in the last analysis, thesis and antithesis lose their independent meaning and existence, and live on in the synthesis. Despite the intentional and hyperbolic sharpening of dialectic, its contradictions are completely sublated and cleared up in its relativity; these contradictions prove either to be moments in the development of the concept or to be misunderstandings. The triunity of substance which is under discussion here, by contrast, is completely non-dialectical; no kind of development of any concept whatever is brought about in it; in it there is no thesis, antithesis, or synthesis. True, there is a sequence, an order, and a connection between its moments, which results from the correlation intrinsic to them. The subject, the hypostasis, is the first; the predicate, the εἶδος [*eidos*], the second; the copula, existence, φύσις [*phusis*], the

third. Yet it is impossible to say that the third element is thereby in any sense the synthesis of the first and the second, or that the first is the thesis to the second's antithesis. In general, these three moments are by no means of a logical nature, of the kind which necessarily characterizes dialectical contradictions. On the contrary, they stand for ontological relationships, which are givens for logic, and which may not be overcome by logic even if they cause serious difficulties for the latter. To resolve the triunity of substance into a dialectical triunity would mean to overcome it through logic, and to award victory to logical monism, that is, to a system of absolute philosophy possessing a single center. But this is impossible. It is impossible to break off or to blunt the corners of the triunity of substance, which lies at the basis of every thought, and which constitutes thought's outcome. This logical triunity is already unacceptable for thought, because thought searches for a single beginning and wishes to build only upon what is single. To start out from three beginnings is impossible for thought if it wishes to remain self-sufficient and immanent, and if, following ancient Parmenides, its creed is that "[t]hought and what it thinks about are one and the same,— no thought can be discovered without existence, since thought is spoken in existence. There is nothing other than being [that is, in this case, nothing apart from a logical first principle—*S.B.*] and there never will be."[11] The supra- or non-logical outcome of thought turns out to be anti-logical, too; or, to put it differently, it can be said that the object of thought—substance, that which is—is not immanent to thought, as philosophy invariably wishes and here claims in the person of Parmenides; thought's object is

11 This is a translation of part of Parmenides' fragment 8; I have translated it directly from Bulgakov's Russian. I give the text from G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 252.

ταὐτὸν δ' ἐστι νοεῖν, καὶ οὕνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.
οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ὠι πεφατισμένον ἐστίν,
εὑρήσεις τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γὰρ <ἢ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται
ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος,. . . .
[tauton d'esti noein, kai houneken esti noēma.
ou gar aneu tou eontos, en hoi pephatismenon estin,
eurēseis to noein: ouden gar [ē] estin ē estai
allo parex tou eontos,. . . .]

Kirk, Raven and Schofield translate thus: "The same thing is there to be thought and is why there is thought. For you will not find thinking without what is, in all that has been said. For there neither is nor will be anything besides what is . . ." —*Trans.*

instead transcendent to thought, and presents an extra-rational [*zaumnij*] mystery in relation to thought, a mystery which reason can only grope for, having oriented itself according to its own bases. Reason naturally falls into antinomies which determine its own structure and tasks. This does not deprive reason of the possibility of contemplating that which is, nor of that of philosophizing about the meaning and significance of these contemplations. Reason is, instead, bound up with these contemplations: thought has empirical roots. But this means that reason does not start out from an empty place; it does not, like a spider, spin its thread out of itself, but begins from mystical facts and metaphysical givens.[12] In other words, every philosophy is a philosophy of revelation—the revelation of Divinity in the world. The axioms of philosophy cannot be deduced, but only formulated; and autonomous, pure philosophy is either impossible or must with inescapable fatality meet its end in aporia, resulting in a tragedy from which there is no way out. These words should in no way be heard as skeptical. Altogether to the contrary: faith in a truth which is deeper than reason, and which lies beyond reason, by no means impairs or paralyzes our flights towards this truth. Nor can we see in this an abolition of philosophy. Philosophy, having freed itself from false claims, affirms instead that place which properly belongs to it. What is disputed and rejected here is only rationalism's claim to be able to build a single, absolute, transparent system of the world—that is, just that claim which, now in militant and self-confident, now in muted and melancholy tones, is the soul of modern philosophy since Descartes, and which finds its classic and most extreme expression in Hegel. The latter quite openly and consistently placed philosophy above religion, whilst simultaneously admitting that the object of philosophy and religion was identical, yet distinguishing between the methods by which they mastered it. We hold the contrary: religion, as revelation, as

12 For the image of self-sufficient rationalism as a spider spinning a web out of itself, see the bee's rhetorical question to the spider in Jonathan Swift's "Battle of the Books," in *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 151: "the Question comes all to this; Whether is the nobler Being of the two, that which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an over-weening Pride, which feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last, but Fly-bane and a Cobweb, Or That which, by an universal Range, with long Search, much Study, true Judgment, and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax."—*Trans.*

a doctrine which is not rationalistic but dogmatic and mythopoeic, precedes philosophy, and, to this extent, stands higher than it. In this sense every philosophy, as a doctrine of the world, of everything, inevitably also theologizes. If man were able to generate the world *logically*, that is, to comprehend it through reason alone, he would, in such a case, be a god himself, or be completely merged with the God who creates the world (and this is what Hegel, essentially, claimed). Then his philosophy would of course also be theology, having attained to the highest degree of consciousness. But even that philosophy accessible to human beings is naturally theological, in view of the fact that the mysteries of God and the world are here disclosed logically, through the development of thought. Yet we do not mean, here, the self-consciousness of an immanent thought which, since it generates its own content itself, lacks for nothing. We mean elements quite alien to thought and inadmissible by thought, elements which, nevertheless, turn out to be the basis of thought. The antinomies by which reason is cloven are just those which build it up and which give it determinate form.

Thus "critical antinomism" in metaphysics and in epistemology replaces dogmatic rationalism. The latter is a self-intoxication of reason, reason's ecstasy over its own powers, and a desire to stake everything on reason to the very end, to pursue the experiment of a rational interpretation of the entire world. Such an experiment was pursued in its most grandiose form, of course, by Hegel. Criticism consists precisely in clarifying reason's grounds and structure—not in order to dethrone reason, but, on the contrary, so as to strengthen it. And it is precisely in the light of this critique that the history of philosophy can be seen to be a tragic heresiology.

2

Characteristics of the History of Modern Philosophy

THREE INSEPARABLE AND INCONFUSIBLE MOMENTS of substance and of substantial relation—(1) the hypostasis, the subject; (2) the determination or nature, the predicate; and (3) being or reality, the copula—in the history of philosophy, these moments which, in their singular combination, exhaust and determine substantiality, have always and invariably been either separated from, or amalgamated with, each other; or, rather, separation has usually been accompanied by amalgamation. Systems of philosophy started out from any of these moments, after which they deduced the others from it—yielding a peculiar philosophical modalism or Sabellianism.[1] In this sense, philosophical systems, instead of being philosophical transcriptions, or, if you like, schematic elaborations of the motifs of triunity, prove to be variants of the philosophy of identity, or, what amounts to the same thing, variants of monism, in which it is of only secondary and supplementary significance which of these three moments is taken as the point of departure. There are thus three possible forms of philosophical heresiology or modalistic monism, and systems of philosophy can accordingly be naturally divided into three broad groups: (a) *idealist* systems, which start out from the grammatical or philosophical subject, from the I; (b) *panlogistic* systems, which start from the predicate; (c) *realist systems*, which start from the copula, that is, from impersonal being, and whose realism may be of various characters: mystical-contemplative, empirical or mathematical. Let us examine these types more closely.

1 Modalism, usually known, after the doctrine of Sabellius, as Sabellianism, confessed three divine persons only as differing appearances (modes) of one and the same God, Who, in his substance, was uni-hypostatic (in the second century, Praxeas; in the third, Noetus, Berillus, Sabellius, and Paul of Samosata).

A.

IDEALIST SYSTEMS

HERE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT IS ABOVE ALL STRUCK with philosophical "wonder" at the indisputable evidence of our self-consciousness that whatever is exists in, through, and for the I: the world is a spectacle for someone's contemplation, or is a certain subject's representation. The world is subjective, a subjective representation; without the subject, nothing exists. Let us take the words of Schopenhauer, who, as is well known, made this thought the basis of his doctrine of the world as representation:

> Therefore no truth is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, namely that everything that exists for knowledge, and hence the whole of the world, is only object in relation to the subject, perception of the perceiver, in a word, representation [?! — *S.B.*]. Naturally this holds good of the present as well as of the past and future, of what is remotest as well of what is nearest, for it holds good of time and space themselves, in which alone all these distinctions arise. Everything that in any way belongs and can belong to the world is inevitably associated with this being-conditioned by the subject, and it exists only for the subject. The world is representation [?! — *S.B.*]. [...] That which knows all things and is known by none is the *subject*. It is accordingly the supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always pre-supposed; for whatever exists, exists only for the subject. Every one finds himself as this subject, yet only in so far as he knows, not in so far as he is object of knowledge. But his body is already object, and therefore from this point of view we call it representation. For the body is object among objects and is subordinated to the laws of objects.... Like all objects of perception, it lies within the forms of all knowledge, in time and space, through which there is plurality. But the subject, the knower never the known, does not lie within these forms; on the contrary, it is always presupposed by those forms themselves, and hence neither

> plurality nor its opposite, namely unity, belongs to it. We never know it, but it is precisely that which knows wherever there is knowledge. Therefore the world as representation . . . has two essential, necessary, and inseparable halves. The one half is the *object*, whose forms are space and time, and through these plurality. But the other half, the subject, does not lie in space and time, for it is whole and undivided in every representing being. Hence a single one of these beings with the object completes the world as representation just as fully as do the millions that exist. And if that single one were to disappear, then the world as representation would no longer exist.[2]

This *subjectity* [*sub"ektnost'*] of the world, the fact that the world is a predicate for a subject, or that being in itself is also being for itself, is very often interpreted as the *subjectivity* [*sub"ektivnost'*] of the world, and this, in its turn, is then interpreted as illusoriness, spectrality, deceptiveness. This is a motif very widely found in Indian philosophy, in which the world is considered as a dream dreamt by a spectator, by the *atman*. For reasons which cannot be discussed in detail here, this subjective illusionism filtered out from the East into Europe. In Greece, it made itself felt in the epoch of individualistic disintegration, in the skepticism of the sophists, with their subjectivistic relativism (the Protagorean "man is the measure of all things").[3] If, in India, it possesses a mystical and contemplative character, and signifies an appeal to and a deepening of the dark, unconscious, invisible, and unutterable roots of being, a creative *stirb und werde* ["die and become"], a hopeful immersion in the universal nothing—*in deinem Nichts hoffe ich alles finden* ["I hope to find all in thy nothing"]—in Greece it is a symptom of decadence, of a superficial relationship to life which has become a rule.[4] Christianity

2 Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne, 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1969), 1:3, 5.

3 Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, eds., *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols. (Zürich: Weidmann, 1996), 2:263.—*Trans.*

4 "[S]tirb und werde" is a phrase from Goethe's poem, "Selige Sehnsucht" ("Blessed Longing"), included in his *West-östlicher Diwan: Gedichte* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, Jr., 1980), 171–72; 172). The second quotation is from the second part of *Faust*, in J. W. von Goethe, *Faust: Die Tragödie erster und zweiter Teil*, ed. Erich Trunz (München: C.H. Beck, 1987), 192, l. 6256. The line is "In deinem Nichts hoff' ich, das All zu finden."—*Trans.*

overcame this subjectivism not just in theory but in a living way, for, of themselves, the new life in God and the deepening of the feeling of reality brought by Christianity deprived decadent subjectivism of its strength, and extinguished it. Out of Christianity was born, after the vigorous upsurge of thought brought by the epoch of the ecumenical councils, the Christian theology of the East and West (scholasticism) in which there was no place for subjective idealism; on the contrary, a religious realism held undivided sway, differing only in its philosophical expressions. True, in the light of later historical developments it is possible to find seams of rationalism even amid the massifs of patristic theology (and still more so in those of scholastic theology), seams which, later on, threaten to become a channel for subjective idealism. However, for this to happen, the underlying rock needed to be significantly exposed to the action of the weather. A spiritual earthquake was brought about in Christianity itself: in Protestantism, the principle of individualism raised its head, and quickly manifested itself in philosophical thought as well. It appeared first of all in England, in the teachings of Collier and Berkeley, who attempted to make the I, the hypostasis, cut off from real being, into the one and only universal principle of philosophy.[5] With this, the abyss of solipsism lying in wait for idealism was also immediately revealed. If the world is the act of the I, is posited by the I, or is a representation of the I, does anything exist outside the I, beyond its limits? Is there a way out of and beyond the I, or does it remain in the singular number, a *solus ipse* [self alone] held in an unbreakable ring? Is there any other sort of I—is there a *we*?—and is there anything which exists in itself, separate from the I's power of representation? In order to complete the heretical dissevering of the triunity of spirit, it is sufficient to isolate the hypostasis, in thought, from the other moments of the life of spirit and to treat it as a singular, mono-hypostatic moment which posits the others from out of itself—and at once it is discovered that an I which has been torn away from reality or nature, as its predicate, turns out to be cut off from all the sources of life, that it dwindles to a desert island, that it simply does not exist. Titanic pretension then gives way to bewilderment and alarm. The I tries to rescue and to draw to itself whatever it can of the lost fullness of life, and lays over the gulf

5 Bulgakov is referring to Arthur Collier, the author of *Clavis Universalis* (1713). — *Trans.*

the idealist bridge of *esse-percipi* [to be—to be perceived], the principle of immanent philosophy, in accordance with which being is wholly immanent to the consciousness of the I, that is, being's existence in itself merges with its existence for itself or for the subject.[6] The subject is no longer separated from all reality; it is no longer empty; it is no longer an abstract point which occupies no place in spatial reality, since it has ascribed to its reverie, to its thinking, an immediate power of creation: the power to found reality, to create being. Yet the specter of solipsism has not gone away, but has only moved to another place. Instead of the question of how to overcome solipsism, there has arisen the question of how to overcome subjectivism, the question of nature and of reality, a question which the principle of *esse-percipi*—the fundamental proposition of idealist epistemology, for which being and consciousness or thought are equivalents, and the distinction between them only a logical one—cannot reach. Everyone familiar with the fortunes of philosophy knows what a curse this question of objectivity, of the "object" [*predmet*] of consciousness, of reality, and so on, has been to all idealist philosophy. The devout Berkeley recognized that this question was quite insoluble, and called frankly for the aid of a continuous miracle of divine intervention which would, as if by some hypnotic power, make our thoughts correspond to our needs, and instill in us the link between ideas and things. Berkeley in his idealism destroyed the world, converting it into ideas, and placed humanity immediately face to face with God, so as to restore, in this way, the reality of the world to humanity. Yet even God can reveal His being to humanity only through humanity's nature. How can a humanity which has been dis-humanized, and which consists only of an I, of a monad, receive such divine influence? It is in any case clear that Berkeley's answer to the philosophical question which he poses is not itself a philosophical one, for which reason it could not be convincing and remained unregarded, whereas Berkeley's idea of radical philosophical idealism was noticed and created an enormous impression. It is enough to remember that Kant is continually fighting against and guarding against this perilous ally, and that he is always in every way possible defending himself from, and acquitting himself of, the suspicion of Berkeleianism.

6 *Esse est percipi*, "to be is to be perceived," was a maxim of Bishop Berkeley's. — *Trans.*

Descartes, the founder of modern philosophy, is also a representative of subjective idealism in the starting-point for his theory, if not in its subsequent development. Through his methodological doubt, in particular, a doubt which stops at nothing,[7] he considers it possible to suppose that there is "no God, no heaven," that there are "no bodies," and so on. He pauses only before the *cogito ergo sum* or *sum cogitans*. In Descartes this is, as can be shown, neither a deduction,[8] nor a syllogism, but only the constatation of a fact—the fact of the presence of self-consciousness. The I, hypostaticity, is taken for the sole point of orientation, a torch of consciousness which illuminates the impenetrable night of doubt. Rationalistic doubt, which demands logical demonstrations where logic is powerless to provide them—demonstrations, that is, not only of the particular forms of being, but also of being as such—bows its head before the fact of the I's being in consciousness, even though, at bottom, the being of this I is not in and of itself any more, though also not any less, self-evident than its attributes: predicatedness and being. Its

7 The following are Descartes' formulations in the *Principles of Philosophy*: "In rejecting—and even imagining to be false—everything which we can in any way doubt, it is easy for us to suppose that there is no God and no heaven, that there are no bodies, and even that we ourselves have no hands or feet, or indeed any body at all. But we cannot for all that suppose that we, who are having such thoughts, are nothing. For it is a contradiction to suppose that what thinks does not, at the very time when it is thinking, exist. Accordingly, this piece of knowledge—*I am thinking, therefore I exist*—is the first and most certain of all to occur to anyone who philosophizes in an orderly way.... This is the best way to discover the nature of the mind and the distinction between the mind and the body. For if we, who are supposing that everything which is distinct from us is false, examine what we are, we see very clearly that neither extension nor shape nor local motion, not anything of this kind which is attributable to a body, belongs to our nature, but that thought alone belongs to it. So our knowledge of thought is prior to, and more certain than, our knowledge of any corporeal thing; for we have already perceived it, although we are still in doubt about other things." René Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:194–95.

8 "Descartes himself distinctly declares that the maxim *cogito, ergo sum* is no syllogism. The passages are *Respons. ad II object.*; *De methodo* IV; *Ep.* I, 118. From the first passage I quote the words more immediately to the point. Descartes says: 'That we are thinking beings is *prima quaedam notio quae ex nullo syllogismo concluditur*' (a certain primary notion, which is deduced from no syllogism); and goes on: '*neque cum quis dicit: Ego cogito, ergo sum sive existo, existentiam ex cogitatione per syllogismum deducit*' (nor, when one says, I think, therefore I am or I exist, does he deduce existence from thought by means of a syllogism)." From *Hegel's Logic, being part one of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 100 (§64).

peculiarity and its advantage is its hypostatic form, in consequence of which it appears only as a subject and can never be a predicate. However, Descartes's theory is so ambiguous and unclear that its interest to us is primarily historical, deriving from the strength of the shock which it gave to European thought, impelling that thought more or less decisively into an idealist and immanentist course.

The true father, however, of philosophical idealism, which is both the most fully elaborated and the favorite philosophical heresy of our day, is, of course, Kant. Like Descartes, Kant starts out from skepticism, which was suggested to him by Hume, who thus exerts a continual indirect influence on Kant, whose final position is an anti-Humean doctrine; and Kant was of course right to campaign against this poisonous and fruitless skepticism. The motive which impelled him was a defense of the rule of reason, as whose advocate against skepticism he wished to come forward. Kant was under the sway of the pathos of the Enlightenment; he too was ruled by the Cartesian search for a solid place where one might confidently stand in the quagmire of doubt. It is well known how complex, ambiguous, and contradictory is Kant's thought, which is why every exposition of it is at the same time a commentary upon it and a stylized simplification of it. The history of philosophy for the most part recognized and singled out in Kant one main current, idealism, and that within an epistemological framework. For the majority of Kant's readers his thought as a whole can be reduced to this framework, but for us it is important to single out the central nerve of his philosophical activity, even if this central nerve was concealed from, and insufficiently singled out by, Kant himself. A schematic sketch of the *Critique of Pure Reason* would run thus. In his attempt to outline the objective conditions of knowledge, or, which comes to the same thing, the formal features of truth, Kant conducts, in a "transcendental aesthetic," an exploration of those forms, starting with the forms of sensuous perception.[9] Time and space are thus shown to be the universal forms through which the object

9 Translating Bulgakov's Russian vocabulary for Kant into English entails particular difficulties because of the need to triangulate with Kant's German. I have prioritized capturing Bulgakov's sense and tone over any attempt to produce a minutely faithful account of Kant. Time and space are in Kant the pure forms of intuition (*Anschauung*); Bulgakov uses the word *vosprinyatie*, "perception." N.O. Lossky's Russian translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* renders *Anschauung* as *sozertsanie*, "contemplation" (I. Kant, *Kritika chistogo razuma*, trans. N.O. Lossky [St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2017]). — *Trans.*

[*predmet*] or "appearance" is apprehended. The next stage is to set out the forms not merely of sensuous appearances, but of the logical concepts which, on the basis of these appearances, are developed into particular forms or categories—a "transcendental logic," divided into a "transcendental analytic" and then a "transcendental dialectic" which reveals the skeleton of reason itself. Kant here proceeds as follows. He takes the objective [*predmetnij*] world to be completely static, as it appears to an observer. By turning the world into a logical preparation, he separates it from its forms, unpacks them, reviews them, and then packs the world and reason back up again from these forms and the materials of sensuous perception—and where anything remains left over, he clears it up in the dialectic, with the help of the antinomies. Thus it seems at first as if pure objectivity governs Kant's thought, and as though there were no place at all in it for idealism, still less for the abstract hypostaticity of the *Ich-Philosophie* [philosophy of the I]. In Kant everything is organized according to the measure of the object—whether empirical or transcendental—even the subject itself. This is why, when he is considered as an epistemologist, Kant can easily be classified amongst the representatives of the philosophy of the predicate, that is, as coming close to Hegel on one hand, but also, like certain contemporary neo-Kantians, to the positivists and empiricists on the other. We do not deny that there is a sufficient basis for all this. However, if one looks for the ontological roots of Kant's system, which were laid bare by his immediate successors, and especially by Fichte, they must be found in a moment of hypostaticity which has been abstracted from and deprived of its nature. The forms of cognition—first time and space, and then the various categories—lie disassembled in Kant, and are oppressive in their plurality. Who will collect them up and give them life? It is evident that although these forms define the object, only a subject, an I, a hypostasis can do this. All these forms are the innervations of this I, are its self-determinations. The I connects the forms and leads them to move; it can be said that they are the I in its epistemological form, the epistemological subject—a concept which originated in the very depths of the Kantian philosophy and which plays an equally important part in neo-Kantianism. In Kant himself this point finds expression in a significant, and, it can be said, central doctrine of his, that of "transcendental apperception." The "synthesis" of separate features into an

object, and objectivity itself, presuppose, for Kant, the presence of the unifying function of an *I* which is itself the synthesizing principle. This I is, if one can put it like this, the all-seeing eye which looks through cognitive forms and sees with them. Without this I, there is no synthesis, no object, and no cognition. Kant makes extreme efforts to reduce this I to a purely logical function, to make of it merely an epistemological subject, and in that static condition for which he takes cognition, this is still possible; but he gives himself away as soon as he crosses over to the domain of practical reason, where the I is already will, "practical reason," personhood. The missing center of Kant's epistemology, a lack which Kant's continuators so keenly felt, lies just here. "Transcendental apperception," the unity of the I, lies at the basis of all acts of cognition, and applies equally to the transcendental aesthetic and to the logic, to sensibility and to thought. (Cf. section 1 on the doctrine of transcendental apperception in the excursus on Kant below.) Kant did not succeed in demonstrating that the I may be taken merely as the "unity of transcendental apperception," as a logical function, without relation to an ontological center, be it only in the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* = *sum cogitans* = *sum*. He becomes entangled in obscurities and contradictions. Kant's thinking about what the I, the subject, is, has a merely epistemological significance, and lacks any other; but this idea is for practical purposes abandoned in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the other critiques. We ourselves need by no means be bound by this division of thought into departments, without any means of crossing from one to the other. A large and important question arises: does the epistemological I, the "unity of transcendental apperception," express the true nature of the I, or, what is the same thing, can that purely epistemological I, upon which Kant so much insists, at all exist? He maintains that the contents of consciousness contain nothing which would provide knowledge of the I (this goes without saying, of course, if he is not talking here of the domain of inner experience, the psychological I, which is concerned with empirical reality). But are knowledge or its separate acts possible as such without the presence of the I? In the act of knowing, the ontological I turns itself into the epistemological I too, but through this transparent film can be seen the fathomless depths of being. And if epistemology is only a transparent film, why can Kant see nothing in it or through it apart from this transparency itself?

This doctrine of the "transcendental unity of apperception" nevertheless contains what can be called one of Kant's central illuminations. Kant persistently underlines the purely logical significance of this I and in this respect opposes to it the psychological I, which is known only on the basis of "appearances" and which concerns only the domain of internal experience. "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations," which representation ("I think") "cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility," and must be identical in every consciousness (CPR 152–53 [B 131–32]). This representation confers unity on all the original representations, and without it they would not be my representations.[10] It is, it might be said, the general, universal, and unconditional subject [*podlezhashchee*] of all the contents of consciousness and of any act of cognition, irrespective of whether such an act is expressed in the first or in the third person. It can be said of the judgements in which cognition is accomplished that "a judgement is nothing but the manner in which given modes of knowledge are brought to the objective unity of apperception," that is, to the I (CPR 159 [B 141]). "This is what is intended by the copula 'is.' It is employed to distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective. It indicates their relation to original apperception, and its *necessary unity*. It holds good even if the judgement is itself empirical, and therefore contingent, as, for example, in the judgment, 'Bodies are heavy.' I do not here assert that these representations *necessarily* belong *to one another* in the empirical intuition, but that they necessarily belong to one another *in virtue of the necessary unity* of apperception in the synthesis of intuitions, that is, according to principles of the objective determination of all representations, in so far as knowledge can be acquired by means of these representations—principles which are all derived from the fundamental principles of the transcendental

10 From this fact Kant arrives at a completely arbitrary and incorrect conclusion, according to which "[c]ombination does not, however, lie in the objects, and cannot be borrowed from them, and so, through perception, first taken up into the understanding. On the contrary, it is an affair of the understanding alone, which itself is nothing but the faculty of combining *a priori*, and of bringing the manifold of given representations under the unity of apperception." For Kant "this principle . . . is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge" (CPR, 154 [B 134–35]). This position is linked to Kant's subjective-cubistic epistemology, but it does not by any means follow from the recognition of a "transcendental unity of apperception," for it is entirely possible that "objects" (ideas) might possess their own existence, which could only be announced by thought or by the understanding to the knowing I.

unity of apperception" (ibid. [B142]). In other words, in the cognition which transforms a bare association of representations (in the example given, a body and heaviness) into a judgement, Kant arranges for each moment of objectivity to coincide with the unity of consciousness. This thought, however, may be interpreted not only in this epistemological, specifically Kantian, and highly questionable sense, but also in the wider sense that the content of any cognition is a predicate of the I: that is, that in addition to its particular subject—the object hypostatized in the image and likeness of the I ("bodies are heavy")—it also possesses another, universal subject, namely, the first person, I. I think: "bodies are heavy"; I reveal myself, I realize myself in the judgement "A is B." If we do not limit ourselves, as Kant did, to epistemology (and he himself only does so within the *Critique of Pure Reason*, without attempting, in any case, precisely to connect this theory of the unity of transcendental apperception with the theories of the other critiques); if we take the concrete I, which realizes itself not merely in thinking, but also in willing, and in creative intuition, it is possible to say in principle that every living act, every living substance is related to the "unity of transcendental apperception." All life is directed by an I, all life is predicated of an I, and the whole world is such a living proposition, is the self-revelation of an I, is its predicate.

And at the same time this I, as Kant quite correctly pointed out, is not our emotionally changeable I which can be known through our own experience, is not the psyche, the soul, the "bundle of representations," the "psychological subject," which lives in the body, and which is a corporeal organism, and so on. In relation to the "transcendental unity of apperception" represented by this absolute I, the psychological I is found in the same domain as the whole world of appearances, on the other side of apperception, and it is just as much a predicate as those appearances are. The absolute I is pure subject and never predicate, a subject which never becomes an object. Rather in contrast to his usual practice, Kant always expresses the peculiar nature of this I as an absolute subject imprecisely, without further explanation or definition, as "thinking": "On the other hand, in the transcendental synthesis of the manifold of representations in general, and therefore in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor as I am in myself, but only that I am. This representation is a *thinking*, not an *intuiting*"

(CPR, 168 [B 157]).[11] So that "[a]ccordingly I have no *knowledge* of myself as I am but merely as I appear to myself.... I exist as an intelligence which is conscious solely of its power of combination...." (CPR, 382 [B 429]). The following sort of expression is also found in Kant: "in the consciousness of myself in mere thought I am the *being itself*, although nothing in myself is thereby given for thought" (ibid.). At the same time, Kant regards even the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* = *sum cogitans* as being either a contentless identity (an "analytic judgement") or a false conclusion, as he puts it on another occasion, arrived at by "subreption of the hypostatized consciousness."[12]

In one sense, therefore, Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, the *I* as a logical function, is by no means a pure zero, but must itself in some undefined sense have existence ascribed to it — and no wonder, since this *I* is indeed the world's sun, around which moves the whole universe of this new Copernicus, holding in place all the categories by which he creates and secures the world; and if this *I* were taken away, everything would be turned upside down, and would whirl around in a mad dance. Yet at the same time the strict law of the categories does not permit anything to be said or known about this I. It may know everything else (including its own perishable psychological I) yet may not peer into its own self, may not turn its head towards itself. This is "the simple, and in itself completely empty, representation '*I*'; and we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts. Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = *X*. It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any conception whatsoever..." (CPR, 331 [A 346/B 404]). This thought is continually and tiresomely repeated, even though it is in no way clarified, in Kant's analysis of the "psychological paralogisms," where the same question of the transcendental unity of the I is explored from the point of view of the doctrines of rational psychology as to the soul's substantiality, simplicity, and so on. And here Kant's main prop is a peculiar agnosticism, according to which there can be no act of cognition of any kind concerning the

11 I have amended the very end of the quotation to replace Kemp Smith's *thought* and *intuition* for *Denken* and *Anschauen* with *thinking* and *intuiting*. — *Trans.*

12 "[A]nalytic judgement": CPR, 337 (A 355); "subreption": CPR, 365 (A 402).

I. Moreover, in the first, less guarded, edition, Kant sometimes resorts to an extremely strange argument of this kind: "The 'I' is indeed in all thoughts"; none the less, we would not, "in resting it upon experience, be able, by any sure observation, to demonstrate its permanence." "[W]e can indeed perceive that this representation is invariably present in all thoughts, but not that it is an abiding and continuing intuition, wherein the thoughts, as being transitory, give place to one another" (CPR, 334 [A 350]). Whether seriously or ironically, Kant agrees here to acknowledge a "constant logical subject of thought," whose substance is "only in idea, not in reality" (ibid.) This whole heap of misunderstandings does not get us any nearer to answering this question: how we are really to understand this epistemological lever, upon which the whole Kantian universe—that is, "the world of appearances"—rests? It is not a zero, yet neither does it exist. It is not the individual I, since it is decisively opposed to the I of inner experience which possesses its *Anschauungen*; yet nor is it the supra-individual I, *the* I, for such an I is not mentioned either. Is it the one and only I of its kind, or is it merely a single I? There is self-evidently no way in which the logical function could be *repeated*, no way, that is, in which one could see, from one's own I, with one's own "unity of transcendental apperception," the logical function at work in another consciousness, since this would already be *Anschauung* [intuition], already "experience." Consequently, there is apparently no way of overcoming epistemological solipsism or of exiting from its *splendid isolation*.[13] True, Kant does, in passing, and most infelicitously, speak of transcendental consciousness from the standpoint of another (CPR, 342 [A 363]), but he does this without having any grounds for it, and it can be said that here and in the "paralogisms" of rational psychology he shatters that epistemological possibility of knowing or of recognizing other epistemological subjects which he himself nevertheless takes for a criterion of objective knowledge. The multi-hypostaticity of the epistemological I is incompatible with the mono-hypostaticity of the I as a logical function, to which the ideas of plurality or of repetition are in no way applicable. There is no epistemological bridge from I to thou, since epistemology does not permit a psychological handling of the question. The Thou—that is, the other I, other and at the same time

13 "Splendid isolation" is in English in the original.—*Trans.*

identical, an epistemological point of view outside me yet at the same time within me—is impossible here. This, of course, is not of itself an objection, but it does confirm the contradiction in Kant's theory and the clear insufficiency of his principles.

Kant becomes entangled in his own web here, and falls victim to the dogmatic prejudice that there is no cognition without "sensibility"—a sensibility which is, moreover, narrowly and incorrectly understood here—even as he himself speaks of "thinking" as an activity of the "epistemological I." But if this I sees, thinks, and knows everything, can it really be impossible for it to look at itself? And what, if not the I's consciousness of the I, is represented by Kant's own reasoning when, like the ancient sage who began to walk forward so as to refute the idea of the impossibility of motion, his very doctrine of the unknowability of the I in fact demonstrates that it can be known? In other words, he both poses the problem of the I and solves it after all. Against such hyper-criticism, which leads only to self-deception and illusion, Hegel's suggestion that learning to swim should be done by getting into the water, rather than by trying to work things out on the bank, retains its force.[14] In fact, our thought possesses a powerful and inalienable instrument for self-knowledge: reflection, or, more precisely, self-reflection, which Fichte and Hegel put to just this purpose. The I, the epistemological I, even if it be merely a "function" (granting for a minute that there can be a function without anyone who or anything which functions), can itself reflect upon itself, can itself become the object of thought, of ideation, of intuition. In this consists, too, the logical meaning of the tautology "I is I," which, in reality, is neither a tautology nor a meaningless assertion. The second I is a predicate: the I becomes its own predicate. Of course, the I (or any other subject which occupies its place) cannot simultaneously be both subject and predicate; this is ruled out, and that is that. But Kant wants, on this basis, to maintain the unknowability of every propositional subject, that is, of all concepts. In a certain way this is true, if it is borne in mind that a subject can in general be disclosed only by a predicate. The propositional subject is transcendent

14 "But the examination of knowledge can only be carried out by an act of knowledge. To examine this so-called instrument is the same thing as to know it. But to seek to know before we know is as absurd as the wise resolution of Scholasticus, not to get into the water until he had learnt how to swim." *Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 14 (§10).—*Trans.*

to thought; it is a question to which the predicate is the answer. Is the question contained in the answer? Yes and no, because the answer would not be an answer if it did not presuppose the question, if it did not contain the question in itself; but it would also not be an answer if it simply repeated the question. The I in Kant's thought is of course distinguished from any propositional subject, from any concrete I or object, by the fact that it is as "transcendental apperception" the universal subject *par excellence*, the subject of subjects, in relation to which every subject is in a certain sense already a predicate, and thus transcendentally impure. Yet this does not mean that transcendental apperception is empty and abstract, like a logical function, but that it has a universal and metaphysical, an ontological, significance; that is, that transcendental apperception necessarily leads through the gateway of epistemology into metaphysics as the domain of the theory of being as such. For from a Kantian point of view, any living I, which speaks of itself as this or that, and which feels itself to be a concrete person, is still not a "transcendental" I: I want, I love, I am hungry, I consider that, I see, and so on. Such an I is not an epistemological I at all: the latter is, in this I, only a certain non-spatial point which funnels down into the opaque and earthly psychological I; it is a super-I within the I, which latter is merely the countenance, the predicate of that super-I. The enigmatic and chimerical character of such an I constitutes, of course, a riddle for thinking which Fichte faces head-on and which even in Kant leads to many opacities and contradictions, as previously remarked. The chief of these is that Kant has to ascribe both existence and non-existence to it. And this is correct, in the sense in which it can be applied to the distinction between phenomena and noumena. The noumenon does not possess being in the world of phenomena, yet, at the same time, it is not a zero, since the noumenon is the truly existent, and so existence, if not being, must be ascribed to it, and this is the noumenon's phenomenal manifestation, which is also *being*, the being of noumena and phenomena. In this way, the *Ding an sich* turns out to be not merely a "limit concept," a *Grenzbegriff* which marks the limit of experience itself, which demarcates non-experience from experience, and which does not wholly belong either to the former or to the latter, since it participates in both. The *Ding an sich* is what truly exists; it posits what exists and possesses being in what exists. It is not possible to say of it that it *is*, but being

belongs to it; it is the true subject of any given predicate. Substance is also defined by this relationship between the noumenon and phenomenality, by this concrete proposition, and in this sense the only true noumenon in the Kantian sense is the "transcendental I," that is, the hypostasis. Kant does not, in essence, provide a theory of personhood in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and although, as becomes clear in the remaining critiques, especially in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, his theory is through and through anthropological, perhaps even anthropomorphic, he does not, here, supply any kind of anthropology, nor, in particular, does he provide any theory of the person. Without realizing it, he walks past a crater which has unexpectedly opened up, and which leads into the depths of the earth, walks past, that is, his own theory of personhood—although he does stumble into this crater in his account of freedom and the intelligible character. Here it turns out that "in its intelligible character," the subject, which, empirically, is bound by all the laws of the chain of causal determination, is nevertheless free from that chain "[i]nasmuch as it is *noumenon*." In the intelligible character of the subject, "nothing happens in it; there can be no change"; "the active being of itself begins its effects in the sensible world.... In this way freedom and nature, in the full sense of these terms, can exist together, without any conflict, in the same actions, according as the actions are referred to their intelligible or to their sensible cause" (CPR, 469 [A 541/B 569]). It would seem that in order to see knowledge as the act of the subject [*sub'ekt*], as the self-revelation of the subject, it would be enough to take a single further step, by extending this account so as to characterize the relation between the "transcendental subject" of knowledge and knowledge itself. After Kant, Fichte took this step; but Kantians usually hold fast to the transcendental subject and take great care to avoid any account of the noumena. More will be said about this below, but here it is necessary to emphasize that Kant's theoretical philosophy and his anthropology also lack, in particular, any account of personhood. As was already remarked, there is no *other* person; each exists only in the singular number. For the psychological I which is accessible to experience is not a transcendental person, whilst the latter, in so far as it is merely a logical function, cannot form an object of experience. Therefore, according to Kant's theoretical philosophy, human persons are not persons, but constitute aggregates of properties, "objects," established by

epistemological consciousness. True, from time to time Kant feels the want of them, and then he conjures them up (as we already saw in the discussion of the question of the I, when it is suddenly asked how the matter would appear to an external observer); the existence of another, alien and specifically epistemological consciousness also turns out to be necessary when it comes to defining the objectivity of judgements as having a universal significance for every consciousness (particularly in the *Prolegomena*). This dogmatic contraband is already at work in Kant's practical philosophy, where the concept of the person is central: "Rational beings . . . are called persons because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves, that is, as something which ought not to be used merely as a means."[15] The whole edifice of the *Critique of Practical Reason* also stands on this foundation. A clear tension exists between theoretical and practical philosophy in Kant, a tension which is not made any less acute by the declaration of the primacy of practical reason. The doctrine of the transcendental I is of the very essence; it forms the heart of Kantian idealism or Kantian epistemologism, as was revealed and underlined in the subsequent history of thought. The real state of affairs, however, was obscured by the fact that the whole Kantian construction is governed by a different plan and from a different center. In the foreground are found epistemological obstacles and parts of the dismantled epistemological apparatus; these conceal the pilot himself. Fichte and Hegel believed that one of the inadequacies of Kant's epistemology was that he did not provide a deduction of the forms of cognition, but allocated them to a "rhapsody of categories," according to external, scholastic, and sometimes arbitrary schemas.[16] These categories relate both to the predicate and to the copula, and constitute the forms of thinking and the forms of cognition as such, but they are organically unified not by the predicate but by the subject; they make up the epistemological I, which casts its net over the material of cognition, over this something. Of this *something* it is either impossible to speak, as Kant himself

15 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H.J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 96.

16 In his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, Kant had distinguished his own deduction of the categories from "that ancient rhapsody (which proceeded without any principle)." *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, ed. Gary Hatfield, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76 (§39). — *Trans.*

thought,[17] or, more precisely, a hiatus in cognition is found here, a tear between the subject and the object, a mutual separateness in the face of which every act of cognition becomes a riddle: how can anything at all be caught in the epistemological net, and what would do the catching? The question which Kant addresses, how cognition is possible, that is, precisely, how objective cognition is possible, becomes even more enigmatic after this, since it is merely deferred to another place, and gets connected to the link between the form and content of cognition. This is why "epistemology" emerged as the result of Kant's work, and why questions either about the nature of consciousness, on the one hand, or about the "object of cognition," on the other, are not on Kantianism's agenda. The question of "epistemological consciousness" is generally treated on the level of immanentism, in the sense that the whole content of cognition is taken to be immanent to the subject. The πρῶτον ψεῦδος [*prōton pseudos*, original error] of Kant's philosophy, and its main distinguishing characteristic, is his abstract subjectivism or egocentrism. He forcibly dissolves (only into abstractions, of course) the living unity of substance, the inseparability of subject and object as subject and predicate, noumenon and phenomenon, and there proves to be a disunity between, and perhaps even an impossibility of uniting, the subject, on the one hand, with the forms and categories which have been torn away from real experience, and into which have been inserted the alien material of "*Empfindungen*," *affizierende Dinge* [sensations, things which affect us] and, on the other, that formless, senseless and unthinkable material which is accessible, if at all, only to "pseudo-thinking" (Plato). How can this broken bond be mended? And how are knowledge itself, and consciousness, to be understood in the face of this split in experience, in which our feet give way with every step taken by thought? And what, finally, is known; what is such an object of cognition? The reader familiar with the latest Kantian literature will recall its basic lines of thought

17 "The much-discussed question of the communion between the thinking and the extended, if we leave aside all that is merely fictitious, comes then simply to this: how in a thinking subject outer intuition, namely, that of space, with its filling-in of shape and motion, is possible. And this is a question which no man can possibly answer. This gap in our knowledge can never be filled; all that can be done is to indicate it through the ascription of outer appearances to that transcendental object which is the cause of this species of representations, but of which we can have no knowledge whatsoever and of which we shall never acquire any concept" (CPR, 359–60 ["Paralogisms of Pure Reason (A), 393]).

and its various answers to the fateful question of the object of cognition. Desperate attempts are made to break out from the enchanted circle of solipsism while at the same time remaining within it, to rescue and secure the "object of cognition" whilst remaining on the ground of epistemological subjectivism. Metaphysically, all this can be diagnosed as one of the complaints most characteristic of epistemologism: the separation of the hypostasis from substance, of the subject from the object. The epistemological expression of this sickness takes many forms, some of them unexpected. On one hand, of course, arguments continue about settling the content of the Kantian subject, i.e., the categories and the forms of cognition, about "pure logic" and "pure consciousness," about *a priori* cognition. On the other, attempts are made to define the "object of cognition" itself, cognition's *a posteriori*. With this, a pure and consistent immanentism proves possible, an immanentism which inevitably degenerates into a subjective panlogism: *esse* = *percipi*. Here the world and the object of cognition inevitably turn into a mist of daydreams, in which there is a vain struggle to secure the firm ground of objectivity in a despairing attempt to overcome solipsism (Schuppe and his school).[18] Yet equally desperate efforts are made to overcome any "givenness," and to dissolve the object of cognition into a logical category, to leave only *a priori* cognition remaining, having expelled *affizierende Dinge* [things which affect us] into the "outer darkness" of psychologism, whilst of course all the while continuing to draw nourishment from them. This is what Cohen does; he wishes to conquer the world by representing the "object of cognition" as a matter of "pure," "scientific cognition."[19] Hence for such a (Cohenite) neo-Kantianism the decisive and fateful question is the deduction of the fundamental elements of thought, which correspond to the sensations and, as it were, the stimuli given by things in themselves in Kant's thought. By means of cunning intricacies, including the application of the mathematical concept of infinitesimals, Cohen succeeds in eliding and perhaps in doing away altogether with the

18 The philosopher Wilhelm Schuppe (1836–1913), who edited a *Zeitschrift für immanente Philosophie* [Journal for immanent philosophy] towards the end of the nineteenth century. — *Trans.*

19 Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), the leader of the so-called "Marburg School" of neo-Kantian thought and the author of a *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* [Logic of pure knowledge] (1914), amongst other works. — *Trans.*

distinction between God's earth—and zero (which is what evolutionism always tries to do). The *reiner Ursprung* [pure origin] of Cohen's "pure logic" exemplifies a sophistical dialectic whose goal is to erode and completely to dissolve irrational "givenness," and thoroughly to rationalize and to apriorize—that is, in the last analysis, to subjectivize—reality.

Another path towards attaining the same goal—to make an objectless subject and thereby to secure the triumph of "idealism"—is taken by the Freiburg school of Windelband and Rickert, whose fulcrum is not pan-categorism and pan-methodologism, but the exploitation of the *copula*.[20] The copula is interpreted subjectively [*sub"ektivno*], or, more precisely, subjectally [*sub"ektno*], as defined at will by the subject: it is taken in the imperative mood instead of in the indicative, is transformed into a demand, whilst a teleological character and a value (*Wert*) are ascribed to that act of the self-revelation of substance which is accomplished in the copula; the "object of cognition" turns out to be an absolute *ought*. Here, of course, all empirical cognition of the world is understood only as material for the exercise of a moral demand. The idea of "practical" consciousness, to which Fichte attributed primacy over theoretical consciousness, returns, but it lacks the audacity and foundational significance of Fichte's conception. Only the weaker aspect of Fichte's treatment is adopted, without his metaphysical doctrine. To turn the world into a fruitless and insatiable demand for knowledge, whilst at the same time retaining it as useful empirical material—this is a tedious and pointless idea, which is of more interest as one of the outcomes of Kantianism characteristic of Kantianism's blind alleys than it is in itself.

A Kantian idealism of the most decided kind is supported by Schopenhauer, who considered Kant's deepest teaching to be the separation between the phenomenality of the world and things in themselves. For Schopenhauer, the latter, as is well known, are made up of alogical, blind, unconscious, and anhypostatic will, which requires the whole world to consist of the "representation" of a dreaming consciousness. However chimerical this doctrine, the clarity and resolution which Schopenhauer

20 Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), the inventor of the distinction between "nomothetic" and "idiographic" approaches to knowledge, the former concerned with positing general laws and the latter with specifying singular instances; and Heinrich Rickert (1863–1935), the author of *The Limits of Concept-Formation in the Natural Sciences* (1896–1902). — *Trans.*

brings to his account of "the world as representation" deserve recognition. Schopenhauer comes close to the truth in his theory of the philosophical subject [*sub"ekt*] as the propositional subject [*podlezhashchee*] of all predicates, which subject, therefore, never itself enters the realm of experience; the subject is transcendent to experience, yet at the same time is immanently intuited in experience. "That which knows all things and is known by none is the subject. It is accordingly the supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed; for whatever exists, exists only for the subject. Everyone finds himself as this subject, yet only in so far as he knows, not in so far as he is object of knowledge. But his body is already object, and therefore from this point of view we call it representation. For the body is object among objects, and is subordinated to the laws of objects, although it is immediate object. Like all objects of perception, it lies within the forms of all knowledge, in time and space through which there is plurality. But the subject, the knower never the known, does not lie within these forms; on the contrary, it is always presupposed by those forms themselves, and hence neither plurality nor its opposite, unity, belongs to it. We never know it, but it is always that which knows whenever there is knowledge."[21] In particular, Schopenhauer considers arguments about the reality of the external world to rest on a misunderstanding, in so far as no causal interaction takes place between subject and object; such interaction pertains only to the world of objects.[22] However, on the whole this correct and precise distinction does not lead to any worthwhile results in the theory of hypostaticity, since it is completely lost in the nonsensical, or, more precisely, the anti-sensical doctrine of the will

21 *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. Payne, vol. 1, chap. 2, 5. Cf. vol. 2, chap. 1, 16–18. "Unser erkennendes Bewusstseyn, als äussere und innere Sinnlichkeit (Rezeptivität), Verstand und Vernunft auftretend, zerfällt in Subject und Object und enthält nichts ausserdem. Object für ein Subject seyn und unsere Vorstellung seyn ist dasselbe. Alle unsere Vorstellungen sind Objecte des Subjects und all Objecte des Subjects sind Vorstellungen." (*Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde* [On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason] chap. 3, §16.) (The quotation is given in German in Bulgakov's text. "Our cognizing consciousness, which appears as external and inner sensibility [receptivity], understanding, and reason, divides into subject and object and contains nothing beyond these. To be an object for a subject, and to be our representation, is one and the same thing. All our representations are objects of the subject, and all objects of the subject are representations." — *Trans.*)

22 *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. Payne, 1:14–15.

as first principle, which first produces all the individual special effects and then gets rid of them when they are no longer needed. Despite all Schopenhauer's gifts, as well as the aesthetic merits of his work, his thought when taken as a whole too clearly bears the stamp of morbidity and of misanthropy, as well as of contradiction: having started out along one line of thought, a subjective-idealist one, he abruptly shifts to the philosophy of identity in his theory of the will.

The true monarch of the realm of idealistic subjectivism is, without doubt, *J. G. Fichte*, especially in the first period of his philosophical activity (around 1800: here we are concerned with the introductions to the science of knowledge, *Concerning the Concept of the Science of Knowledge*, *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge*, and the *Outline of the Distinctive Character of the Science of Knowledge*). The aspects of Fichte's theory which are of interest to us here will be considered in detail in a dedicated excursus; for the moment, only a brief indication of its general significance will be given. Fichte's theory, as it is developed in his science of knowledge, is a unique phenomenon in the history of the philosophy. It is the most radical attempt to think through to its end a philosophy of pure and abstract hypostaticity, an attempt which does not stop short even of absurdity. It is the same as a philosophy of identity, but reversed. Usually, the philosophy of identity understands substance as nature (φύσις [*phusis*]), predicate, object, a he or it from which in one way or another the subject and the whole world of consciousness then originate. In Fichte it is the **I** which takes on this significance of being the sole substance; the **I** posits a not-**I** by means of its own resources and for the sake of its own needs. This is a philosophy of identity of absolute clarity and absolute subjectivity, from which the whole universe must be "deduced," and throughout the early treatises Fichte exhausts himself in these fruitless efforts at a forcible deduction (here too belongs the young Schelling's early and able exposition of Fichte in his essay on the *Ich-Philosophie*).[23]

The foundational significance of Fichte's system is enormous, and the philosophical experiment represented by this system, maniacal in its principled one-sidedness, is indispensable. Its meaning lies in the fact that in order to comprehend the true nature of the **I**, thought must test

23 F. W. J. Schelling, "Of the I as Principle in Philosophy or on the Unconditional in Human Knowledge," in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays 1794–96*, trans. F. Marti (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1980). — *Trans.*

and explore its limits; and for this it is really necessary to transgress and cross these borders, to carry out a sort of philosophical vivisection, which is what Fichte's system also is. In Fichte there appeared, in all its dazzling vividness and incontrovertibility, a truth: that it is impossible to eliminate the I from everything which exists—not, however, in that false and slanderous sense which Schopenhauer gave to this idea in his theory of "the world as representation," where the subject turns out in the last analysis to be merely a temporal and illusory center, to be one of the reflexes of a blind and capricious will. No, Fichte grasped the substantial nature of the I in its indissolubility and ineliminability. The I is itself what is closest at hand, what is most trustworthy, what is first. Everything must be thought in and through the I, must be thought in terms of I-ness: this is the task. The I, the philosophical and propositional subject, like a spider in its web, must weave a world, must bring the predicate into being, must posit being. Never, either before or afterwards, has such a full attempt been made to reckon with the I, to display and to measure its force. Here Fichte stands on Kant's shoulders, and expounds the true meaning of Kant's theory to its conclusion, thereby illuminating and deciphering it—or expounds the meaning, at least, of one of the fundamental motifs of that unwieldy and many-motifed structure. The Fichtean system is nothing other than a development of the Kantian theory of the "transcendental unity of apperception" or the epistemological I. In Kant, this theory appears as if against Kant's own will, issuing from his account of the forms of cognition, as the missing link between the categories; the categories are not deduced from the I, but, on the contrary, the categories of themselves presuppose the necessity of the I as what unifies them. In Fichte, by contrast, the I is put in charge at once, and all the categories, as well as the pure forms of intuition, time and space, derive from it. To display the nature of the I as a logical centre, as a focal point for the epistemological forms, to display epistemological idealism in its strength and glory is the first and most fundamental task of the *Ich-Philosophie*. Although Kant famously bristled at his commentator's eagerness, it is doubtless true, historically, that Fichte did indeed reveal the truth about Kant.

Even more significant, however, were Fichte's projects of a metaphysical, rather than an epistemological, kind. Fichte ascribes to the I not merely the significance of an epistemological subject—as, insistently, do all the

neo-Kantians—but also that of a metaphysical substance. Hypostaticity is awarded all its plenitude; substance is directly equated with hypostaticity, and this metaphysical daring is both the most paradoxical and the most interesting thing about Fichte's doctrine. Everything falls under the category of I-ness; everything is the I, and the I is everything; there is nothing without the I, nothing which is beyond the limits of the I, or which could be not-I or transcendent to the I. Such is the metaphysical postulate of Fichte's theory, and such its fundamental task. Here Fichte touches upon a problem of extraordinary significance: the problem of the role of the hypostasis in substance, of the bond between the I and that which is not I. This bond is something mysterious and unsoundable; in it lies the mystery of substance, that is, of that something which it is necessary to assume, and which can be grasped in its self-revelations, but which it is impossible to comprehend with the intellect and impossible to deduce—either by deducing the I from nature, or by deducing nature from the I. Usually, the philosophy of identity takes the first path, but Fichte, who has in this neither equals nor imitators, took, in his *Science of Knowledge*, the second path: the attempt to deduce everything from the I, to see in everything a state of the I or a positing by the I. (It should be admitted that Fichte did not himself stand fast for long at the summit of his own philosophy, and soon descended from it along the path of popular philosophical edification.) How and where does the I make contact with that which is not I, the subject with the predicate? Is it possible to grasp everything using the category of I-ness? Fichte tried to do so, and his *Science of Knowledge* is his answer. It is well known how this deduction is carried out: in the absolute and, obviously, unitary, I, which plays the same role as substance in Spinoza, or, if you prefer, the same role as the One in Plotinus, there emerges an opposition between the I, and the not-I as a reflection of the I (the logical conjuring tricks of the deduction possess no fundamental significance and are essentially of no interest, since they are merely auxiliary instruments). The greater, absolute I plays the role of a transcendent, self-identical beginning, in which there is neither I nor not-I, which are bound to each other by their mutual entailment and by their mutual inseparability. The absolute I is substance as it exists before the emergence of I and not-I, of hypostasis and nature. One of Fichte's many obvious ambiguities and unclarities, then, is that, starting out from a transcendental I, he converts this into an absolute

I, which he then exchanges for an empirical I inalterably bound to the not-I. Essentially, there is no more proximity or resemblance between the I and I [*mezhdu Ya i ya*] than between Spinoza's substance and the self-consciousness of its *modus*, the individual human person, or between the One in Plotinus and the self-consciousness of the individual human soul in this world. There is not, in essence, any kind of "deduction" here, nor can there be. Yet Fichte, with all his might, deduces; and, by means of a series of intermediate links, he fashions a chain which unites the centre with the periphery. Except that it turns out that there is nothing to which the chain can be fastened: however far the chain is stretched out, it still cannot come to an end, because there always remains a "stimulus" to the I, an *äussere Anstoss* [external stimulus], which cannot be explained, but only registered. In order to explain the "stimuli" it turns out to be necessary to presuppose, together with the theoretical I, a practical I which requires "limits" and "obstacles" to its continual movement. The practical I turns out already to be an absolute *ought*, and what leads to this impotent and unquenchable thirst, to this restlessly burrowing worm, an eternal revolution upon the burning wheel of the *ought*, is the Luciferian project of constructing the world in one's own image and likeness, out of a bare, abstract hypostasis. Fichte constructs, of course, not the world, but, at most, an abstract, I-shaped schema of the world, of its transcendental form. And the "practical exercises," the seminaries of practical reason to which all this construction leads, add nothing, since here too what is required is only some obstacle or some limit in general, and not a single step is taken in the direction of the concrete world, of our despised and — alas! — lovable "sensibility." This is not a world, since it is not yet even the schema of a world. And the Fichtean I, whether writ large or writ small, can never, however hard it tries, engender from itself so much as a real fly or a living cockroach, not a single blade of grass nor even a thistle. It dwells, dead and empty, in the wilderness of Luciferian self-isolation. The disappearance of nature, that is, a desert: such is the result of Fichte's venture, and it was only natural, perhaps even inevitable, that there should appear as the antithesis to this thesis that philosophy of nature which, from Schelling to Hegel, tries to deduce the I from the not-I, a venture just as hopeless as Fichte's.

A further peculiarity of the philosophy of abstract hypostaticity is that it is doomed to a fateful *solipsism*. We have already indicated that the

concept of the absolute I wavers between the concrete and empirically plural I and the unitary I—which latter is already not a human I, but a divine I—so that the positing in this divine I of an I and a not-I, the primordial "deduction" of the not-I, is, properly speaking, the act of the creation of the world. It is obvious, however, that to create the world is by no means to "deduce" it, and is even quite the opposite of any such "deduction." Passing over these ambiguities and polysemies, let us pause only over the fact that, from the point of view of the I which, having posited a not-I, is already no longer absolute, no other I can be perceived, since there exists no means of "deducing" the other I, nor any epistemological organ for it. "I" remains, inevitably, in the singular. The other I is for it—if indeed it is anything at all for it—only a not-I, and there exists no sort of "introjection" whatever which could invest the not-I, as if through certain pores, with the image and likeness of its own I. In other words, Fichte is still somehow able to postulate the not-I as a predicate, but he does not even once pose himself the problem of how to postulate an other I, or a *thou*, a co-subject, nor does he even try to defend himself on this most perilous and ill-protected front. Kant in his theoretical philosophy no doubt finds himself in no better a situation than Fichte, since there is also no transition from the bundle of categories and schemata, or the "transcendental unity of apperception," to transcendental unity of apperception numbers two, three, four, and so on, to a *thou* or a *you plural*. But Kant disposes of this difficulty through the postulates of practical philosophy. A theoretical solution of this kind will not do at all, of course; apart from anything else, it would, if taken seriously, inevitably lead to the revision and re-organization of the whole theory. (What, indeed, would Kant's thought have looked like if practical philosophy had really occupied first place, in accordance with the "primacy" of practical reason, and if that primacy had really influenced his account of the basic presuppositions of the system?) For Fichte, who so often and so readily descants upon "human dignity," there is no such thing as a human being, nor a "thou," nor anything at all like them. The I, the abstract hypostasis, is capable in its Luciferian ecstasy of begetting only its own shadow, the not-I, and of reigning over this empire of shadows, this metaphysical *sheol*.

Fichte's philosophy is not only a theory of abstract hypostaticity, of a subject without an object, but also a theory of mono-hypostaticity. In

Fichte's work, substance is characterized as having a single and unitary countenance, that of the all-engendering subject, which, in truth, can beget nothing, but is able only to "posit," and which posits everything from out of itself. It is not difficult to see in this a distorted philosophical transcription of the image of the *first* hypostasis, the Father, which, however, when taken in isolation from the other hypostases and from the divine *pleroma*, Sophia, is neither a father, since it lacks a son, nor a creator, since it remains without a creation, even though it lays claim precisely to this. The deduction from the *I* not only of the not-I, but also of all the categories and forms of consciousness, together with the ideal (transcendental) form of the world, is, without doubt, an attempt to beget the Word; it is an intimation, from the depths of the **I**, from the first hypostasis, of the divine Logos. Since, however, only a completely empty transcendental schema of the world, devoid of content and of colour, can, by following the logical path of a "deduction," be deduced by such intimations from out of the **I**, such a mono-hypostatic philosophy is in fact doomed to acosmism, however much it struggles against it. For a transcendental schema is, in and of itself, only the possibility of a world, but not the world itself—which Fichte is therefore unable to deduce. This is just why there is no place whatsoever in Fichte's system for the third hypostasis, for the Spirit which creates life and brings it to fulfilment, and which confers sensible concretion upon the ideas of the world, as the world's possibilities. The surge of Fichte's thought does not extend to the third hypostasis; its power is exhausted before that hypostasis can be reached. The pitiful surrogate for life-creating spirit in Fichte's architectonic turns out to be "practical reason," which, in pursuit of the unattainable, performs a kind of running on the spot in order to keep theoretical reason supplied with matter, whilst the word "reason" amalgamates both domains, the theoretical and the practical, the world-positing and the world-creating, into a putative unity.

In the language of Christian heresiology, Fichte's doctrine represents, without doubt, a Sabellian variety of Unitarianism. To Fichte's theory belongs the honor, if it is one, of being a brilliant and resolute deduction of a philosophical heresy, and in this sense, because of its religious and metaphysical precision, it stands *higher* than Kant's theory, which it thinks through to its conclusion. At the source of this heresy, as of all heresies, is rationalism, reason's defiant refusal to submit to that mystery which

finds a philosophical transcription only in those antinomies which tear apart the unified fabric of monistic philosophy. In Fichte this monism finds expression in his universal "deductions," but above all, and here more decidedly than anywhere else, in his deduction of the *not-I* from the I, whereas in fact no subject can be deduced from a predicate, nor can a predicate be deduced from a subject, nor a *not-I* from an I, nor an I from a *not-I*: there is no logical bridge here, for this is not a deduction, but a production, not the unfolding of a single thing, but the disclosure of one thing in and through another. Here is the tragedy of rationalistic philosophy, whose deductions condemn it to heresy. The merit of a philosophical system, as a heresy which reveals one of the possibilities established by "autonomous" reason, is the purity, precision, and determination with which it pursues its path and with which it reveals its motifs and its motives. Just as, in Kant, the foundations of "pure" reason's antinomies and transcendental illusions and self-deceptions—which turn out to be at the same time its ideas and ideals—are already laid in reason's very structure, so, in the same way, "the critique of philosophical (that is, of metaphysical) reason" is able to lay bare the logic of heresies, illusions, and aporias. Reason inevitably falls into these if it does not wish to remain skewered by those antinomies towards which it is led by the content of the dogmas of the faith, and by reason's own metaphysical self-reflection. A sphere located at the apex of a conical form will, provided that it move at all, choose for itself a definite direction, and having taken one slope, will inevitably fall down it until it reaches a limit, rolling down to the bottom. If it can only manage to, it may not move at all, remaining superior to all "directions." It proceeds, however, from this single point alone, a single point which, although it does not itself lie along any of these paths, nevertheless, by beginning all of them, belongs to each of them, without itself occupying any logical space whatever. The sphere goes further in the direction selected and in the path already determined, and cannot come to a halt until it has travelled along the whole path. To stop half-way, in indecision, is, here as elsewhere, a grievous, irreparable, and unforgivable sin. Philosophy is the tragedy of reason, which has its own catharsis. It is possible not to give way to passions, but if one is already fated to fall under their power, great passions stand higher than petty caprices, and folly stands higher than reasonableness. "For there must also be heresies amongst you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among

you" (1 Cor. 11:19). And philosophical aporias must come to be known in their full depth; the tragedy of reason must be lived through honestly and unflinchingly, and in suffering lies the special stamp of greatness in philosophy. Intrepidity and madness, self-crucifixion on the cross of paradox, absurdity not only in the face of common sense, but also in the face of impartial philosophical thought, Dionysiac frenzy, a Khlystism of thought: such are the characteristics of tragic philosophizing.[24] It can embody itself in differing temperaments and in various forms, from Nietzsche's hysteria to the granitic imperturbability of Hegel, but such is its nature. And the stamp of such greatness is also imprinted upon the work of Fichte, who does not shrink from wild absurdity, despite his conversion of this great world of God's into a pocket edition under the title "not-I." There have been many systems of idealism both before and after Fichte, yet Fichte's surpasses them all in the purity and sharpness of its leading metaphysical motif. Fichte reveals the truth about idealism, and he, if anyone, can say of himself that "idealism is I, is my doctrine, and ought not to be otherwise." The idealist heresy has appeared fully and exhaustively, and Fichteanism is a permanent monument in the history of thought, in the dialectic of reason, an irreversible act in the tragedy of philosophy.

B.

PANLOGISTIC SYSTEMS

PANLOGISM IS USUALLY, WITHOUT FURTHER DISCUSsion, ascribed to idealist systems as such and considered as the type to which they belong—Fichte *and* Hegel. Such is the usual idea. In fact, there is, on the contrary, a fundamental opposition between them, an opposition only obscured by the general denominator "idealism," which is unimportant here. So far we have been dealing with the philosophy of

24 The Khlysty ("whips") were an ascetic Russian sect originating in the seventeenth century, originally known as the *khristoveroi*, or "Christ-believers," who believed in the possibility of direct communication with the Holy Spirit and in the Spirit's embodiment in living individuals; it is presumably this belief, rather than the sect's asceticism, that Bulgakov has in mind in describing philosophy as *khlystovshchina*. The sect's name was corrupted to "Khlysty" by its critics, who considered members of the sect to be flagellants. — *Trans.*

abstract hypostaticity, for which there exists only the subject, **I**. But it is no less tempting and no less possible for philosophical thought to proceed from the object, and to orientate itself solely from that. The object can be taken in one of two ways: either as a certain content, meaning, word, or idea—as a predicate, in the precise sense—or as being, *res*, which is expressed by the copula. Both these sides, the ideal and the real, are united in the **I**. The "I" is a dimensionless and indeterminate point; it is outside being and above being. The predicate, the object, by contrast, necessarily possesses content and thus leads into the domain of being. This ideal content is "the world as representation," the sum total of ideas, the organism of ideas. These ideas of an intellectual world, of an intelligible and eternally essential realm of pure being, are regarded by panlogism as substance itself. For panlogism the word, the *logos*, was not only *in the beginning*, but the word also *was* the beginning, and not only was "it" "all," but everything also originated from it: this is panlogism's fundamental thesis, its principal thought.

It is possible, in a certain sense, to regard Plato, in his theory of ideas, as having been the forefather of the philosophy of abstract predication. Plato's theory of ideas as a whole is without doubt characterized by its anhypostaticity, by its lacking an interest in the problem of personhood, and by its lacking, therefore, any account of personhood either. He fastens his gaze upon an intellectual place, a τόπος νοητός [*topos noëtos*], where the "mother" of being resides, the eternal, divine ideas. It is these that he wishes to see and to hear; he wishes, in his dialectic, to hold still the sempiternal birth of the ideas and the conflicts inherent to them. Nor is Plato unfamiliar, moreover, with the problem of laying bare the very logical bases of this conflict, of this dialectic of ideas; so that he proceeds from the science of ideas to a "science of logic" (in the Hegelian sense) especially in dialogues such as the *Parmenides*, the *Sophist*, the *Philebus*, and in certain parts of the other dialogues. The moment of hypostaticity is either completely absent in Plato, or it is considered only as an aspect of the relativity, transience, formation, and confusion of authentic being—the ideas mingled with the inauthentic, material world. Nevertheless, Plato's thought here by no means has a militantly anti-hypostatic character; rather, it is helpless and naïve in regard to the question of personhood, like antiquity in general. Thanks to this, Plato's theory of ideas does not have the characteristics of a closed and free-standing

metaphysics, and is able to enter Christian theology as a theory of Sophia and of the sophianicity of the world (compare my *Unfading Light*). Plato's thought must not without qualification be interpreted as panlogistic, despite the fact that, needless to say, Hegel, the "German Plato"—who, in fact, in no way resembles his putative forerunner—understands Plato precisely in this way, together with many of his compatriots (rather as, more recently, the Cohenites Natorp and Hartmann have tortured Plato so as to turn him into a forerunner of Cohen). If, for the reasons stated, Plato is not to be counted amongst the panlogists, we need to go straight on to Hegel, who is the only radical panlogist of his kind. The philosophy of Hegel, like the philosophy of Fichte, constitutes a classic and fully consummated panlogism, a panlogism of pure predication, of thought thinking itself. Hegel's panlogism represents the Herculean pillars of philosophical audacity, to which thought can attain when delirious in, and intoxicated by, its own strength; this is the ecstasy of thought, and, at the same time, it is a human frenzy, an idealist Khlystism. Just as Fichte, in his Luciferian madness, had the audacity to write his little *I* with a capital letter, and to equate his own spark with the divine Flame itself—to unify and to identify the creaturely I with the absolute **I**, so as to make of his putatively absolute **I** not only the creator of the world, but also the creator of the **I** itself and of its creaturely, human form—so Hegel, standing at the opposite pole, and starting out not from the philosophical or propositional subject but from the predicate, faced the same difficulty, to deduce and posit everything out of pure thought, out of the absolute predicate, to deduce not only the subject, the **I**, but also the world and nature. If, for Fichte, substance is **I** and **I** alone, for Hegel substance is self-engendering thought. The first-order significance and importance of such a project is evident. A more detailed account of it will be given in a dedicated excursus; here we will pause only over some features which are of fundamental interest in this connection. In Hegel's thought the subject, or the **I**, does not posit the *not-I* out of itself, together with the thought of the **I** and of the *not-I*, that is, thinking as such; instead it is thinking as such which posits the **I**, which becomes subjective, or even, at a certain moment of its own dialectical development, becomes the subject. Thinking begins and starts out neither from subjectivity nor from objectivity but from indifferent, self-thinking thought, which, in its own dialectical self-unfolding, becomes the concept and then the concept

of the concept, the subject. "The concept, when it has developed into a *concrete existence* that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness."[25]

25 SL, 583. In the introduction to the *Encyclopedia Logic*, 30 (§20), we find a remark made in passing: "Thought, regarded as an activity, may be accordingly described as the active universal, and, since the deed, its product, is the universal once more, may be called a self-actualizing universal. Thought conceived as a subject (agent) is a thinker, and the subject existing as a thinker is simply denoted by the term 'I.'" *Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 29. And that is all. But in the third part of the *Science of Logic*, at the zenith of speculation, where the twists of the dialectical transitions are followed patiently and acutely, this theme is given only the following definition: speaking of the nature of the concept, Hegel goes on to say that "I will confine myself here to a remark which may help one to grasp the concepts here developed and may make it easier to find one's bearings in them. The concept, when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness. True, I have concepts, that is to say, determinate concepts; but the I is the pure concept itself which, as concept, has come into existence. When, therefore, reference is made to the fundamental determinations which constitute the nature of the I, we may presuppose that the reference is to something familiar, that is, a commonplace of our ordinary thinking. But the I is first, this pure self-related unity; and it is so not immediately but only as making abstraction from all determinateness and content and withdrawing into the freedom of unrestricted equality with itself. As such it is universality; a unity that is unity with itself only through its negative attitude, which appears as a process of abstraction, and that consequently contains all determinedness dissolved in it. Secondly, the I as self-related negativity is no less immediately *individuality* or is *absolutely determined*, opposing itself to all that is other and excluding it—individual personality. This absolute universality which is also immediately an absolute individualization, and an absolutely determined being, which is a pure positedness and is this absolutely determined being only through its unity with the positedness, this constitutes the nature of the I as well as of the concept; neither the one nor the other can be truly comprehended unless the two indicated moments are grasped at the same time both in their abstraction and also in their perfect unity" (SL, 583).

On p. 84, we find another remark made in passing: "The richest is therefore the most concrete and most subjective, and that which withdraws itself into the simplest depth is the mightiest and most all-embracing. The highest, most concentrated point is the pure personality which, solely through the absolute dialectic which is its nature, no less embraces and holds everything within itself, because it makes itself the supremely free—the simplicity which is the first immediacy and universality" (SL, 841). "The absolute idea, as the rational concept that in its reality meets only with itself, is by virtue of this immediacy of its objective identity, on the one hand the return to *life*; but it has no less sublated this form of its immediacy, and contains within itself the highest degree of opposition. The concept is not merely soul, but free subjective concept that is for itself and therefore possesses personality—the practical, objective concept determined in and for itself which, as person, is impenetrable atomic subjectivity—but which, none the less, is not exclusive individuality, but explicitly universality and cognition, and in its other has its own objectivity for its object. All else is error, confusion, opinion, endeavour, caprice and transitoriness; the absolute Idea alone is being, imperishable life, self-knowing truth, and is all truth" (SL, 824).

It goes without saying that we find only fleeting and inadequate judgements about the nature of the I. For Hegel, the I exists as a concept, as a generality, which in his view is always expressed by a word, by every word, and consequently also by the word I. There is, for Hegel, no such thing as the particular nature of the pronoun as a demonstrative, mystical gesture, namely, towards an individual, nor is there, accordingly, any such thing as the nature of any given substantive. This mistaken and one-sided appeal to the nature of the word as universal and universal alone is one of the main arguments which, as early as the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, leads Hegel to panlogism. Hegel treats the I from the same standpoint, simply as a general concept.[26]

26 "The object of sense-certainty is *Einzelnes, Dieses, ein Jetzt, ein Hier, dieses Jetzt, dieses Hier* [an individual, this, a now, a here, this now, this here], yet this immediate 'here' is already *schlechthin allgemeines* [directly universal]." (Despite the presence of German text, this is—at least so far as I have been able to discover—not a quotation but a paraphrase of the sense of Hegel's discussion of sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology*. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister [Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952], 79–89; *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, 58–66.—*Trans.*) To predicate an object means to generalize it; this expresses "die göttliche Natur der Sprache" [the divine nature of speech] (which is why one might perhaps pay closer attention to it). It is possible to indicate an object with one's hand; an individual is inexpressible, irrational; the definition of an object itself is, by contrast, already *allgemeines* [universal]; that is why what is spontaneous and intuitive is immediately ejected from the luminous kingdom of the logos into outer darkness, and panlogism's later path of abstraction is already predetermined.

This turn of thought is reproduced in the *Logic* and in the *Encyclopaedia*, and now it is applied to the I. Here we read: "Sensible existence has been characterized by the attributes of individuality and mutual exclusion of the members. It is well to remember that these very attributes of sense are thoughts and general terms.... *Now language is the work of thought: and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal.* What I only mean or suppose is mine: it belongs to me—this particular individual. But language expresses nothing but universality; and so I cannot say what I merely mean. And the unutterable—feeling or sensation—far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant and untrue. If I say 'the individual', 'this individual', 'here', 'now', all these are universal terms. Everything and anything is an individual, a 'this', and if it be sensible, is here and now. Similarly when I say 'I', I mean my single self to the exclusion of all others; but what I say, viz. 'I', is just every 'I', which in like manner excludes all others from itself. In an awkward expression which Kant used, he said that I accompany all my conceptions—sensations, too, desires, actions, etc. 'I' is in essence and act the universal: and such partnership is a form, though an external form, of universality. All other men have it in common with me to be 'I'; just as it is common to all my sensations and conceptions to be mine. But 'I', in the abstract, as such, is the mere act of self-concentration or self-relation, in which we make abstraction from all conception and feeling, from every state of mind and every peculiarity of nature, talent and experience. To this extent, 'I' is the existence of a wholly abstract universality, a principle of abstract freedom. Hence thought, viewed as a subject,

Every *here* or *now*, although it is immediate, is also *schlechthin allgemeines* [directly universal], something logical; this is ensured by *die göttliche Natur der Sprache* [the divine nature of language] (which divine nature, by the way, is why language deserves much more focused attention and concentrated scrutiny than it in fact gets in Hegel). Thus the **I**, too, when it is expressed, is "every I," "the universal in its abstract and free

---

is what is expressed by the word 'I'; and since I am at the same time in all my sensations, conceptions, and states of consciousness, thought is everywhere present, and is a category that runs through all these modifications." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 31 [§20].) The lack of clarity in Hegel's arguments about words and thoughts, and in particular about pronouns, is characteristic of his reasoning, as is the fact that in his work hypostaticity vanishes, in panlogistic fashion, into the general *concept* of the I.

In another passage of the *Encyclopaedia* we find the following account: "Nature does not bring its νοῦς into consciousness: it is man who first makes himself double so as to be a universal for a universal. This first happens when man knows that he is 'I'. By the term 'I' I mean myself, a single and altogether determinate person. And yet I really utter nothing peculiar to myself, for everyone else is an 'I' or 'Ego', and when I call myself 'I', though I indubitably mean the single person myself, I express a thorough universal. 'I', therefore, is mere being-for-self, in which everything peculiar or marked is renounced and buried out of sight; it is as it were the ultimate and unanalysable point of consciousness. We may say 'I' and thought are the same, or, more definitely, 'I' is thought as a thinker. What I have in my consciousness is for me. 'I' is the vacuum [*!?—S.B.*] or receptacle for anything and everything: for which everything is and which stores up everything in itself. Every man is a whole world of conceptions, that lie buried in the night of the 'Ego'. It follows that the 'Ego' is the universal in which we leave aside all that is particular, and in which at the same time all the particulars have a latent existence [*Hegel has to get himself out of a tight spot here—S.B.*]. In other words, it is not a mere universality and nothing more, but the universality which includes in it everything. Commonly we use the word 'I' without attaching much importance to it, nor is it an object of study except to philosophical analysis. In the 'Ego', we have thought before us in its utter purity [*?—S.B.*]. While the brute cannot say 'I', man can, because it is his nature to think. [*Not because of this, of course, or, rather, not only because of this, but because the human being is spirit, which, for Hegel, is identical with thinking, is only thinking.—S.B.*] Now in the 'Ego' there are a variety of contents, derived both from within and without, and according to the nature of these contents our state may be described as perception, or conception, or reminiscence. But in all of these the 'I' is found: or in them all thought is present." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 38 [§24, Zusatz].) A similar conclusion about the I is reached in the theory of quality, in the section on being-for-self: "The readiest instance of Being-for-self is found in the 'I'. We know ourselves as existents, distinguished in the first place from other existents, and with certain relations thereto. But we also come to know this expansion of existence (in these relations) reduced, as it were, to a point in the form of simple being-for-self. When we say 'I', we express the reference-to-self which is infinite, and at the same time negative. Man, it may be said, is distinguished from the animal world, and in that way from nature altogether, by knowing himself as 'I': which amounts to saying that natural things never attain a free Being-for-self, but as limited to Being-there-and-then, are always and only Being for an other." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 141 [§96, Zusatz].)

existence. The I is, consequently, thinking as subject"; "I is pure thought." And since thinking distinguishes a person from an animal, the pure I can belong only to a person.[27]

It is natural that Hegel should, with carelessness and prejudice, pass over the problem of judgement.[28]

27 From time to time Hegel unexpectedly speaks of the I in strange accents which recall Fichte: "'I' is the vacuum or receptacle for anything and everything: for which everything is and which stores up everything in itself. Every man is a whole world of conceptions, that lie buried in the night of the 'Ego.' It follows that the 'Ego' is the universal in which we leave aside all that is particular, and in which at the same time all the particulars have a latent existence." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 38 [§24].) (The reader will notice that Bulgakov has already quoted this passage in the previous note. — *Trans.*)

28 "[T]he propositional form . . . is not suited to express the concrete (and the true is always concrete) or the speculative. Every judgement is by its form one-sided and, to that extent, false." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 51 [§31].) "The chief feature of the method [of pre-critical metaphysics — *Translator*] lay in 'assigning' or 'attributing' predicates to the object that was to be recognized, for example, to God. But attribution is no more than an external reflection about the object: the predicates by which the object is to be determined are supplied from the resources of picture-thought, and applied in a mechanical way. Whereas, if we are to have genuine cognition, the object must characterize its own self and not derive its predicates from without [? — *S.B.*]. Even supposing we follow the method of predicating, the mind cannot help feeling that predicates of this sort fail to exhaust the object. From the same point of view the Orientals are correct in calling God the many-named or the myriad-named One. One after another of these finite categories leaves the soul unsatisfied, and the Oriental sage is compelled unceasingly to seek for more and more of such predicates. In finite things it is no doubt the case that they have to be characterized through finite predicates: and with these things the understanding finds proper scope for its special action. Itself finite, it knows only the nature of the finite. Thus, when I call some action a theft, I have characterized the action in its essential facts; and such a knowledge is sufficient for the judge. Similarly, finite things stand to each other as cause and effect, force and exercise, and when they are apprehended in these categories, they are known in their finitude. But the objects of reason cannot be defined by these finite predicates. To try to do so was the defect of the old metaphysic." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 50 [§28].) Here, quite wrongly, predication is linked to the understanding and opposed to reason; the relation between a subject and a predicate is one of simultaneous identity and non-identity (for Hegel justly remarks that *omnis determinatio est negatio* and that every judgement contains a contradiction within itself). This is repeated in the *Science of Logic*: "[t]he proposition in the *form of a judgement* is not suited to express speculative truths; a familiarity with this fact is likely to remove many misunderstandings of speculative truths. Judgment is an *identical* relation between subject and predicate; in it we abstract from the fact that the subject has a number of determinatenesses other than that of the predicate, and also that the predicate is more extensive than the subject. Now if the content is speculative, the *non-identical* aspect of subject and predicate is also an essential moment, but in the judgment this is not expressed" (SL, 91). Then again, Hegel lets fall the following witty aphorism: "in death, as we ordinarily say, body and soul part, i.e. subject and predicate

The plan of Hegel's system was that it should show how thought, starting from its simplest, barest, and most abstract determinations, comes to itself through its dialectical development; how, increasing in strength, it becomes in the end both an all-encompassing concept and the concept of concepts, becomes the subject, becomes the living idea, spirit, so that panlogism issues in spiritualism. So we have here a complete antithesis to Fichte. In the latter, the subject in all its own power and glory generates the object together with all its categories. Here, on the other hand, it is, if not the object, then the predicate—that is, thought—which reveals itself also to be the subject; thought is here, moreover, understood not in its concrete fullness but in terms of logical schemas and categories. It can be said in advance that this deduction of the non-deducible can be accomplished only by means of a series of forced interpretations and sophisms, and that Hegel in any case nowhere carries out any such deduction, but instead simply announces it in the third part of his *Science of Logic*, in accordance with the plan of that work, in which this part was to contain the "subjective" logic, and, consequently, the requisite subject. To announce, quite abruptly and dogmatically, that "[t]he concept, when it has developed into a *concrete existence* that is itself free, is none other than the *I* or pure self-consciousness," or that "the *I* is the pure concept itself which, as concept, has come into existence" (SL, 583) does not mean that one has deduced the I, even though this general task—to exhibit thinking not only as substance, but also as subject—is presented as the common aim of all Hegel's philosophical work as early as the "Preface" to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[29]

---

utterly diverge." (*Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 238 [§173, Zusatz].) (True, O king!) This is connected to Hegel's aforementioned failure to understand the nature of the word, which he in general so greatly misuses. The error about *Dies* [this] and *Hier* [here] which underlies the *Phenomenology* is also repeated in the *Science of Logic*: "By 'this' we *mean* to express something completely determined; it is overlooked that speech, as a work of the understanding, gives expression only to universals, except [*how can there be an 'exception' here!—S.B.*] in the *name* of a single object; but the individual name is meaningless, in the sense that it does not express a universal, and for the same reason appears as something merely posited and arbitrary; just as proper names, too, can be arbitrarily assumed, given, or also altered" (SL, 117; an astonishingly frivolous judgement about the word to have come from the philosopher of panlogism!).

29 "In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, 9–10.—*Trans.*

The transition from thought to the subject [*sub'ekt*], from the predicate to the subject [*podlezhashchee*], or, what amounts to the same thing, from a panlogistic schema to spiritualism, is both the most difficult and the most impracticable transition in Hegel's project. To posit an **I** from the *not-I*, or at least from the *non-I*, is much less manageable than Fichte's undertaking in the opposite direction—to deduce a *not-I* from the **I**. For in a certain sense the world, or predicate, is actually a *not-I*, to the extent that it can be defined in terms of categories of I-ness, and the **I** is really the starting point (the first hypostasis in the triune shape of substance). But this movement is irreversible: if it is possible to accomplish a leap (but by no means a transition) from the **I** to the *not-I*, there is no sort of path from the *non-I*—which had not previously even contained the *not-I*—to the **I**. Hegel's undertaking is, ontologically, perfectly absurd, and shows with how little intensity he experienced Fichte's philosophical discoveries (there are almost no traces of any attention on Hegel's part to Fichte's problem). It goes without saying that in fact there could not be a *non-I* which would not at the same time be a *not-I*, which would not, that is, conceal within itself an **I**; and this **I** must also duly come to light. In other words, the kind of thinking which Hegel wished to demonstrate, a thinking of a predicate without a subject, does not exist, and here one can say, to adapt a Russian proverb, that if you chase Nature (or the subject) in through the door, it escapes out of the window, and that Hegel, having begun as a panlogist, ends as a spiritualist—that is, either his system must in fact from its very beginning be understood as a gradually unfolding spiritualism, or spiritualism signifies the inevitable collapse of panlogism and itself stands for a completely new doctrine. In reality, Hegel's whole worldview wrestles together, in a fantastical way, two different systems, idealistic panlogism and monistic spiritualism, which is why it is also possible to understand him in the latter sense (Caird).[30] Despite this, Hegel's most original, significant, and interesting productions—i.e., almost all of the *Science of Logic*, as well as the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia Logic*—are panlogistic. The remaining works have such a pronouncedly spiritualistic character that they in no way require either panlogism or the works just mentioned

30 Edward Caird's *Hegel* (1888), as Khoruzhij, ed. cit. (575) points out, appeared in a Russian translation in 1898, with a foreword by S. N. Trubetskoj and a prefatory essay on "The Philosophy of Hegel" by Vladimir Solovyov.—*Trans.*

in order to be understood. (As an external reminder of those works, the externally applied triadic form persists, metamorphosed into a particular kind of evolutionism; this is how it was possible for a Hegelian evolutionism, such as we find in Marxism, to come about). Nevertheless, Hegel's main efforts aim to bring panlogism and pan-spiritualism closer together, or even to identify the two—to pass from the schema to concretion, from abstraction to reality. He was not able, of course, to fulfil this requirement, since it was an impossible one, or, more precisely, a false one. However deep the separate analyses of the *Logic*, however dazzlingly brilliant certain moves of the dialectic, however astounding Hegel's industry and persistence in overcoming difficulties, in erecting a system of cast iron and granite, the project of an absolute philosophy nevertheless did not succeed, otherwise this system would in actual fact have been the system of the world, its reason a divine reason, and the rationality of everything existing transparent to thought. Hegel met with two fundamental and decisive misfortunes. The first was the impossibility of deducing the subject from the predicate, and the second, no less serious, the impossibility of deducing being or reality from thought, or, more precisely, from conceivability, from abstract possibility alone. This latter difficulty is the question of nature. In order to obtain reality, the world, and nature, Hegel—stopping his ears and screwing up his eyes so as to forget everything which he has argued up to that point—famously announces the "being-other" of the concept, which "releases" nature from itself in no less irrational and incomprehensible fashion than does the Schopenhauerian Will when it arbitrarily posits the world.[31]

31 Nature is depicted along these lines in relation to the concept: "This is the impotence of nature, that it cannot adhere to and exhibit the strictness of the concept and runs wild in this blind irrational [*begrifflos*] multiplicity. We can *wonder* at nature's manifold genera and species and the endless diversity of her formations, for *wonderment* is unreasoning and its object the irrational. Nature, because it is the self-externality of the concept, is free to indulge itself in this variety, just as spirit, too, even though it possesses the concept in the shape of the concept, indulges in pictorial thinking and runs riot in its endless variety. The manifold natural genera or species must not be esteemed as anything more than the capricious fancies of spirit in its representations [*indeed so!—S.B.*]. Both indeed show traces and inklings of the concept on all sides, but do not present a faithful copy of it because they are the side of its free self-externality. The concept is absolute power just because it can freely abandon its difference to the shape of self-subsistent diversity, outer necessity, contingency, caprice, opinion, which however must not be taken for more than the abstract aspect of nothingness" (SL, 607–8). (A pitiful hypostatization on the part of the haughty panlogist!) The following thought sounds even more absurd:

This irrational collapse affords the concept the further possibility (in the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of history) of overcoming this irrationality—an irrationality which, however, possesses the priceless quality of being real. The system is given a wholly spiritualistic meaning, and "spirit" or substance obviously takes the place of the idea and the concept; Hegel's philosophy turns into a metaphysical evolutionism. The "being-other" of the idea—that is, reality—becomes a springboard for spirit, an inert mass, in overcoming which spirit reveals its own nature and strength. Unfortunately, this "being-other" not only is not properly grounded in Hegel's panlogism, but does not admit of any sort of dialectical grounding either. For, of course, the external simplification into a dialectical "contradiction" of something which has nothing universal or dialectical about it—namely, the idea's relinquishing itself, at its point of fullest maturity and self-consciousness, into nature, into the darkness and meaninglessness of "being-other"—is unconvincing, and constitutes of itself a *petitio principii*. Equally unconvincing is the transformation of the faceless and anhypostatic idea into the subject, a transformation accomplished by an unexpected bare assertion that "the free subjective concept is not merely soul [!!!—*S. B.*] but also possesses personhood," that it is "a person . . . impenetrable atomic subjectivity."[32] This sort of leap of thought, these sorts of logical gaps and hiatuses, will stand for ever as a historic example not only of logical arbitrariness, but also of philosophical despair; they are Hegel's attempt to escape from the nets of his own system. And Hegel's position concerning the fundamental

---

"Life, or organic nature, is the stage of nature at which the concept emerges, but as blind, as unaware of itself [*what nonsense!*—*S. B.*] and unthinking [*!!!*—*S. B.*]; the concept that is self-conscious and thinks pertains solely to spirit" (SL, 586). Here panlogism is clearly making a transition to spiritualism (Hartman/Schopenhauer). The transition to nature is solemnly announced in the same way: "the idea *freely releases* [*entläßt*] itself in its absolute self-assurance and inner poise. By reason of this freedom, the form of its determinateness is also utterly free—the *externality of space and time* existing absolutely on its own account without the moment of subjectivity" (SL, 843).

32 I have rephrased Miller's translation (SL, 824) to reflect the different ordering in the Russian quotation given by Bulgakov. Miller's version of the passage quoted in part by Bulgakov runs thus (with his "Notion" for *Begriff* as usual replaced by "concept"): "The concept is not merely *soul*, but free subjective concept that is for itself and therefore possesses *personality*—the practical, objective concept determined in and for itself, which, as person, is impenetrable atomic subjectivity—but which, none the less, is not exclusive individuality, but explicitly *universality* and *cognition*, and in its other has *its own* objectivity for its object."—*Trans.*

task of his philosophical work indeed remains, from a logical point of view, entirely aporetic. With his initial plan—a militant, abstract panlogism—Hegel confines himself to an airless cave, where, certainly, there are found the "mothers" glimpsed by Faust, but which neither sound nor light can penetrate.[33] Self-excommunicated from the hypostasis and from reality alike, there remain to Hegel only convulsive attempts to break down the door of the crypt which he has himself constructed. Without such a break-out, he would have had to put a full stop at the end of his *Logic* and rest from his labors, whereas in fact he continues his philosophical voyage to the ends of the cosmos, pronouncing *de omnibus rebus scibilibus atque quibusdam aliis* [about everything that can be known, and one or two other things too].

Hegel's philosophical undertaking is nevertheless, like Fichte's, significant, as a philosophical experiment of dizzying audacity and incredible force, which ends in inevitable and tragic failure. For all Hegel's pride in his own dialectic as fearless of contradiction and as throwing down the gauntlet to rationality, Hegel's system is a rationalism at breaking point. By means of innocent and in no way terrifying contradictions, it develops from its initial antinomies (insoluble by reason) and wishes to explain and to deduce everything by reducing the triunity of substance—the hypostasis, the word or idea, and reality or being—to a simple rational unity. In this attempt it founders. In theological terms, it can be said that Hegel's doctrine, like Fichte's, is a monohypostatic system, with the difference between them that in Fichte this hypostasis is the first hypostasis, the person, the philosophical and propositional subject, I, whereas, in Hegel, the hypostasis is the second, the Logos, the idea, the concept. Hegel's position is thus far more difficult and aporetic even than that of Fichte. For the first person is the beginning, from which, evidently, the movement commences, even though it does not stop there. By contrast, the conversion of the second person into the first and, consequently, only person is accompanied by absolutely fundamental distortions and difficulties. Here, to use Hegel's own expression, it is as though someone had had the idea of walking on his head for fun, and as if all objects

33 Bulgakov alludes to the mysterious goddesses with whom Mephistopheles terrifies Faust in Part Two of Goethe's play. See "Finstere Galerie" in Goethe, *Faust*, ed. Trunz, 190–94 (191), esp. ll. 6216ff.—*Trans.*

were to appear to him distorted and upside-down.[34] For to proceed from the idea to the hypostasis (from "objective" to "subjective" logic), from phenomenal revelation to the original noumenal source, from the predicate to the subject, is simply impossible; no such path exists, just as it is impossible to count from the second to the first. For Fichte, as we saw above, there was such a path. He was mistaken in his mono-hypostatic "deduction," but he did not distort the order of succession: the first hypostasis, the Father, really is the beginning, the originator of any movement within substantiality, and in a certain respect the world, the predicate, really can be defined as a *not-I*, in terms of the categories of I-ness. The I cannot, on the other hand, in any sense or under any circumstances be defined in terms of the categories of *not-I*, deduced from the *not-I*, exhibited as a development of the predicate, as the ripening of a concept which has become subjective—but this is just what Hegel attempted to do. This is why we do not see even an attempt at a deduction here, but only a metaphysical evasion of the logical difficulties involved by means of a hypostatization or spiritualization of the concept. Hypostaticity is attributed to the concept by means of a verbal somersault of unfathomable naïveté and crudity, a somersault which merely illustrates the full hopelessness of Hegel's position. Less hopeless is the deduction of reality or being from the idea, for here the path is leading from the second to the third hypostasis, and the natural order of succession between these two moments is at least not broken, but merely hampered by the absence of a hypostasis, of a philosophical or propositional subject of being. The latter (being) continues involuntarily to lack a subject; it exists for no one. In this sense, it is as though being loses consciousness. This transition from ideality to reality also expresses the celebrated "being-other" of the idea which becomes reality, which releases nature from itself, which, in other words, itself becomes a "living soul." Here yet another characteristic misinterpretation is added, namely the idea that knowledge of the third hypostasis, of being, is acquired by means of the second, whereas in fact it comes from the first. Particular difficulties follow from this. Since the

34 "When natural consciousness entrusts itself straightway to Science, it makes an attempt, induced by it knows not what, to walk on its head, just this once; the compulsion to assume this unwonted posture and to go about in it is a violence it is expected to do to itself, all unprepared and seemingly without necessity." Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, 15 (§ 26). — *Trans.*

idea is merely an image of being, it obviously cannot in and of itself give rise to being as such; being exists for a hypostasis, and a putative deduction of being from the idea merely underlines the impossibility of beginning anywhere other than at the beginning. "Logic" (supposedly) "exhibits the elevation of the idea to that level from which it becomes the creator of nature and passes over to the form of a concrete immediacy whose concept, however, breaks up this shape again in order to realize itself as concrete spirit" (SL, 592).

Such is the metaphysical character of Hegel's thought. It is a typical philosophical heresy in this sense, that it is grounded in an arbitrary and self-willed *choice* of one of the moments of triune substance—the logical moment—and the subordination of both the other moments to it. What results from this is a philosophical Sabellianism, a mono-hypostaticity which dialectically converts itself into a triunity. (It is well known that, in theology too, Hegel elaborates a Sabellian doctrine in his account of the Holy Trinity: see the excursus on Hegel below.) This heresy brings Hegel's philosophy to a tragic collapse; the system, which is not secured from within, splinters apart because its philosophical principles are inadequate. Seen with the eyes of common sense, Hegelianism is absurd, a pipe-dream; but even when compared with "critical" reason, it is a metaphysical delirium, is possessed. Despite this, its significance and even in its own way its greatness lie precisely in its audacity, in the very fact that it is so bold and so singular, a one-sidedness or heresy which is one of a kind. If the words of the apostle Paul—"[f]or there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19)—are applicable anywhere in the history of philosophy, they are applicable here. For here a philosophical experiment is conducted with astonishing persistence and with colossal strength; here the tragedy of heretical philosophizing is lived through to the depths and convincingly articulated, and the lessons of this experiment are stamped indelibly on the memory. If such an experiment could ever, in the history of philosophy, be repeated—*non bis in idem* [never the same thing twice]—then, apart from anything else, it would not, after Hegel, have either the freshness or the naivety which forms part of its strength. It was reserved to Hegel alone to test and to define the true limits of logicism and thus, in reality, to deprive the false claims of panlogism of their power.

C.

SYSTEMS OF SUBSTANTIALITY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF IDENTITY AND MONISM

THE PREDICATE CONSISTS OF AN IDEA AND THE COPula. The latter is not merely a grammatical part of the sentence, but is also a mystical gesture, full of the deepest ontological significance. The copula imparts significance to the predicate; it brings into being the meaning of the predicate as a revelation of the nature of the subject. The copula leads from the ideal into the real. Just as the I does not in itself contain any sort of thought, but is merely a philosophical or grammatical subject, so too the copula contains nothing but a *relation* between the subject and the predicate; it testifies to the reality of the predicate in the subject, and places the being of the subject in the predicate. The copula expresses an ontological moment, testifying to being, and making the predicate participate in the being of the subject. The copula is itself this being in its most universal and comprehensive form. It is the nature of substance, not in a special or particular, but in a universal and comprehensive, form. In a similar way to that in which the I expresses the hypostaticity of substance, the copula, the ontological bond, points symbolically to the nature of substance, φύσις [*phusis*]; the predicate is only one of its innumerable revelations. It signifies substance—not in its hypostatic face, but in its nature, not as subject, but as object, the unity of sheer being, its oceanic depth. It is the upfurled and incessantly self-unfurling *All* (not for nothing does Hegel begin his deduction of the *All* with the category of being—see the "excursus on Hegel"). It can be well captured by saying that in and through the copula's translucence shines substance in its ontological [*bytijnoj*] nature, permitting its reality to be sensed, and by means of the copula's power the word becomes flesh, becomes a living soul. By means of this role of the copula, in which the nature of substance and the reality of the predicate are revealed, the possibility is established of a type of philosophizing not thus far examined: the philosophy of ontological monism, of substantial all-unity, of metaphysical naturalism. If, in idealism, the all-consuming and definitive principle was the hypostasis, and if, in panlogism, it was thought, here this principle is substance as nature (anhypostatic, non-hypostatic, or pre-hypostatic). A philosophy

of this type is, evidently, always a naturalism, but such naturalism can take many different shapes and forms, from the crudest to the most refined. Systems of naturalism are both extraordinarily numerous and extraordinarily widespread. This is understandable, when one takes into consideration that idealism and panlogism are the fruit of a refined speculation, and arise only on the basis of a highly-developed philosophical culture, whereas naturalism may be equally proper either to the lowest stages of culture or to the highest, and accompanies thought in every age as one of its possibilities. Thought seeks an explanation for the I in the *it*, just as it seeks the definite and particular in universality and all-unity; the demand made by the philosophy of identity sounds to thought almost like the voice of philosophy itself. In so far as it is possible to abstract from the moment of hypostaticity and of logical form, thought is right—in so far as it seeks to trace that which has originated to its origin, to trace phenomena to the nature which gives rise to them, to trace *natura naturata* in *natura naturans*. All ancient philosophy is this kind of naturalism, until the philosophical birth of the hypostatic person in Socrates and Plato (so far, at least, as this can be considered as having happened in their work). If we leave to one side the Milesian school, with its primitivism, two figures above all—Parmenides and Heraclitus—come to mind, even though they are in disagreement with each other. To them we can in a certain sense add Pythagoras; Empedocles and the atomists; and, later, the stoics.

It was given to Parmenides, in his verse fragment, to assert the principle of the all-unity of substance and of the philosophy of identity with such force and with such classical clarity and simplicity that it resounded unceasingly through the ages.

ταυτῃ δ'ἔπι σήματ' ἔασι
πολλὰ μάλ', ὡσ ἀγένητον ἐὸν καὶ ἀνώλεθρόν ἐστιν,
οὖλον μουνογενές τε καὶ ἀτρεμὲς ἠδὲ τέλειον. [...]
οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ'ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἐστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν,
ἐν, συνεχές.

[tautēi d'epi sēmat' easi | polla mal', hōs agenēton eon kai anōlethron estin,| houlon mounogenes te kai atremes ēde teleion. [...] | oude pot' ēn oud' estai, epei nun estin homou pan, | en,

sunekhes.] (On this way there are very many signs, that being uncreated and imperishable it is, whole and of a single kind and unshaken and perfect. [...] It never was nor will be, since it is now, all together, one, continuous.)[35]

οὐδὲ διαιρετόν ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον.
οὐδέ τι τῇ μᾶλλον, τό κεν εἴργοι μιν συνέχεσθαι,
οὐδέ το χειρότερον, πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος.
τῷ ξυνεχὲς πᾶν ἐστιν. ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει. [...]
αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρασι δεσμῶν
ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄπαυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος
τῆλε μάλ' ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής.

[*oude diaireton estin, epei pan estin homoion:* | *oude ti tēi mallon, to ken eirgoi min sunekhesthai,* | *oude ti kheiroteron, pan d'empleon estin eontos.* | *tōi xunekhes pan estin: heon gar eonti pelazei.* | [...] *autar akinēton megalōn en peirasi desmōn* | *estin anarkhon apauston, epei genesis kai olethros* | *tēle mal' eplakhthēsan, apōse de pistis alēthēs.*] (Nor is it divided, since it all exists alike; nor is it more here and less there, which would prevent it from holding together, but it is all full of being. So it is all continuous: for what is draws near to what is.... But changeless within the limit of great bonds it exists without beginning or ceasing, since coming to be and perishing have wandered very far away, and true conviction has thrust them off.)[36]

"Remaining the same and in the same place it lies on its own and thus fixed it will remain. For strong Necessity holds it within the bonds of a limit, which keeps it in on every side. Therefore it is right that what is should not be imperfect; for it is not deficient—if it were it would be deficient in everything. The same thing is there to be thought and is why there is thought. For you will not find thinking without what is, in

35 Text and translation are given here from Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 248–49. — *Trans.*

36 Text and translation from ibid., 250–51. — *Trans.*

all that has been said. For there neither is nor will be anything else beside what is, since Fate fettered it to be whole and changeless. Therefore it has been named all the names which mortals have laid down believing them to be true—coming to be and perishing, being and not being, changing place and altering in bright colour. But since there is a furthest limit, it is perfected, like the bulk of a ball well-rounded on every side, equally balanced in every direction from the centre. For it must needs not be somewhat more or somewhat less here or there. For neither is it non-existent, which would stop it from reaching its like, nor is it existent in such a way that there would be more being here, less there, since it is all inviolate: for being equal to itself on every side, it lies uniformly within its limits."[37]

Parmenides's doctrine of the one and immovable being laid the foundations of the future systems of the philosophy of identity and of the pan-unity of substance. Everything that is, "coming to be and perishing, being and not being, changing place and altering in bright colour," is immersed in this ocean of identical being, is merely one of its shapes, one of its changing faces. How is this unity revealed? By means of mystical contemplation, self-immersion, or by means of metaphysical speculation. The former takes place in Indian idealism, but also in post-antique European metaphysical idealism (Eckhart, Böhme, and others); the latter, in speculative-metaphysical idealism, a current to which Parmenides, who holds to an epistemological immanentism, also belongs: "Thought and the object [*predmet*] of thought are one."[38] Parmenides's doctrine of being is a philosophy of substantiality, in which the moment of oneness, of immovability, and of supra-temporality is emphasized. But this substantial unity can also be taken from the side of its dynamics, of its incessant

37 Translation from ibid., 252–53. Bulgakov does not supply the Greek text for this quotation, which, accordingly, has been omitted here too; Bulgakov himself quotes the present passage from Sergij Trubetskoj's quotation from the historian of philosophy Paul Tannery, in Trubetskoj's *Metafizika v drevnej Gretsii* [Metaphysics in Ancient Greece] (Moscow, 1890), 273–77.—*Trans.*

38 I have translated directly from Bulgakov's Russian here. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield translate the same proposition thus: "The same thing is there to be thought and is why there is thought" (see above).—*Trans.*

coming-into-being, of process, of temporality, and then, without any alteration of its philosophical principle, the doctrine takes on the characteristics of an evolutionism and a relativistic pluralism. We possess the prototype of the former, in ancient philosophy, in the figure of Heraclitus, and of the latter in those of the atomists. On one hand, Heraclitus, in agreement with Parmenides, holds that "[t]his world-order did none of gods or men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an everliving fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures."[39] "All things are an equal exchange for fire and fire for all things, as goods are for gold and gold for goods."[40] "They do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself [*lit.* how being brought apart it is brought together with itself]: there is a back-stretched connexion, as in the bow and the lyre."[41] "It is necessary to know that war is common and right is strife and that all things happen by strife and necessity."[42] "The beginning and the end are the same (in the circumference of a circle)."[43] "And as the same thing there exists in us living and dead and the waking and the sleeping and young and old; for these things having changed round are those, and those having changed round are these."[44] Heraclitus speaks of identity in "opposites," in movement: "[u]pon those that step into the same rivers different and different waters flow. . . ."[45] "The sun . . . is new each day."[46] "Everything flows": πάντα ῥεῖ, πάντα κινεῖται [*panta rhei, panta kineitai*, everything flows, everything is moving]. Through this universal movement and alteration, the immovable oneness of substance, from which everything issues and into which everything is immersed, is still more strongly emphasized. The ancient attitude is still vividly colored by religious cosmism ("everything is full of gods and demons"[47]), but the metaphysical basis of the philosophy of identity is already clearly laid out.

39 Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 198.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 192.

42 Ibid., 193.

43 This fragment appears to be absent from Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, but is present in Diels-Kranz, 1:174. I have translated it from the Russian given by Bulgakov. — *Trans.*

44 Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 189.

45 Ibid., 195.

46 Ibid., 225.

47 Thales of Miletus, sometimes described as the first philosopher, is reported by Aristotle to have thought "that all things are full of gods." Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 95. — *Trans.*

Here too, however, belongs the doctrine of ancient atomism, as it appeared in Leucippus and Democritus. Here the one substance is no longer thought of as a continuous mass of being, but as something porous, interspersed with layers of emptiness within which move the atoms; these atoms are completely inaccessible to the human senses because of their insignificant size (διὰ σμικρότητα τῶν ὄγκων [*dia smikrotēta tōn ogkōn*]). This porosity of substance, or this multiplicity of centres of being lying within non-being, essentially changes nothing in the philosophy of identity; that philosophy is instead only complicated by the introduction of new problems. Being is imagined as an aggregated multiplicity of atoms linked to each other, which create the universe by means of the influence which they exert upon each other. Atoms are the plural substance of the world, making up the being of everything. Ancient atomism possesses materialistic overtones, anticipating the most recent materialism of our era.

The ancient monism of Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Democritus has prototypical significance for us, since in it is clearly laid down this path of thought, together with the possibilities contained in it. Yet at the same time these doctrines are, here, given in the form of a sort of sacred hieroglyph, which it is the task of modern philosophy fully to lay bare and unriddle.

There are two senses of the philosophy of pan-unity, two possibilities for it: mysticism and rationalism. The first occurs when pan-unity is understood as transcending reason; reason puts out its torch, and, confessing its limitations, enters the darkness of sacred ignorance. The One is Transcendent, lying beyond thought and cognition, subject and object, world and knowledge; it is the NOT of "negative theology" (cf. *Unfading Light*, part 1). Such is the One in, for example, Plato's doctrine, in many a representative of Christian theology, in Nicholas of Cusa, and in the Christian mystics, with Eckhart and Böhme at their head. In essence this is not a philosophy of identity, but rather supra-philosophy or non-philosophy, a renunciation of philosophy, and philosophy proper begins only where a return is carried out, a transition from the realm of reason to that of understanding, from transcendence to immanence. The manner of this transition and of its philosophical meaning determine the philosophical coefficients, so to speak, of a given system; hence reason, by this point, begins to be in its own domain. Our attention here,

however, is addressed not to these mystical speculations, but to systems which are rationalistic in a properly philosophical sense, which do not desire to know the sacred darkness of ignorance, but which, on the contrary, test the power of reason to comprehend the world as a pan-unity and multiplicity as immovable being. And on this path towards modern philosophy, our attention is inevitably caught by the first move towards a doctrine in which rationalistic form — *more geometrico* — is combined with the rationalistic task of constructing a system of the world as a pan-unity, in order that, in this way, the correct manner of human conduct may also be worked out. We are speaking, of course, of Spinoza's *Ethics*. Spinozism is, it can be said, the fate of modern European cosmism; numerous theories of identity flow into it, issue from it, pass through it, and are transformed by it.

Spinoza's goal is a Parmenidean pan-unity, which he seeks in a concept of substance or God whose distinctive feature is self-causality (*causa sui*), such that essence includes existence within itself: *essentia involvit existentiam* (definition 1). Substance exists in itself, and is conceived through itself (definition 3). This distinction between existence and conception at once introduces a concealed Cartesian dualism (between thought and extension) in the concept of substance. To this is at once added a further concept — that of the attribute, that is, of that which mind (but what kind of mind, whose mind?) conceives of in a substance as constituting its "essence" — where God is defined as a substance which possesses infinitely many attributes (definition 6). The very difficult question, for the philosophy of identity or of pan-unity, of how plurality is engendered within unity, is not solved at all here, since the answer to it is given "axiomatically" (I. 1): all things that are, are either in themselves or in another thing. Having thus, in completely dogmatic fashion, recognized the plurality of substances, with their attributes, Spinoza establishes the principle of their hierarchical co-ordination, in which all substances are derived from the one absolute substance or God. According to theorems 14 and 15 of section 1, "[n]o substance can be or can be conceived without God" and "[w]hatever is, is in God, and nothing can be, or can be conceived, without God."[48] "The essence of things produced by God does

48 Spinoza, *Ethics Proved in Geometrical Order*, trans. Michael Silverthorne and Mathew J. Kisner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 14 (§§14, 15). References to this work hereafter are given as "E," followed by the page number.

not involve existence," for "God is not only the efficient cause [*causa efficiens*] of the existence of things but also of their essence" (E 25, I. 14 and 15). "Nothing in nature is contingent but everything is determined to exist and to operate in a specific way by the necessity of the divine nature" (E 28, I. 29), so that "[t]hings could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than they have been produced" (E 31, I. 33).

In this way, Spinoza immerses all shapes of being in the ocean of the one absolute substance, having declared them to be a state or product of it. Although this outcome cannot be considered as having been rationally proved or justified, the chief difficulty with Spinozism does not lie here, but in his anthropology, and, in particular, in his theory of consciousness or of the hypostasis. Why so? Because in order to make room for consciousness, Spinoza, from the infinite number of attributes of God—infinite in principle, of course, not for us—selects two, thought and extension, and both of these furnish a foundation to human self-consciousness, the former to its thinking and the latter to its embodiedness. Substantiality is not conferred on human beings, but only "[t]he idea of an actually existing particular thing" (E 53, II. 11) Human existence is only a *modus* of the absolute, an instant among the states of the absolute; but the human being can attain cognition of his own idea in God, and this can be true or false, adequate or inadequate, in accordance with the distinction between the three modes of cognition: first, opinion or imagination, cognition through a confused experience or communication; second, cognition by means of reason; third, intuitive cognition. The first mode is the only cause of error; the second and third are necessarily true (II. 40–41). Cognition of the third kind, that is, cognition by means of mystical self-immersion, *amor Dei intellectualis* [the intellectual love of God], leads to knowledge of all things, including consciousness of humanity itself, *sub specie aeternitatis* [from the standpoint of eternity], that is, in God. Ultimately, God, in and through humanity, loves himself, and "[t]he intellectual love of the mind for God is the very love of God with which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite but insofar as he can be explained through the essence of the human mind considered from the vantage of eternity, i.e., the intellectual love of the mind for God is a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself" (E 244, v. 36). The *modus* of humanity

proves to be an eye through which God contemplates himself, and a mind by means of which he loves himself—by knowing himself. In its naivety, simplicity, and closedness, Spinoza's system is a classic expression of the philosophy of identity, and, for this reason, it represents a sort of model to which other monistic systems can be traced back. In it also appear all the insoluble difficulties and aporias which make monism to a considerable extent spectral and illusory. Spinoza proposes a pantheism, or, more precisely, a theocosmism: *natura sive Deus* [nature or God]. Bringing together God and the world to such an extent that God is the substance of the world, in the capacity of the sole absolute substance, Spinoza also wishes to delimit him, in order, by this means, to escape the inevitable amalgamation and identification of God with the world. That would entail, on the one hand, the negation of God in favor of the world—atheism, a charge frequently leveled at Spinozism—or, on the other, the denial of the world in favor of God—acosmism, as suggested by Hegel, amongst others.[49] In the work of some monists there prevails a more or less militant atheism, whilst others prefer a naive pantheism of a hylozoistic kind (Haeckel).[50] To draw a borderline between substance or God and its necessary manifestation, "the world," is indeed no easy matter. Spinoza seeks to solve the problem by means of his doctrine of *modes*, a doctrine which oscillates between interpreting the modes either as eternal and necessary, and, consequently, as flowing from the Divinity as his emanation, or as temporal and contingent—but then they are deprived of any solid roots and become the absolute's play of light and shade. The doctrine of modes is one of the principal specific difficulties with Spinozism, but it will not be examined in detail here. The greatest difficulty of Spinozism concerns the problem of hypostaticity. Substance, or God, is anhypostatic. Spinoza painstakingly protects the anhypostatic substance or God from hypostaticity, seeing in hypostaticity a definition and a limitation of the undefinable (*omnis definitio est negatio*). Although Spinoza recognizes God as a free causality, that is, as a

49 "Spinozism might really just as well or even better have been termed Acosmism, since according to its teaching it is not to the world, finite existence, the universe that reality and permanency are to be ascribed, but rather to God alone as the substantial." G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E.S.B. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, 3 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955–68), 1:281.—*Trans.*

50 Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919), the biologist and author of *Die Welträthsel* (1895–99) ("The Riddle of the World").—*Trans.*

self-causality, he nevertheless understands this self-causality as operating only according to the laws of nature, and determinedly avoids the doctrine of a free creation. Not only does Spinoza, in order to remove any trace of anthropomorphism from the concept of God, even deny him a mind and a will, but, in addition, even if mind and will did exist in the supreme being, they would so far differ from our own as to retain only the name ("no more in fact than the heavenly sign of the dog agrees with the barking animal which is a dog" [E 20, i. 17, scholium]). However, whilst advocating the safeguarding of the Divinity, in complete transcendental purity, from any definition, Spinoza, in a roundabout way, does attribute a vestigial consciousness and hypostaticity to his unconscious or supra-conscious substance, thanks to the modes. The modes possess, or at least can possess, an eternal and immutable nature, if they flow from the absolute nature of one or another of God's attributes (E 24, i. 23). And, in particular, such a nature is inherent in man, since "[t]he human mind has adequate cognition of the eternal and infinite essence of God" (E 84, ii. 47). Man's nature is capable of an "intellectual love of God... with which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite but insofar as he can be explained through the essence of the human mind considered from the vantage of eternity" (E 244, v. 36). However, knowledge is not conceivable without a subject of knowledge, without someone who knows, any more than there can be love without someone who loves, without a kernel of personhood, and to speak of God's loving himself in man's love for God, that is, in the self-consciousness of a mode, is simply to avoid the difficulty. To repeat Spinoza's own comparison, the mode's love of God and God's love for himself will have no more in common than the constellation of the Dog, *Canis Maior*, does with the barking animal. For the sake of monism, Spinoza sacrificed the real plurality of hypostases, and even hypostaticity itself, yet retained all those acts which are inseparable from hypostaticity: cognition and will—love. The abstract *it* which Spinoza makes of his "substance" must be conceived either as completely transcendent (as in Plato)—and then it can by no means be understood as a substance which grounds the *all* of the world and makes a place for it within itself—or else it stands face to face with the concreteness of the world and the hypostaticity of the human spirit, and then the fundamental principle of Spinozism clearly becomes inadequate to its own task. Spinoza's substance resembles a

statue whose head, hands, and feet have been chopped off, leaving only a trunk; this torso is nevertheless passed off as a complete and perfect specimen of the human body.

All Spinozism is a decisive and worthy attempt, deriving from religious motives, to build a vision of the world on the sole basis of the idea of substance, that is, being, on to which are grafted definitions ("ideas") taken from the predicate and the subject. This is, in other words, a *philosophy of the copula*, in which the copula expresses the being of the subject [*podlezhashchee*] in the predicate, the reality of the world for the subject [*sub"ekt*], the existence of things for that which is, that is, for the spirit. Without what it binds together the copula does not exist, just as there can be no existence without something that exists, nor without the way in which it exists. To attend exclusively to the copula, to being, and to make of this the chosen object of philosophy, the theme of a philosophical heresy, has the effect of putting the whole system in an extremely unnatural and even perverse position, since here the first and only beginning is made not with what comes first, nor even with what comes second, but with what comes *third*, which, all the time, both presupposes and contains within itself both what comes first and what comes second. This is why Spinoza's philosophy also takes upon itself the burden of all these unintentional inventions and fatal borrowings, and exhausts itself beneath this burden. The only way left in which to camouflage these speculations, and to avoid the question of spirit and of consciousness here, is to drown, in the abstract origin of reality or being, everything which cannot be reduced to that origin, using the method of negative theology. On the pretext of absolute transcendence, it is asserted that the absolute eludes any sort of definition—definitions which, however, are later brought forward and allocated to their places wherever needed. Despite differences in its expression, the task remains the same: to comprehend both the hypostasis and the real plurality of the world, that is, both the subject and the predicate, while starting from a faceless, indistinct, abstract being. Despite a certain external resemblance to negative theology, which by its very nature disclaims any metaphysics, disclaims even the possibility of metaphysics, we have here a most decided dogmatic metaphysics, but one which is, however, worked out on the basis of such inadequate foundations that whenever necessary it can still have recourse to the *not* of "negative theology" as though to a

deductive method, and can imitate that theology while in reality adulterating it. The most naive, the crudest contradictions and inconsistencies of the monistic philosophy of being emerge in that vulgar and very widespread natural-scientific materialism which returns to the primitivism of the Milesian school (whilst, of course, lacking the religious richness of the latter). Given a certain material substance, one will conceive of it materialistically, as a heap of atoms, another mechanistically, as energy, a third biologically, as living or at least as a life-creating essence, without qualities, without a face, without sentience; substance as such is characterized from the very first steps only by this "without"—by a negative (another unexpected enough borrowing from "negative theology"). From this substance are also deduced, and by this substance are explained, not only the whole of God's world with its wealth of forms and its ladder of living beings, but also consciousness, thought itself, and even this materialistic philosophy itself. All this ontological hocus-pocus is set up with the help of the idea of evolution, the idea of a gradual emergence and transition from one set of forms of life to the others. Ontologically speaking, though, it is self-evident that nothing can grow in the field of life which was not sown there, and the times and manners of its growing tell us nothing about the nature of the seeds. This is why gradualness, the principle of infinitely small changes, gets us essentially nowhere. The idea of evolution is our present *asylum ignorantiae* [refuge of ignorance], a twilight in which all cats are grey and in which it is impossible to make anything out.[51] Spinoza's static[52] monism, that geometrical diagram of the world, which directs all its attention to ontological coherence alone, is only preferable to the evolutionary varieties because it does not mask the problems by shifting them to another place without any attempt at solving them and having left them completely unaddressed.

It is usual to devalue Spinozism by referring to its "dogmatism," and by greatly exaggerating, as is fashionable today, the applicability of the distinction between "dogmatism" and "criticism" to serious research in

51 Bulgakov is alluding to Spinoza's criticism of the idea that everything which takes place in nature has a purpose, in which appears the following passage: "they will not stop asking for causes of causes until you take refuge in the will of God, which is the refuge of ignorance" [E 38]. — *Trans.*

52 The Russian text gives *statisticheskij*, "statistical," which is treated here as an error for *staticheskij*, "static." — *Trans.*

thought. Modern philosophy has seen attempts at a fully "critical" Spinozism, such as the post-Kantian systems of Schopenhauer and Hartmann.[53] For what else is Schopenhauer's will but Spinoza's substance, since it precisely possesses both the attributes of substance — thinking and extension in the "world as representation" — yet lacks hypostaticity, and so also lacks consciousness? This anti-hypostatic tendency is seen especially strikingly in Hartmann's philosophy, which already frankly professes the "unconscious" substance of the world in which we live and move and have our being.[54] Moreover, unconsciousness is interpreted as a super-consciousness, in relation to which consciousness is derivative and stands lower, like Spinoza's "attribute." This whole lengthy and colorful parade of philosophical doctrines — empiricist, positivist, materialist, and evolutionist, but also including among their number the "pessimistic" — is a series of variations on Spinozism as the philosophy of being, the philosophy of the one substance; and this doctrine, apart from its intrinsic interest, therefore has a prototypical significance too, since it determines the course of the most widespread and influential current of European thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the translucent waters of Spinoza's philosophy can be observed all and any sorts of monistic thinkers. Spinozism is a kind of general and abstract schema of substantialist monism, an algebraic formula to which each monism can apply a number of its own choosing.

Leibniz's system, whose theological meaning is divided between pantheism and theism, is a singular one. In the first, pantheistic, sense it is a sort of pluralistic parallel to Spinoza's doctrine. What Spinoza's theory understands as an indifferent and undivided unity is thought of by Leibniz as composed of many metaphysical atoms or monads, which are linked in cosmic unity by a pre-established harmony. Both of the attributes — thinking and extension — which Spinoza awards to the single absolute substance are here, by contrast, regarded as properties intrinsic to every monad, as appetition and representation, from the first of which arises extension, and, from the second, thinking. Thus although the doctrines of Spinoza and Leibniz take up opposite positions concerning

53 Bulgakov is referring to Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906), the author of *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869). — *Trans.*

54 Alluding to Acts 17:28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your poets have said, For we are also his offspring." — *Trans.*

the definition of the unity of substance, when it comes to the principle of substantiality which is posited at the basis of both systems, they are related in their metaphysical structure. Each monad individually, as well as the whole world of monads combined, which is tuned in a "pre-established harmony," repeats, each in its own way, Spinoza's *substantia sive Deus*. Both are philosophies of being, of the copula understood as substantiality, and the whole life of substance is developed from this basis. Leibniz's monads also recall Plato's ideas, but with this difference, that the latter possess an ideal and logical character and are logically correlated and co-ordinated with each other, whereas Leibniz's monads are mutually impenetrable; the monads essentially repeat each other, and can constitute a universe only thanks to universal harmony. In Leibniz's monadology, for this reason, the principle of being, substantiality, is the determining principle (and here Leibniz is a continuator of Spinoza), whereas Plato's ideas are, above all, ideal archetypes, and Leibniz's monads and Plato's ideas are therefore related to different metaphysical moments: the former to the copula, to substantiality, the latter to the predicate, to the *logos*. It is characteristic of Leibniz's whole system not only that the monads are linked in a continuous unity, but also that change is always continuous and is brought about by way of imperceptible and infinitely small quantities, by way of obscure and unconscious representations. With the help of this idea, Leibniz establishes a hierarchical scale of monads. This hierarchy consists of the lowest monads, which have the most confused representations; of souls, whose representations attain clarity of perception; and, finally, of spirits, which possess reason and a likeness to God: "although each substance expresses the entire universe, spirits express God rather than the world, whereas other substances express the world rather than God."[55] But the distinction between the soul and the spirit is merely quantitative, a transition accomplished by way of infinitely small alterations. What is more, Leibniz sometimes puts matters in such a way that there exists only a quantitative distinction between

55 Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, trans. Jonathan Bennett, 25, §36. http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1686d.pdf (accessed 8. viii. 2019). "Minds" for Leibniz's *esprits* has been replaced here by "spirits" only in order to reflect the Russian word *dukhi*, which is best translated as "spirits" when used in Bulgakov's own work, and which is used in the Russian translation from which Bulgakov is quoting. — *Trans.*

God and the spirit,[56] even though this is not consistent, from another point of view, with Leibniz's own understanding of God as the Creator of the world and of all the monads. Souls and spirits are distinguished from each other not by the nature of their substantiality, but only by its degree, since they are equally eternal, and, consequently, equally immortal. The human soul is defined only as a step on the ladder of monads. If there are animal souls lower than it, there are also beings higher than it,[57] "genii," otherwise there would be a gap in the kingdom of things, a *vacuum formarum*.[58] The difference between a spirit and a soul lies in the spirit's capacity for apperception: "perception is the internal state of a monad that represents external things, and apperception is consciousness, or the reflective knowledge of that internal state."[59] "These souls [i.e., the class of souls which Leibniz calls 'spirits'] are capable of reflective acts . . . so that they can think about what we call 'myself', substance, soul or mind: in a word, things and truths that are immaterial."[60] In this way, monads, at a certain stage, possess self-consciousness and become persons.[61] If

56 "On sait aussi qu'il y a des degrés en toutes choses. Il y a une infinité de degrés entre un mouvement tel qu'on voudra et le parfait repos, entre la dureté et la parfaite fluidité qui soit sans résistance aucune, entre Dieu et le néant" [we also know that there are degrees in all things. There is an infinity of degrees between any given movement and perfect rest, between hardness and perfect fluidity without any resistance, between God and nothingness]. Leibniz, *Considérations sur le doctrine d'un esprit universel*, in *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. Paul Janet (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1900), 1:681–90, 689.

57 "It is also reasonable that there should be substances capable of perceptions *below* us *as well as above us*." Bulgakov quotes this text from Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, vol. 3, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Leben, Werke, und Lehre* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1920), but I have been unable to locate it. — *Trans.*

58 A *vacuum formarum* is a void in the chain of being. *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, Gottfried Gabriel et al. (Basel: Schwabe, 2001), 11:530–31. — *Trans.*

59 Leibniz, *Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason*, trans. Jonathan Bennett, 3; http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1714a.pdf (accessed August 8, 2019). I have replaced "awareness" with "apperception" and "=" with "is" to reflect features of the Russian translation used by Bulgakov. — *Trans.*

60 Ibid., 4.

61 "The word *person*," says Leibniz, "stands for a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by the sense that it has of its own actions. And this knowledge always accompanies our present sensations and perceptions — when they are sufficiently distinct, as I have remarked more than once already — and by this every one is to himself, that which he calls *self*: it not being considered in this case, whether the same self be continued in the same, or divers substances. For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes every one to be, what he calls *self*;

one considers more deeply this doctrine of Leibniz's about the law of universal analogy and the continuity of all being, one has to recognize that, for him, there is no such thing as a metaphysically self-sufficient *hypostasis*—a hypostasis which, precisely by being an interruption, would tear open the fabric of the philosophy of substance and would introduce a new principle into that philosophy. The same must be said of the logos, the ideal self-determination of substance. Leibniz knows only the psychological person in his or her development; he explains being from genesis, and wishes to understand essence from origin. For this reason, then, it is possible to say that there is no such thing as hypostatic personhood in Leibniz's theory, nor is there any place for it.

The difference between the fundamental projects of Leibniz and Spinoza lies in Leibniz's introducing into his conception an idea of God the Creator, who brought this world into being, and who can exist without it, whilst Spinoza openly asserts *substantia sive Deus*, that is, he proclaims an atheistic cosmism (pantheism) or an acosmic (or even an anti-cosmic) deism. Yet it is precisely at this point that Leibniz's system reveals its vacillation and contradictoriness. On the one hand, God in an indefinite way converges with the world, as its highest stage or as a monad of monads, the monads' universal center, a *centre par tout* [a center which is everywhere], the world-soul, and then Leibniz's thought inevitably becomes a pluralistic Spinozism, that is, a pantheism; but on the other, God is defined as "the basic unitary thing, the original simple substance" and "[a]ll created or derivative monads are produced by him. They are generated by the continual flashes of silent lightning (so to speak) that God gives off from moment to moment"—that is, by means of some sort of process of emanation.[62] At this point Leibniz, in his aporias, comes close to his ancient ancestor, the father of the theory of monadic entelechies, Aristotle, who, along with

---

and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then." G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235. (Strictly speaking, the words quoted are spoken as part of a dialogue by "Philalethes" ["lover of truth"]. —*Trans.*)

62 G.W. Leibniz, "The Principles of Philosophy Known as Monadology," trans. Jonathan Bennett, 7, §47 (http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1714b.pdf, accessed at 28. viii. 19).

a monadologically organized and animated world, postulated a God who was the first cause or mover (and who is also characterized as a νόησις νοήσεως [*noēsis noēseōs*], pure self-thinking thought). The ambiguity and unclarity of this doctrine of God, according to which He on the one hand vaguely blends into the cosmos, whilst, on the other, He remains transcendent to it, indelibly marks both Aristotle's and Leibniz's philosophies. This aspect of Leibniz's thought, which is historically significant, does not, however, affect the question with which we are occupied here, since it sheds no light on the problem of the hypostaticity of the spirit.[63]

The nineteenth-century inheritor and descendant of Spinoza's and Leibniz's work in philosophy is Schelling, in his *Naturphilosophie* [philosophy of nature] and his philosophy of identity. In Schelling this problematic finds its consummate and fully developed form, as was natural for a thinker working after Kant and Fichte and alongside Hegel. The latter caustically mocked an absolute identity in which "all cats were grey" (although Hegel's work suffered no less from absolute identity than did Schelling's, and Hegel's work was directly dependent on Schelling's). Working in different directions at different periods of his life, Schelling expresses one and the same unvarying thought in many different forms. In the early phase of his philosophical activity, when still under the influence of Fichte, Schelling sought an escape from the contradiction between the subjective and the objective principle ("dogmatism" and "criticism") in the concept of the absolute I, which, by virtue of its pre-conscious or unconscious activity, reminiscent of the Schopenhauerian Will, posits an object or Nature. The same problem later appeared in Schelling as an explanation for the emergence of consciousness from the unconscious or from Nature, as Nature's path to life and to consciousness, and in the *Naturphilosophie*'s theory of the unity of Nature and of the world soul (Schelling's work in the philosophy of nature belongs here).[64] If Schelling

63 A series of weighty judgements on this question are met with in Leibniz's work, but they remain only partially developed. Here, for example: "Souls in general are living mirrors or images of the universe of created things, but minds are also images of the Divinity himself, i.e. of God, the author of Nature. They are capable of knowing the system of the universe, and of imitating aspects of it through sketchy constructions of their own, each mind being like a little divinity within its own sphere." *Monadology*, trans. Bennett, 12, §83 (accessed 29. viii. 19).

64 I examine Schelling's ideas on the philosophy of nature in detail in my *Philosophy of Economy*, whose problematic comes close to Schelling's.

travels in this way a path which leads from objectivity to subjectivity, in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* he already travels the opposite path from subjectivity to objectivity, with his doctrine that intellectual intuition is a way of perceiving that which lies beyond the distinction between subject and object, a way of perceiving absolute identity. The problem, which had already confronted Fichte and then Hegel in all its gravity, the problem, that is, of how to understand subject and object not in their difference from each other (as in Kant) but in their unity—in other words the problem of the I-ness of the cosmos and the cosmic character of the I (Fichte's I and not-I)—presents itself to Schelling too. Instead of drowning the object in the absolute I, like Fichte, or dissolving the subject-object relation into the logical predicate alone, without a subject, Schelling, coming close to Schopenhauer here, immerses them both in the dusk of an unconscious absolute identity, in which there is at first no bifurcation between subject and object. These last appear as identity's actions, stages, or potencies, possessing, evidently, no greater ontological force than Spinoza's modes. There are two series of potencies disposed in polar opposition to each other, series which are characterized by the gradually intensifying predominance of the subjective and objective moments respectively, and which reveal the eternal ideas of the absolute. In the concepts of the ideas or monads or potencies, which are united in absolute identity, Leibniz's monadology is seasoned with Platonism and is combined with the purest Spinozism. It is clear that, given such conceptions, the ontological rights of personhood, of the individual spirit, the hypostasis, will be overthrown, to the greater glory of the single, impersonal or supra-personal—and, for this reason, also natureless—absolute identity. One could think that here we are either entering the mystical night of contemplative immersion, or approaching the gates of paradise guarded by the flaming sword of the cherubim, that is, approaching the *not* of "negative" theology. Yet Schelling does not give us any grounds to think so, because his mission is the construction of a perfectly rational system of philosophy; he works in the noonday of rationalism, and with its sun over his head. Although intellectual intuition, like Spinoza's "cognition of the third kind," the *amor Dei intellectualis*, leads, as an already fully determinate mystical epistemology, beyond the limits of rationalism, this does not prevent either Schelling or Spinoza from remaining rationalists in the development and execution of their

systems, even if their mystical roots reach down into the nocturnal darkness of the Absolute. It is evident, however, that it is impossible to say anything in the language of *ratio* about this midnight land of absolute undifferentiation, and every series of potencies, whether subjective or objective, issues from a logically empty place, and remains, thereafter, impossible to "deduce" or to demonstrate. It remains, in such a case, to impart to this whole conception a new, religious sense, to transpose it into religious symbolism, and, in this way, to turn one's back on rationalism. Schelling does precisely this in his *Philosophy of Revelation*, although he nevertheless does not manage to break completely with rationalism or to put an end to deductions of what cannot be deduced, so that his philosophical work retains to the end a certain aroma of rationalism. None the less, Schelling, submitting to the logic of his own ideas, is already moving from critical idealism and *Naturphilosophie* to theology, and the problem of deducing the absolute identity of subject and object already leads to the question of God's creation of the world, or, more precisely, of the world's coming-to-be in God. Although Schelling transfers the problem to the philosophy of religion, it retains the same content. His doctrine here is a philosophy of identity, but now applied to God himself, and in this respect it is already an authentic Christian heresy in the proper sense, a Sabellianism of a gnostic kind. Here, however, Schelling is merely giving a philosophical transcription of Jakob Böhme's theory, which he knew, it seems, through Baader.[65] The question of how a bifurcation of subject and object can arise out of identity proper turns into the question of the origination of something relative from what is absolute or within what is absolute, that is, the question of how the world comes to be. According to Schelling's doctrine, the world originates from God's nature or ground [*Grund*], which it is necessary to distinguish, within God, from God himself. This dark primal ground forms, so to speak, the material for the origination of God (in a similar way to that in which the chain of the dialectic of the concept in Hegel is material for the origination of the Logos or Concept itself). This absolute nature, as something dark and not yet clarified, harbours within itself the possibility of self-will, of falling, and also, through this, of individuation, and consequently of

65 Franz von Baader (1765–1841), Bavarian Catholic theologian, philosopher, and mystic. — *Trans.*

bifurcation into subject and object. Yet through this fall, being strives to illuminate and to actualize itself, to become a mirror-image of the Deity, endowed with reason. In this way, the light of the Son, the power of reason, is born within the dark primal ground of the Father, and the kingdom of the Spirit comes into being through the overcoming of chaos.

The world, therefore, is God's becoming. From the *deus implicitus* comes forth the *deus explicitus*. Schelling, imagining that he is just furnishing an authentic, well-grounded thesis, wants to fence himself off from pantheism. The primal identity is a dark, Schopenhauerian will, subsisting within Divinity as a *prius* of God himself, and which, in its disintegration and its fall away from Divinity, gives rise to the world, but, at the same time, to God. In his last treatises, beginning with the *Inquiries into Human Freedom*, Schelling developed this model with a different degree of depth, seriousness, and completeness, particularly in the *Philosophy of Revelation*.

There are many varieties of the philosophy of substance, and this is understandable, because it has to do with concrete reality, whose depth is the depth of life, and whose richness is the richness of life. There is not such a limited range of possibilities as exists in the philosophy of hypostaticity or the philosophy of purely logical form, the philosophy of the subject or of the predicate. Accordingly, just in as much as the depth and variety of experience is unfathomable, so the possibilities of orientation within it are inexhaustible, being distinguished by the character of one's susceptibility or of a particular focus of attention, or by a certain way in which one's philosophical "wonder" is excited. What appears decisive here, alongside the general direction taken, is the more particular philosophical choice of a motif, the "heresy" in that "heresy" which every system of substantiality which reduces the many to the one, or the complex to the simple, inevitably and by its nature appears as.[66] A natural variety of colours and shapes is proper to philosophies of substance, and it is quite mistaken to believe that "progress" in thought might change this fact by bringing them into unity or agreement. "Progress" in thought (to the extent that it exists or is possible at all) manifests itself only in what makes certain directions of thought impossible to go on with in their crude form — as, for example, vulgar materialism is impossible for

66 Bulgakov is playing here on the sense of Greek *hairesis* as "choice." — *Trans.*

serious philosophy (a materialism which has, however, precisely found unprecedented "democratic" success on the street, thanks to the zeal of enlightened educators, so that in this sense one must speak not of progress, but rather of decline), although this does not prevent it from arising again in a more refined form. Just as the sea of experience is inexhaustible, and just as the ocean of reality is unfathomable, so the possibilities of the philosophy of substantiality wax unlimited at the same time as and in connection with the successes of the empirical sciences. Antiquity already displayed these possibilities in the naive form of a cosmological wisdom-philosophy, first in the Milesian school and then in the work of all the other pre-Socratics, and the modern age has in no way diminished their number. For this reason it is necessary to renounce the hope of characterizing them exhaustively in detail, and to limit oneself to merely general indications relating to their structure. The fundamental task, and the fundamental difficulty, which arises here, consists above all in deducing a subject from an object, in connecting consciousness and being, and in explaining how intelligible and connected forms are possible in the dark mass of being. In essence, the first problem, the deduction of consciousness from non-consciousness, of a subject from an object, is incomparably more difficult to solve than the opposite one—to comprehend the not-I from the I. For the world is indeed a not-I, even though this relationship to the I does not exhaust its metaphysical nature. But it is in no way possible to understand the I as a not-not-I, deducing it from the indifference of identity or of the object. And deductions of this kind, whether scientific or metaphysical, are either evasions of the problem by means of cloudy phrases, or are simple dogmatism and self-deception. Here we see the position which inevitably comes about when a *third* definition of substance, the third hypostasis, is declared to be the first and only one. Philosophically, this is simply to walk on one's head, in Hegel's well-known saying—that is, to invert the natural order of things. At the same time the temptation offered by this path, the temptation to repeat the same experiment over and over again, is too great, for here thought evidently gives itself over to the domain of reality, wanting to know what reality is before thought and without the I, what is in the room when we are not there, what the world is like without a subject—and, indeed, in essence, without an object—transformed into this colorless, shapeless *it*. And the *temptation of reality*, if it is possible

to put it like this, has in recent times been an ever-increasing one. The external reason for this is the quantitative success of scientific knowledge, but the inner reason lies in a particular feeling about the world, in a universal cosmic tension. The world thirsts to be revealed as a new creation, but before this revelation, the striving towards it, the expectation of the Holy Spirit, expresses itself in the philosophical thought of paganism in baleful and wretched surrogates, in numberlessly divided heresies which are nothing other than varieties of the universal heresy, the philosophy of substantiality as unmoved or as a mover, as an abstract being withdrawn into itself, anhypostatic and alogical, yet nevertheless producing both hypostasis and logic. The power of this heresy, however, its truth and its fascination, lies precisely in the fact that it holds to reality and seems to control it; it wishes to lay bare the mysteries of life, and in this possession it cannot be defeated by any idealism which would sway the world only in printed format, in a "scientific speech," nor by a panlogism which prides itself on its own concreteness simply by virtue of knitting together and ramifying its own abstract diagrams.[67] In other words, the power and advantage of the philosophy of substance lies in its empiricism; it is connected to concretion, to the colors and sounds of life (which also corresponds to the character of the third hypostasis). Yet at the same time, the impossibility and impracticability of realism's task leads thought to return involuntarily to one and the same point of departure, and to begin its labor anew, which is why the history of realist philosophy, more than that of any other kind, resembles the history of a series of individual failures and disappointments. And if realism feels and knows its failure less keenly, this is to be explained not merely by the elusive insufflation of the *comforter*, the Holy Spirit, or by the fascination which reality exerts, but also by the dullness of philosophical cognition,

67 Bulgakov's "idealism" probably alludes to Fichte, whose *Sun-Clear Report* to the public on his philosophy appeared in 1801 and whose *Speeches to the German Nation* in 1808. Khoruzhij suggests that there is, specifically, an allusion to the mockery of Fichte in *Nachtwachen* or "Night Watches," a novel of 1805 published under the pseudonym "Bonaventura" and now thought by many scholars to have been the work of E. F. A. Klingemann (1777–1831); Khoruzhij, citing an article by A. V. Gulyga, believes the work to have been written by Schelling (cf. Bulgakov, *Sochineniya v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, 549, 576). In *Nachtwachen* the hero meets a crazed "world-creator" who "has just as consistent a system as Fichte" and who "squeezes everything into, as it were, a pocket edition of a little I which every tiny little boy can shout out." "Monolog des Wahnsinnigen Weltschöpfers" in *Nachtwachen* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, Jr., 1974), 80–86. — *Trans.*

by a certain lowering of level, in accordance with the alogical nature of reality, which, nevertheless, still has to be handled logically. What, then, is the result of this survey of philosophical heresiology? All turn out to be wrong, to suffer collapse and defeat—to the glory of a toothless skepticism's surreptitious laughter, of this philosophical *ramollissement* [softening, slackening]—but, at the same time, all are correct, and not one is able to abandon its position, or to renounce its own fundamental motif, its philosophical acquisitions—a paradoxical and difficult conclusion which compels thought in some way simultaneously to accept all three possibilities for thought, and, at the same time, obviously, compels thought to negate each of them in their isolatedness. The catharsis of thought, which is obtained as the result of this tragedy of philosophy, leads to thought's renewal through the deepening of its self-knowledge, its knowledge both of its strengths and limitations and of its nature. And the fundamental conclusion which follows will be that a thought which expresses substance will inevitably contain antinomies within itself: the single principle is fulfilled in triadicity, and thought turns out to be fated to this deliberate self-sacrifice. And the living truth of the gospel is laid bare anew: if the grain does not die, it cannot come back to life and cannot bear fruit.

Und so lang du das nicht hast,
Dieses: *Stirb und werde!*
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.[68]

(Goethe)

The way out of contradiction does not lie in eclecticism, which wishes to accept and to combine everything, blunting the cutting edge of the thoughts, and not resolving or not possessing the character to choose a "heresy"; nor does the way out lie in "dialectic," which, jingling the spurs of its "contradictions," strives, in reality, to understand and to explain

68 "And for so long as you lack it,/ This 'die, and become!'/ You are only a sad guest/ on this dark earth." A quotation from Goethe's "Selige Sehnsucht" ("Blessed Longing"), in his *West-östlicher Diwan: Gedichte*, 172. Bulgakov's quotation contains a number of small inaccuracies, so we can be sure that the quotation was important enough to Bulgakov for him to have memorized or to (mis-)remember it.—*Trans.*

everything, so that all genuine contradiction—that is, all antinomism—might be definitively banished from thought and from being. The way out lies in seeing the true structure of thought and in recognizing that substance does not, as in the monistic project, coincide with thought, and that is why, when substance is thought about, it leads to contradictions and antinomies within thought, antinomies which are necessary and insuperable, even if they are unbearable, for thought itself. Nevertheless, this recognition in no way despairs of thought. On the contrary, it testifies instead to thought's maturity; it can appear, therefore, only in an age of marked historical maturity, when philosophy has travelled a protracted, and, to a certain degree, a completed, path. Our time is indisputably such an age. It can also spring up from a soil which is not philosophical, but supra-philosophical—that is, from the soil of religious contemplation, of myth and contemplation, of dogma, from the soil of revelation, and, consequently, of a philosophy of revelation: this must become the most radical philosophical rallying-cry of our times, one which, in modern history, was first proclaimed by Schelling, in the ripest maturity of his working life. The complacency and narrow-mindedness of philosophical thought, to which the consciousness of tragedy is alien, led philosophy, as we know, to a conception of itself as standing higher than religion, as constituting the truth of religion, and as being able, finally, to explain religion. In reality the matter stands exactly the other way round: philosophy issues from and returns to religion, and, precisely, to religious myth and dogma, and this fact, rather than thought itself, specifies both philosophy's problem and the way out of that problem. And religious mystery is guarded by the flaming sword of the cherubim, whose name in the language of philosophy is *antinomy*. How can the three points, which have become separated from each other, be combined so as to obtain a triangle; can they, indeed, at all be so combined? There can evidently be only one honest answer to this question: either philosophy is impossible, and it will remain its lot repeatedly to walk along the same old paths which it has already traversed, like a squirrel on a wheel—*da capo* forever—or philosophy is possible, if it is grounded in the antinomies and is religiously, that is, dogmatically, conditional. And this is not a diminution of philosophy, but its higher calling—to be the *ancilla* not *theologiae*, but *religionis*, the handmaiden, not of theology, but of religion itself, to become a revealed and conscious (and in this sense, a critical) religious empiricism.

II

Philosophy of Triadicity

1

The Philosophical Meaning of Triadicity

MAN WAS CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF God. This means that the image of the Holy Trinity is imprinted upon every part of his spiritual nature. *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness* (Gen. 1:26). So says the word of God, precisely pointing, by means of this plural number, to the trihypostaticity of the Divinity and the triunity of the image of God—which, after all, is also the human image. It is wholly natural, therefore, that the literature of the church should be full of attempts to find this image of triunity in the human being, and that the fathers of the church should have seen it in one or another of the lineaments of the human spirit.[1]

1 They pointed, for example, to the sun, to the sun's light, and its ray, which form a unity and yet are different; to the root, trunk, and fruit of a single tree; to the spring, source, and stream, continuously brought together in a unity, and yet distinct; to three candles which may be burning in a certain place, and which give out a single inseparable light; to a fire, the shining of its flames, and its heat, representing triadicity within unity; or to three different faculties within one and the same human being—mind, will, and memory, or consciousness, cognition, and desire (see Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, chapter 8; Athanasius, *Fourth Discourse Against the Arians*; Gregory Nazianzen, *Fifth Theological Oration*, Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, book 1; Augustine, *Treatise on Faith and the Creed*, chapter 9, section 17; *On the Trinity*, book 9, section 18). Dimitry of Rostov, *Inquiry concerning the Schismatics*: "The spirit is the image of God, for it possesses threefold powers, but a single essence. The powers of the human spirit are the following: memory, reason, will. The memory resembles God the Father, the reason God the Son, and the will God the Holy Spirit. But just as in the Holy Trinity there are three persons, yet there are not three gods, but one God: so in the human spirit there are three spiritual powers, yet there are not three spirits, but a single spirit . . ." (*Rozysk o raskol'nicheskoj brynskoj vere* [Moscow, 1855], 292). To these similitudes it is without doubt possible to add certain others from the physical and spiritual worlds: just as, in the physical world, all bodies necessarily possess three dimensions, length, breadth and depth, so the space in which those bodies are situated also possesses the same dimensions; time, in which bodies develop and change, is also formed of three parts, past, present, and future; in the world of the spirit, every truth necessarily includes three conditions: the representation, the object of the representation, and the harmony between the representation and the object; every virtue is also threefold: the free action, the law, and the harmony between the free action and the law (Metropolitan Makarius of Moscow, *Pravoslavno-dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie* [*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*], 2 vols. (Saint Petersburg, 1856–57), 1:208–9).

Nevertheless, it is in its way surprising to have to seek for something which could not in any way be avoided, and without which a holistic perception of the human spirit is quite impossible. If the human being really is the image of God, then this image also *defines* the essence of the human being; the human being's whole nature points to its prototype, has its necessary and inevitable prerequisite in that prototype, and can be understood only in relation to it. If God is a Trinity, with one indivisible being, then the human spirit, although it is not a trinity, possesses, nevertheless, the form of a triunity, and necessarily derives its intellect from the Prototype. The triune nature of the human spirit is living proof of the Holy Trinity; equally, the revelation of the Trinity, the church's dogma about it, is the sole satisfactory postulate of thought by means of which the human spirit can be comprehended. Here is a position which is axiomatic for thinking, as is demonstrated by the whole of history, and the whole tragedy of philosophy as monism. If certain fathers of the church, with justice, depreciate the value of the likenesses or comparisons which reason uses to comprehend the Trinity, then this depreciation, it goes without saying, is not directed at that likeness which God himself instilled in the human spirit.[2] This likeness leaves an ever deeper and

2 "I have very carefully considered this matter in my own mind," says Gregory Nazianzen, "and have looked at it in every point of view, in order to find some illustration of this most important subject; but I have been unable to discover anything on earth with which to compare the divine nature. Even if I did discover some tiny likeness, what was most important [about God] eluded me and left me still here below with my example. As others have done before, I have imagined a source, a fountain, and a river, to see if the first might be analogous to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Spirit. For in these there is no distinction in time, nor are they separated from one another with respect to continuity, though each of the three seem to be distinguished in some way by its proper characteristics. But I was afraid in the first place that, by this analogy, I might be suggesting some sort of flow in the divine nature, which would exclude stability. Secondly, I was afraid that this image would introduce a numerical unity [of person]. For the source and the spring and the river are only one thing, though they take different forms.

"Again, I thought of the sun, a ray, and light. But here once more there was a danger that people might imagine a certain compound in the nature which is uncompounded, such as there is in the sun and what belongs to it. In the second place, there is the risk that we should assign the essence to the Father but deny any distinctive existence to the others, and thus make them only powers of God, existing in Him without being hypostases. But it is not possible for me to make use even of this analogy; because it is quite clear what gives the ray its motion. But there is nothing prior to God which could set Him in motion; for He is Himself the cause of all things, and He has no prior cause. And secondly, this analogy will not do because here also there is a suggestion of

more pronounced mark as humanity comes to historical maturity; it is the supreme and ultimate revelation about the human being, the truth about the human being.

a) *Judgement.* It is a fundamental and indisputable fact of consciousness that human beings think *in judgements.* This, however, is not enough. It is also necessary to say that the human being, in a certain sense, *is* a judgement, and that the life of the human spirit is a continuously self-developing and self-accomplishing judgement: I am something, a certain A. More precisely, it is necessary to express the sequence of judgements thus: *I* am something, *I—am—A;* the empirical forms of the judgement can always be fulfilled and unfolded in a tripartite formula: (1) ***I am*** signifies, essentially, the indefiniteness of the predicate: I am something, or, I am (potentially) everything; (2) ***I am A***, I am something, in an obvious way signifies that **I** realizes its being in this A, that **I** am this something. Impersonal expressions have, essentially, a similar meaning, only with a different form: it is getting light, it is getting dark, it is boring, it is annoying, and so on; they imply a cognitive or grammatical subject, relative to which they function as a predicate: it is getting light for me, I watch the dawn, it is boring for me, I am getting bored, and so on. It cannot be assumed that the complete judgement arose by a differentiating development from this rudiment of judgement, as is sometimes suggested. Even if it were possible to establish such a case linguistically, in the history of language, the logical and ontological whole always exists before the parts. Just as the hand or the foot could not be understood without their link to the body, even if they might happen to be found in separation from it, so elliptical judgements do not give a full conception of the judgement, and must of their nature lead back to the form of the latter. Each new judgement consists of a subject, a predicate, and a copula.

---

such things as composition, diffusion, and an unsettled and unstable nature—none of which we can suppose in the divine nature. In a word, there is no fixed point for my mind in these illustrations from which to consider the Object which I am trying to represent to myself, unless one shrewdly accepts one point of the image while rejecting the others. Finally, it seems best to me to let the images and the shadows go, as being deceitful and falling very far short of the truth . . ." (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Fifth Theological Oration*, "On the Holy Spirit," from Gregory, *Five Theological Orations*, trans. Stephen Reynolds [2011], 97–123, 122–23, https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/36303/1/Gregory%20of%20Nazianzus%20Theological%20Orations.pdf, accessed 2. ix. 2019).

The judgement is a grammatical proposition; its ontological first principle can always be reduced to the type: *I am something.* The object, as a noun, is only a mirror-image of the I, the first person pronoun, and that is why every individual judgement is a variant of the primary judgement, of the ontological judgement *I am something*, to which the individual judgement leads and on the basis of which it must be understood. It can be considered, if you like, not as a judgement about objectivity itself, but as an expanded predicate of the I, so that an I is always implied in or admixed with the individual judgement.

The I, as the kernel of the human spirit, is that which truly exists [*sushchee*] but is not an existing thing [*sushchestvuyushchee*], just as the center of a circle is not a point on the surface plane of the circle, as it is usually and conventionally represented by geometry. A point does not occupy space, and, moreover, only when connected to another point can it yield a particular direction, a straight line. The center, as a point, does not itself possess such a second point, although any of the points on the curve can serve this purpose. This means that the center exists only as a direction, as a connection, a force, and the curve is in this sense a function or a phenomenon of the center. The I is not in and of itself, it does not *exist*, but it *possesses existence*, it *receives being* from another, which is its predicate and which is different from the I. This is why the I can never be defined, but only specified, and the whole of life is nothing other than this specification. It can also be said that the I is not, but *super*-is, or *truly exists* [*est' sushchee*]. This in no way means that the *I* is merely a function, an *als ob* [as if], as Kant essentially thinks and as, following Kant, some modern epistemologists also think. Of course, the *I* is *also* a function, but functioning, action, requires someone who is acting and functioning. As non-*existent*, the *I* can also not be expressed by any kind of *concept* [*poniatie*], since a concept is an image of existence, its *conception* [*poiatie*]; the concept, therefore, wholly belongs to the realm of being, to which the *I* does not belong. None the less, the word *I* is a verbal and mystical gesture which everyone understands. It points to an ineffable and unutterable depth, to a darkness which is constantly being torn apart by the light into a chiaroscuro, to an underground spring which is continually welling forth at the surface. If we did not ourselves have the *I*, we could not know it by experience or from life, for no amount of verbal or conceptual effort would be capable of expressing or showing

the *I*, or of demonstrating it or describing it, since the *I* is transcendent and absolute. Yet since we ourselves do have the *I*, there is no need for any sort of deliberate introspection in order to understand it, for it is given to us in an immediate, mystical and intuitive act. A different kind of clarity and distinctness is possible in the self-consciousness of the *I*, for this very self-consciousness is given in a completely easy and natural way, is given completely intuitively.

The real difficulty arises not in the original self-consciousness of the *I*, but in distinguishing between the many different coverings which clothe it, and, in a closely-related way, in distinguishing the subject from subjectivity. The *I*, as subject, is the subject of every predicate, whether this is heaven or hell, minerals or the passions. In practical terms, however, there is a very great difference between a realm which is found in the world outside us and our own subjectivity, which, usually, is precisely the field identified with the *I*, whilst everything remaining is considered as the *not-I*. Yet the *I*, as a *psychological* subject, that is, as a ceaselessly moving and varying ocean of states, of experiences, of emotions, and of passions, is, to the extent that all these are an external world for the noumenal, hypostatic *I* itself, a *predicate* of the hypostatic *I*. Both the psychological subject, as a complex of states which is eternally changing, and also the epistemological *I*, the totality of cognitive forms, schemas, and categories, are predicates with respect to the noumenal *I*; they are the most refined of the noumenal *I*'s forms, cast in the image and likeness of the noumenal *I*. Both Kant's philosophy and that of the epistemological movement which follows him suffer from an insufficiently distinct understanding of this truth. Nor is it possible to equate the *I* as an absolute subject, the absolute *I*, with the *I* of volition. Volition, too, is itself only a shell of the *I*, a manifestation of the *I* within being, for the powerful, self-sufficient will introduced by the metaphysics of Schopenhauerian voluntarism is merely a hypostatized psychologism. Volition is a predicate of the *I*, which is what truly wills, yet which is also just as much what thinks, recognizes, feels. In relation to this absolute *I*, pure hypostaticity, the will too is merely a form of existence: will exists in the one who wills, and not the other way round; the one who wills is above any particular volition, and a subjectless or pre-subjective will is merely a spectral nightmare of the philosophy of pessimism, which wishes to extinguish the light of day and submerge itself in the kingdom of darkness. If it is

necessary to distinguish the hypostatic *I*, the absolute subject, from the epistemological and psychological *I*, it is still more necessary to separate the hypostatic *I* from the *body* as a unity of psycho-physical organization, as a sentient being. The body is our *cosmic I*, the whole ensemble of organs, by means of which we find ourselves in relation with the entire universe; at the same time, the universe is our peripheral and potential body (cf. my *Philosophy of Economy*). Our whole life takes place in, with, and by means of the body; the body is a laboratory for the spirit, where spirit develops itself in its functions. The question of the significance of natural and bodily life, and of the meaning of embodiment as such, can be particularly clearly seen here when we consider that our body, however close or intimate we might be to or with it, is not the *I*; it is not the *I* to the same degree and in the same sense that the psychological and the epistemological *I* are not the *I*. And our body, in relation to the *I*, is a *predicate*, a real, living predicate, in which and by means of which the *I* lives, that is, by means of which the *I* realizes its constant predicativeness. And if it is impossible to equate our bodies with the *I* (this would be materialism, which is a metaphysics which deduces the *I* from the *not-I*, as was shown earlier), it is even less sound to equate the *I* with the whole of the natural world, to dissolve the *I* into the cosmos. Although our *I* is a cosmic *I* to which *everything* belongs as a predicate, in so far as it beholds itself in the cosmos, it nevertheless—and this is the mystery and the wonder of the *I*—cannot be dissolved into the cosmos, nor is it amalgamated with the cosmos, since, not being of this world, it does not occupy any sort of point in it. In the last analysis, the *I* must be defined antinomically, on the model of "negative theology." On one hand, the *I* is completely and decisively *not* in relation to any definition, for it *is not* as such; yet that is why it cannot be treated as a zero, as a vacuum, simply as non-being, for to it belongs super-being [*sverkhbytie*]. On the other hand, the I is *everything* which forms a predicate for it, from the most intimate subjectivity to the most rigidified objectivity.

The *I* can never, even for a single moment, become a zero, because it is inseparably linked to its predicate, and in, through, and with the predicate the *I is*, comes to being. The existent [*sushchestvuyushchee*] is posited, the indeterminate determined, by what truly exists [*sushchim*]—not from without, but from within. This bond is unbreakable: an *I* without a predicate is a "what-less" *I*, relating to nothing at all; a predicate without an *I*

is a "who-less" predicate, relating to no one at all. Predication, the capacity for predication, is nothing other than the disclosure within spirit of its own proper nature and depth, an act of self-definition and self-realization. The predicate does not come from outside, as might appear, but is born in the spirit. In the predicate, the hypostatic spirit recognizes its own self; through the predicate are disclosed the spirit's own nature and its inexhaustible riches. This sounds paradoxical: is it really the case that everything which is continually given to me, unknown to my will or even despite it, and not in the least in accordance with it, is my own self-realization, my own nature? Can it be that the *I*, which is manifestly and without doubt only a something, an insignificant little particle of the universe, possesses *everything* within itself, is the creator of the world, and the world its result? Here we come up against the question which turned out to be a "curse," to be insuperable, for monistic philosophy, and which, as the general problem of identity, presented itself to monism over and over again in different forms: how can a bridge be thrown from the subject to the object, from the subject to the predicate? How can a judgement whose form is quite clearly inherent in substance itself be realized? Even if this bridge itself has not been discovered, the conditions which any solution must satisfy have nevertheless become completely clear, even though these conditions of themselves lead to antinomies. On the one hand, for the predicate to be a predicate, to pertain to the *I*, the predicate itself must be in a certain sense an *I*, must possess *I*-ness; yet at the same time it must also separate itself, must be an *other* in relation to the *I*—that is, it must be a *not-I*. Predication is grounded in a violation of both of the fundamental laws of logic: the law of identity, and the law of contradiction. For predication testifies to the fact that the *I* is *both not I, and, at the same time, I*, simultaneously and at once. If the *I* were merely repeated, throwing off, in its predicates, reflections of itself—*I* is *I*, is *I*, is *I*—it would be a squirrel running on a wheel, an insatiable thirst for a predicate, but not the predicate itself, an unceasing craving for any kind of content or determinacy. Separated from any existence, deprived of any predicate, the *I* would be in spasms of torment over being, would be convulsed in its impotence to give birth to the absolute. (Is not this that inextinguishable fire of final *separation*, lacking all predicates, an immortality without the capacity for life, which awaits in the fiery Gehenna? And is not every death, in a certain provisional and temporary sense, also

the separation of the subject from the predicate, or at least the paralysis of the connection between them?) Conversely, if the *I* were completely to step over into the *not-I* and to immerse itself in it, it would lose the force and sharpness of life, its sunlikeness; it would fall into the swoon of pre-being or post-being (death also appears as the latter, death which abandons the *I* to its craving and to the desert, and which leaves the *not-I*, the potential predicate, in a swoon of unconsciousness which can be overcome only by the resurrection). This domain of predication, which is simultaneously *I and not-I*, must be understood and interpreted as the *not-I* within the *I*—that is, as something which, being an *I*, nevertheless still remains unilluminated by the light of the *I*, that is to say, something which is not taken cognizance of, something like a twilight of the *I*, or an un- (or pre-, or sub-) conscious *I*. Such a definition sounds like a simple *contradictio in adjecto*, a contradiction (which, it goes without saying, is to be strictly distinguished from an antinomy). However, this contradiction is removed when it is added that unconsciousness here does not mean anti-consciousness, that is, the absence of consciousness in the sense of the impossibility of consciousness (the introduction of such an assumption would indeed be contradictory, and, therefore, inadmissible) but signifies simply its absence, as a state of consciousness's potentiality. *I* and *not-I* are distinguished from each other as consciousness *in actu* [in actuality] and *in potentia* [in potentiality], and the *I* is to be thought of as a source of the continual actualization of potential. The nature of the spirit is infinite, and the depth of the *I*—which, in accordance with Fichtean terminology, is also a *not-I*—is fathomless, as befits an immortal and eternal spirit.

Fichte came up against this difficulty, and was compelled to recognize an *unconscious* creative activity in the *I*, an activity by means of which arise the forms of the *not-I*, a *produktive Anschauungskraft* [productive power of intuition]. He comes close to the truth here in a matter of exceptional importance, and is deflected from it only thanks to a starting-point which is mistaken in the force of its one-sidedness. The philosophy of the abstract *I*, isolated from substance, can only be rescued either by ambiguities—such as those in the concepts of the absolute *I* and the pure *I*—or by the direct violence of a "deduction." Such a violence is seen in Fichte's leap into the domain of practical reason for the purpose of deducing the *not-I* as a "limit," whereas the *not-I* is not a "limit," but is, above all,

a predicate of the I itself. In any case, in Fichte's problematic a genuine discovery which possessed permanent significance for philosophy was made, in that Fichte posed the question of the nature of *the not-I in the I.* Schelling, in his work *On the Essence of Human Freedom*, and also in his *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*, answers this question through his doctrine of the *nature in God*, which can be universalized into a doctrine of the nature of spirit, of the *I*. The nature or primal ground of God, according to Schelling, is that dark and unconscious principle by overcoming which God emerges as a personal principle. In connection with the question which interests us here, it is possible to say that here the *not-I* constitutes the nature of the *I*, that it is a φύσις [*phusis*] with respect to the hypostasis. Schelling's heresy and error (the reverse of Fichte's) lies in his putting the nature of the hypostasis *before* the hypostasis, and *deducing* the hypostasis from that nature. In other words, he takes the predicate, understood as a dark potentiality, *apart from* and *before* the subject, and forces it to engender its own hypostasis from out of itself. And this misshapen alignment, which Schelling inherits from Böhme through Baader, distorts and falsifies Schelling's whole conception. Schelling does not merely distinguish God's nature from God himself, but directly opposes the two: the world emerges from this nature as if arbitrarily, and then evil comes into being of its own accord, an evil which, in essence, turns out to be identical with individuation, that is, with the origin of a hypostatic form of being. With this there is accomplished here the severing of the indivisible Trinity, and the divine hypostasis is thought in isolation from the divine nature, even though it is depicted as having its origin in the divine nature, as a result of that nature's development. Leaving to one side for a while this dogmatic side of the question, we see in Schelling's doctrine of the nature of God an attempt to link God's hypostasis with his nature, to link subject with object, subject with predicate. Although as this thought develops it turns out to be a heretical distortion, the question was, nevertheless, correctly posed. But in consequence of the fact that nature, the predicate, was posited by Schelling before the subject, what eventuated, in the spirit of the philosophy of identity, was an unconscious primal origin, from which consciousness too originates. This is a radical lie, since spirit by its own nature cannot be unconscious or non-conscious; this would signify its being anhypostatic, whereas spirit is above all hypostasis, which is its alpha and omega, its source and destination. All its riches

are expended in the light of hypostatic consciousness; the *I* may not be unconscious, since it is consciousness. And this intellectual sun cannot be explained as originating in darkness; consciousness, or the *I*, cannot be generated from anything else.

Yet consciousness cannot exist without something of which it is conscious, nor can a hypostasis exist without its content. Just as day presupposes its hidden foundation in night, and just as light presupposes what it reveals and presupposes the darkness which it disperses, so too consciousness always possesses its own depths, from which its objects originate. A hypostasis possesses that of which it is the hypostasis; a hypostasis is inseparable from its nature, is hypostatic with respect to its nature. Nature is the foundation or the predicative character for the subject which reveals and calls this predicate into being. What does this foundation conceal within itself? What does it contain, this predicative character of the subject? This question must be answered with a question: what does it not contain? In other words, it contains everything potential and everything which is actualized. The predicate speaks of everything; it is the universal word, the logos of the world. This logos rises from the depths of nature, from the depths of the hypostasis, which, through the logos, recognizes its own nature and its resources, since it turns out that, to adopt the expression of our popular mystic Syutaev, an expression repeated in chorus by all mystics of all ages and of all peoples, "all is within thee," and thou art within all; the whole world is the property of the I, and nature is the depth of my own spirit, which flings open its treasure before me.[3] And this character of spirit's, this pairing of the hypostasis with its nature, is revealed in and leaves its mark upon spirit's every movement, in its every act, and most distinctly of all, as we saw, in the act of thinking self-consciousness, in the judgement. The judgement, which is concerned with the subject-object pair, is living proof of the bi-unity of substance, that is, of spirit as hypostasis and nature.

Yet this bi-unity does not come to a halt in duality, but leads to a triunity. The predicate is not exhausted in a single grammatical object, but is filled, is linked with the subject by the *copula*, by *being*. And the subject, the hypostasis, never limits itself to seeing its predicate as its ideal reflection, but rather recognizes reality—both its own and the

3 Vasilij Kirillovich Syutaev (1819–1892). — *Trans.*

predicate's—or rather, which is the same thing, it feels *the force of being* proceeding from itself and returning to itself, and this "life-giving" force is also, properly speaking, existence "in the living soul," is life, reality, being. Reality, it would seem, does not possess its own voice or image; it is only the *how* of a *what*, is as it were its *modus*. More precisely, it is necessary to say that the predicate has the same identity as reality: *everything* which came into being as the universal logos is also reality's proper all. At the same time, too, the reality which the hypostasis receives, and which is realized in the hypostasis's own nature, is the same reality as the predicate's. It turns out that reality exists only *in the relation* between a hypostasis and its nature, in the movement from one to the other, which, it goes without saying, must be understood purely ideally, as the realization of the relation between moments in the life of spirit. This, however, is not enough, and reality cannot be reduced to a single relationship or a single movement; reality *is present in everything*, and everything, or the world, "becomes a living soul" (Gen. 2.7), becomes *being*—which the philosophy of identity, abstracting from its pan-unity and universality, then selects as the sole principle of the world. Philosophical cosmism orientates itself towards being as towards universal reality. We already know of the insuperable difficulties into which cosmism, or the philosophy of identity, falls. Reality as such, taken without its bond to hypostatic consciousness, to the subject, and to the universal logos or predicate, is colourless and mute, lacking consciousness or meaning, which is why abstract realism, too, is meaningless and impossible. Being is thinkable only as the copula, that is, only in the light of the hypostatic logos and in connection with it. Being is not just being, devoid of predicates and equivalent to nothing (as Hegel liked to suggest, and needed to suggest for the sake of his subsequent dialectical tricks—see the excursus on him); rather, being is always *someone's* (is hypostatic), and is always *something*. Its *modus* embraces all the Aristotelian categories[4] (apart from οὐσια [*ousia*] or essence, it goes without saying, which was counted amongst the Aristotelian categories by mistake or as a result of a misunderstanding). This colourful diversity of categories, however, belongs

4 The categories in Aristotle, besides οὐσια [ousia], are the following: ἡ πόσον, ἡ ποιὸν, ἡ πρός τι, ἡ ποῦ, ἡ ποτὲ, ἡ κεῖσθαι, ἡ ἔχειν, ἡ ποιεῖν, ἡ πάσχειν [ē poson, ē poion, ē pros ti, ē pou, ē pote, ē keisthai, ē ekhein, ē poiein, ē paskhein] (quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, possession, activity, passivity).

only to a transient image of the world, and not to being itself, which is the unmoved and non-categorial foundation of all the categories. One of the greatest falsehoods of epistemological idealism, particularly in its most extreme tendencies (the Marburg school), after Hegel, lies in the fact that it treats being (as reality) as one of the categories, and declares it to be a category *of thought*; reality is only conceivability. This philosophical "defamation of the Holy Spirit" doubtless signifies an acosmism, or even an anti-cosmism, since the logos makes the cosmos only by virtue of reality. Being in and of itself belongs neither to the hypostasis as such—for the hypostasis, that which truly exists, is above being, and, consequently, is also outside of it—nor to the logos, the predicate, as a "representation" or as an ideal image which arises only in the bosom of being. By virtue of the fact that it is a life-giving power of being which allows *everything*, in one way or another, to participate in reality, the hypostasis descends to the realm of being, and being becomes accessible to the hypostasis. The realm of being already *is* something, and the predicate is not simply a word, but a word *about* something, or, more correctly, *from* something (for the true nature of the word lies in the fact that words are spoken by the objects themselves, that words already presuppose concretion, reality). To convert the force of being, reality, into the logical category of "givenness" or "being" means to dissolve the third moment of triune judgement and of tri-hypostatic substance into the second moment, so that—it goes without saying—this third moment can then be managed as one likes, and one can construct "the natural-scientific world" in one's own image and likeness, which is what Hegel and Cohen and company are each in his own way busy doing. Logic cannot do anything with being, but nor can it manage without it. Being is alogical, and yet is permeated through and through by the logos, which, however, is impotent without being. This is why a logic which has pretensions to deduce the being of the universe also comes to a halt before being in embarrassed helplessness.

EXCURSUS ON KANT

THE QUESTION OF BEING OR OF EXISTENCE IN KANT'S theory remains very unclear, whereas it should have received particularly careful explanation given the difficulties for idealism which it brings

with it. Kant counts reality among the categories, under the rubric of *quality*, along with negation and limitation, and places existence under the rubric of *modality*, along with possibility and impossibility, but he does not provide particular applications of most of the categories, with the exception of causation, and the categories of reality and existence are not even subjected to any particular examination, but are considered only as modalities of the predicate, rather than in themselves (CPR, 113 [A 80/B106]). "The postulate bearing on the knowledge of things as actual," says Kant (CPR, 242–43 [A225/B272]), "does not, indeed, demand immediate perception (and, therefore, sensation of which we are conscious) of the object [*?—S.B.*] whose existence is to be known. What we do, however, require is the connection of the object with some actual perception, in accordance with the analogies of experience... In the mere concept of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found. For though it may be so complete that nothing which is required for thinking the thing with all its inner determinations is lacking to it, yet existence has nothing to do with all this, but only with the question whether such a thing be so given us that *the perception of it can, if need be, precede the concept.*" The italicized words introduce some kind of *givenness of things*, for which there is no place at all in Kant's general epistemology, where the thing or object is a categorial synthesis of perceptions. This is why the question of "givenness" in Kant's system has acquired such sharpness and significance. Kant deliberately comes to a halt before this question in the section on "the impossibility of an ontological proof of the existence of God." "'Being,'" Kant reasons here, "is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. *It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves.* [*Nothing can be more ill-defined or more contradictory than such a definition of the main question.—S.B.*] Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgement. The proposition, 'God is omnipotent', contains two concepts, each of which has its object—God and omnipotence. The small word 'is' adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate in its relation to the subject. If, now, we take the subject (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence), and say 'God is', or 'There is a God,' we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and indeed posit it as being an object that stands in relation to my concept. The content of both must be

one and the same; nothing can have been added to the concept, which expresses merely what is possible, by my thinking its object (through the expression 'it is') as given absolutely. Otherwise stated, the real contains no more than the merely possible. A hundred real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers. For as the latter signify the concept, and the former the object and the positing of the object, should the former contain more than the latter, my concept would not, in that case, express the whole object, and would not therefore be an adequate concept of it. My financial position is, however, affected very differently by a hundred real thalers than it is by the mere concept of them (that is, of their possibility). For the object, as it actually exists, is not analytically contained in my concept, but is added to my concept (which is a determination of my state) synthetically; and yet the conceived hundred thalers are not themselves in the least increased through thus acquiring existence outside my concept... Whatever, therefore, and however much, our concept of an object may contain, we must go outside it, if we are to ascribe existence to the object. In the case of objects of the senses, this takes place through their connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws. But in dealing with objects of pure thought [*it is the idea of God in particular which is being discussed here—S.B.*] we have no means whatever of knowing their existence" (CPR, 504–5, 506 [A 598–601/B 626–29]).

The passage given here from Kant, together with the notorious example of the hundred thalers, is justly considered as one of the most vulnerable points of his account. All the Königsberg Copernicus's arguments, in fact, were directed towards absorbing all the energy of being into the subject, into thought, and towards presenting the object as a categorial synthesis. In reality, however, thinking turns out not to have the object, but only the *concept* of the object, at its command; being has to be added to this concept by an act of synthesis, not on the basis of speculative reflection, but by relying on some sort of intuitive and mystical givenness of the object (although this is shamefacedly disguised by an ill-defined reference to the "connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws"). The distinction between the concept of the hundred thalers and the actual sum (setting to one side the unfortunate mercantile associations of this example) is not only hard to grasp from a logical point of view but is also epistemologically unintelligible.

A mystical empiricism breaks out within Kant's epistemological idealism. And although Kant supposes himself to be celebrating his victory over the ontological proof of God, he reveals, in reality, the groundlessness and unsustainability of his idealism, since the latter lacks any foundation in being, and, at the last, becomes a certain synthetic $=x$. Nowhere in the whole span of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the question of reality posed in any other way than in the sense of its being a formal and logical property of judgement. In the first lines of section 1 it is suggested that "intuition"—*Anschauung*—"takes place only in so far as the object is given to us. This again is only possible, to man at least, in so far as the mind is affected in a certain way. The capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by objects, is entitled *sensibility*. Objects are given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us intuitions; they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arise concepts" (CPR, 65 [B 33/A 19]). Kant begins his *Critique* with a completely dogmatic declaration which is in no way argued for, that in intuitions *objects are given*, objects which also act on us; consequently, at the basis of all cognition, as its precondition, lies the reality of the object, a reality given, according to Kant, only through sensibility, but not through thought (and his critique of the ontological proof of God relies on this). But this initial Kantian realism is of course not further developed or corroborated in what follows, since it turns out that objects are categorial syntheses, and that the *res* proper retreats into the realm of noumena, of which we can know nothing. Yet at the same time such a realism proves to be essential, so that we can distinguish between the real and the imaginary thaler. Kant's relation to the copula "is" is characteristic of his thought. In the copula he sees an expression of the "relation" between subject [*sub"ekt*] and predicate, but he neither explains nor even asks about the nature of this relationship. Kant does not go beyond a formally grammatical and formally logical approach to this question, even though in this form it possesses only a wholly derivative significance, and even though it is necessary first to understand the nature of the copula—that is, of being—ontologically, in order then to move on to its logical reflection in the copula. In any event, it is not enough to say that the copula is merely the relation between a subject and a predicate without asking oneself what kind of relationship this might be. For this reason it will not do to refer to the idea that being is *only* the copula and

does not add any new predicate, because here something unknown is defined by something unknown, or at least by something undefined. The broader meaning of Kant's epistemology is that only the sensible elements of reality—*Anschauungen*—are given. These undergo the active influence of the epistemological subject, as a result of which is obtained experience, as the sole form of reality, and as something accessible; but when discussion turns to the power of concepts, Kant refers to the reality of the object itself, and with this introduces a special source of cognition—*the sense of reality*—whose testimony is synthetically added to the judgement.

It is wholly natural that Kant should pay so little attention to the third moment of the judgement, to the copula, that is, to the question of being or of reality. Kant's philosophy, as we saw, is a subjective idealism, in which the concept of the subject from which Kant starts is not even taken in its authentic form, as a hypostasis, but is treated as an epistemological casing stripped off from the predicate. This is a philosophy of the predicate mistaken for a subject. But with neither definition of the concept does Kant get as far as the third moment, as far as being; he lingers on the second moment, and the illumination of the problem of being in his work remains wholly inadequate. The problem is wrapped up in the theory of noumena and phenomena, which is itself problematic. This is why Kant's idealism proves to have so many different meanings, which it takes in different, and even in mutually incompatible, directions. (Hegel also considers Kant's example of the real and the imaginary hundred thalers in his *Logic*, in connection with his own theory of the identity of being and nothing. "[T]he abstractions of being and nothing both cease to be abstractions if they acquire a determinate content... *Determinate being* is the first category to contain the real difference of being and nothing."[5] On the whole, Hegel's discussion, which is necessary only to the development of his own point of view, adds nothing essential to the question.)

* * *

Being, therefore—"*is*"—is not merely a "copula." More precisely, it is necessary seriously to ask oneself what precisely this copula signifies, and whence it springs. And it at once becomes evident that its formal

5 SL, 87, 88. (Miller's "*[d]eterminate being*" translates *Dasein*, "existence" or, in the Russian version quoted by Bulgakov, *sushchestvovanie*. — *Trans.*)

logical function is only a reflection of an ontological givenness. The copula connects [*sviazka sviazyvaet*] and unites subject and object, which, if taken separately from each other, are antinomically correlated. There is no bridge between them. The subject has all the force of being, but it does not have the shape [*obraz*] of being; it remains transcendent. The object, the predicate, has all the fullness of being, but lacks its force. What is needed is a special mediating power which could connect subject and object in the act of being. Being is the unity of the hypostasis with its nature. There is no such thing as that being in general which was propounded by Parmenides or Spinoza in all their thinking about oneness. Being is always concrete and definite. That is why being cannot be grasped or understood without reference to the relationship of the subject of being to the object. It occupies a definite third place in the structure of substance, but also in that of the logic and grammar of the judgement, and the place of the category of being in this hierarchy can neither be changed nor abolished. Moreover, this third moment of substance has a definite relationship to its two predecessors, and the relationship is not in each case identical: being begins with the hypostasis, with the subject, *he is*, but it makes towards the predicate, towards *something that* he is. It can be said, to use theological language, that the third shape [*obraz*] of substance, the force of being, proceeds from the subject, as its first shape, and unites the first shape to the second in such a way that between the first and the second a new unity is established ("And all mine are thine, and thine are mine," John 17:10): the shape of being, the logos of the world, the predicate, is inseparable from being, for the predicate proceeds from the subject to the object. The subject cannot, in and of itself, color being with qualities; only the force of being belongs to the subject. From this results the property of the predicate, when compared with the subject, that the predicate always has a *general* character, that it expresses a concept or an idea, a certain property or qualitative feature of being—being which, in and of itself, without this property, would lack its own face; all individuality, all participation in a particular hypostasis, conversely, is proper to the subject, which, in this sense, is not a concept, but a name (a "proper name"). From this follows a conclusion which is, formally and logically, of paramount importance, namely that *one and the same predicate may characterize a whole series of subjects*. True, the subject may also have a series of predicates, and it would seem in this

way not to differ from the predicate, but this sameness is only apparent. The point is that the predicate as such never possesses an exhaustive, complete nature. It is always an undefined plurality: A is B and B1 and B2 . . . and Bn and Bn+1, etc. . . . , which concludes in an ellipsis. The integral of this series, the sole universal (although also potential) predicate, is the *all* or the world. For this reason the domain of being, that is, of the predicate, is *one* and is common to many subjects, while these latter, conversely, are *many* and *non-recurring*, for they cannot recur in the absence of a content of being; they remain above being and have contact with it only through the predicate. In this way we have a unified world, the universal and most general predicate, the domain of being, and a multiplicity of hypostatic centres. The problem of the *universal* (τὸ καθ' ὅλου [*to kath' holou*]), the nature of the concept, which stands before us as it has done since antiquity and through all the subsequent centuries down to our time, comes down, that is, to the concept's relationship to the subject, which is never universal and which is not even a concept, but which is always a *non-concept*, a hypostasis which exists immediately in a personal name. The real nature of the question is obscured by the fact that the first person pronoun only acts as the grammatical subject in exceptional cases. As a rule, grammatical subjects are concepts (or "common" nouns, in distinction from "proper" names) or simply words, whereas a hypostasis as such is not even a word and cannot, of its nature, be expressed by a word, which is why it needs a predicate for its own sake. These particular forms of judgement, however, exist only by virtue of the general, ontological judgement of the type *I am something, such-and-such a person is A*, and so on. The subject, by virtue of its function, ceases itself to be a concept, and becomes, as it were, a proper name, and, for this reason, also requires a predicate of its own. As we showed earlier, all judgements come down to the hypostatic type, and presuppose the latter as their self-evident precondition. "The table has a black surface" signifies, in reality: I think, I see, that the table, etc.; that is, I am the one who thinks that the table, and so on. The other source of obscurity about the real state of affairs is the fact that in the judgement, as it is executed in our thinking, is manifested all the inconstant nature of thought, its untruthfulness. Hence the "modality" of judgement, its "problematic," apodictic or assertoric form (according to Kant) concerns not its ontological basis, but, so to speak, its logical

technique, its way of conducting the search for a true judgement.[6] All these aspects of the categories are modifications of judgement as it is executed logically and grammatically, as thought, but *judgement*—and this is the very essence of our point of view—*is not thought*, or, rather, *is not only thought*, but is a fundamental fact of the self-determination of spirit. *Judgement expresses the nature of substance.* And here, when judgement is taken in this ontological sense, it follows that the subject is always in the singular number, that it is a self-enclosed monad, whereas the predicate is universal, is a concept expressing the nature of a being, to whomsoever that being might belong.

But here we find ourselves face to face with the most burning and most difficult of problems: the problem of the *multi-hypostaticity of being*, the oneness of the predicate and the multiplicity of subjects, unity in plurality and plurality in unity. The one world has an undefined plurality of sovereigns, of hypostases; the one nature of the spirit which is revealed in the world has many faces.

And, above all, whence come *we*? How does each *I*, enclosed within itself, and involuntarily imagining itself to be an absolute I, know another I? Where and how is the transition to the *thou* brought about, how do *we* come to be? This question appears equally urgent and fateful for Kant and for Fichte, but neither noticed it; they bypassed it instead. Their whole projects would have foundered upon it. Kant defines objective judgement as universally significant, that is, as binding for every mind, or for every *I*; his whole epistemological account of the *I* as a logical function, as transcendental apperception, would need revision in the light of the fact of the epistemological (and thus necessarily also of the ontological) existence of *thou* and *we*. An even greater difficulty for Fichte, who, no less than Kant, takes the presence of a plurality of individuals for granted, is how to make the other *I* part of his schema of *I* and *not-I*, for the *thou* is neither one nor the other, and the whole of the *Science of Knowledge* would have to be completely revised and re-organized in the light of the *thou*.

The main difficulty here consists in the fact that *thou*, the other *I*, is never in any sense a predicate, a form of being for the *I*, for the hypostatic

6 CPR, 107 (B 95/A 70). Here belong, too, all the other aspects of judgement which Kant distinguishes from each other in the categories of quantity (unity, plurality, totality), of quality (reality, negation, limitation) or of relation (of inherence and subsistence, of causality and dependence, of community).

subject [*podlezhashchee*], yet at the same time it is a *not-I*, an object. Every *I* naturally makes of itself something absolute and unique, and Stirner, in his philosophical pamphlet, only laid bare this egoistic nature of the *I* (although even in Stirner, unexpectedly and inconsequently, the "egoists" appear in the plural number, and even form a "union").[7] The transition from the singular number to the dual, or, equally, to the plural number is not so easy and so readily intelligible as it might appear on the table of grammatical declensions. It is in its way no less mysterious and primordial than the transition from the subject to the predicate, which also takes place in the trivial and as if clear—yet, in fact, deeply mysterious—workings of the judgement. How can the *I* see and observe the *we*, that is, its own likeness and repetition, a *we* which is not a predicate, but a grammatical co-subject, not an object, but a cognitive co-subject? This act is so primordial and miraculous that there is not, nor can there be, an explanation for it; it is possible only to ascertain it, and then to take the proper notice and make the proper appraisal of it. The whole question has nothing to do with a psychological study of the other *I*, nor even with epistemological "introjection" (although this word, an invention of Avenarius's, says more or less nothing here) but concerns, rather, ontological contact with the other *I*, the comprehension of the other *I* as truly existing.[8] We can show where the *task* lies for the other *I*, for the *thou* and for the *we*: it lies in the nature of the predicate as a universal, or a being, which has lost the exclusive link with its individual shape. Although the I is indeed *der Einzige* [the unique individual], the world which, as a predicate, is governed by the I, is not experienced by that I as *sein Eigenthum* [his property], or, at least, not *only* as "his property." On the contrary, even though the predicate is joined to the cognitive subject by the copula of being, the world, despite this, *does not belong to anyone, that is, it is common to all*, and judgement, precisely in its nature as universal and universally signifying, is a silent yet expressive enough gesture towards the *we*, is the site of the *we*. When the nature of the Subject, of the hypostasis, is scrutinized, we see with surprise that

7 Max Stirner (Johann Caspar Schmidt) (1806–1856), author of *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* [*The Unique Individual and Its Property*] (1844).—*Trans.*

8 Richard Avenarius (1843–96), a "neutral monist" who held that the intrinsic nature of ultimate reality was neither physical nor mental; author of a *Kritik der reiner Erfahrung* [*Critique of Pure Experience*] (1888–90).—*Trans.*

although the I is an isolated, repelling centre, there is also present in it, as in the force of gravity, a power of attraction. In other words, the *non-uniqueness of the I*, the presupposition of other *I*s, inheres in the very nature of the *I*. As soon as we attempt to think or to perceive the *I* as a unity, without any *thou* (since *we* is also unable to meet such a demand), the *I* becomes unintelligible, loses its elasticity, and collapses. Without the *thou*, the *I* too loses its colour and fades. How this comes about is impossible to say or to explain, but it is so: the *I* implies not only a *not-I* (in the Fichtean sense, that is, a predicate), but also a *thou*, and a *we* or a *co-I*. The *I* also, in fact, experiences itself as the *singular number* of the plural *we*, and as the *first* person in relation to a *second*—*we* and *you plural*—and a *third*—*he, they*. And if this were not the case, neither *thou* nor *we* would be possible, nor would they exist. Consequently, the very nature of the *I* includes plurality. Hypostaticity does not presuppose mono-hypostaticity, but multi-hypostaticity, many *I*s in the presence of a single *not-I*, or predicate, or world. This is what Fichte, following Kant, bypassed, not having grappled with the problem of the *I* for longer than was necessary for the deduction of the *not-I*.

The plurality of the *I* is a fundamental axiom of thought and life. It must be shown, yet it cannot be seen; moreover, it is impossible and unnecessary to prove it. The impossibility of a proof is evident enough from the fact that the *I* as the truly existing [*sushchee*] lies *outside* the world of being, and, consequently, cannot be examined or demonstrated using its logic. Only apodictic judgements are possible in respect of the *I*, only axioms possessing the significance of the establishment of a fact. The I is not conscious of itself as unique; on the contrary, it presupposes an indefinite plurality of other hypostases. Its φύσις, the nature of the predicate, is not only reconciled to this, but also presupposes and even demands such a plurality. The predicate possesses a universal character; it is, logically speaking, always a general concept. Let us say it openly: the world is the common sphere of being for the plurality of hypostases. Hence, from one aspect, plurality is *Allheit* [all-ness], but from another it is universality—*Allgemeinheit*. Both commonalities close in a circle of universal pan-human judgement: *all know all, all are all*.

The *I* is thus something completely singular. On one hand, every *I*—or, more precisely, my own *I*—is unique, and in this sense is absolutely individual; yet at the same time it turns out to be a certain *genus* or

species, since the *thou* and the *we* are given just as immediately as the *I*, and part of the consciousness of the *I* is consciousness of itself as a member of the *we*. There is no kind of logical or epistemological path from *I* to *thou* or *we*; not even Fichte, who deduces everything, undertook this deduction. It is possible, if one wishes, to arrange the triunity of *I*—*thou*—*we* according to the Hegelian triad, by representing *thou* as the antithesis of *I*, and *we* as a synthesis of the thesis, *I*, and the antithesis, *thou*. This innocent Hegelian game of triads only circumvents the difficulty, however, and blunts the sharp, thorny antinomy of the *I* by a happy recourse to Hegel's non-contradictory contradictions. I is *I*, and this *I* in its turn is *I*, and so on. Each *I* is self-enclosed and singular; like the Leibnizian monad, each *I* is windowless. And this very *I* knows not only a *not-I* (by means of which Fichte believed he could limit and exhaust the knowledge of the I) but knows also other *I*s. It knows *thou*s and *we*s, and, consequently, knows itself also as a *thou* and a *we*, and knows the other *I* within itself. *By means of one and the same act* in which the I recognizes, or, in Fichtean terms, "posits" itself as a unique *I*, it knows or "posits" itself as generic, as co-hypostatic. Thus the hypostasis is simultaneously unique and non-unique, and this antinomy cannot be domesticated by breaking off its sharp end and turning it into an innocent Hegelian contradiction. It turns out that just what is most certain in us and for us, just that in which Descartes thought to find a ποῦ στῶ [*pou stō*, a place in which to stand], a support against or a calmative for doubt, an intelligible and reliable principle, contains within itself a gaping abyss.

A splendoured firmament of burning stars
Mysterious shines from high
On us who swim, by an abyss
Surrounded on all sides.[9]

Thus there is nothing which is intelligible in and of itself or without remainder. The intelligible is expelled from its last refuge, the

9 Bulgakov quotes the last quatrain of Fyodor Tyutchev's poem *Kak okean ob"emlet shar zemnoj*. Khoruzhij (ed. cit., 578n.) points out that Bulgakov (quoting from memory, perhaps) slightly misquotes the quatrain. A closer prose translation might be: "[t]he heavenly arch with burning starry glory mysteriously looks from the heights, and we swim, surrounded on all sides by a blazing abyss." — *Trans.*

self-consciousness of the *I*, and proves to be mysterious and unintelligible. The tragedy of reason has come to fruition; reason has been tormented and sacrificed on sharp antinomies. Yet catharsis is already beginning here. In the depths of hell, in ordeal by fire, the human being's own lineaments and their meaning are revealed to him. He appears before himself in the form of triadicity. The formula of the ecclesiastical dogma, which had up until now sounded alien, dead, paradoxical and absurd to reason, appears before him as the only answer to his perplexity, as the *truth* about his own nature, and, as lightning pierces the darkness, so the dogma fills everything with meaning. But more of this later; let us now resume our interrupted train of thought.

The question of the plural unity of the *I* repeatedly arose in philosophy, either in its essence or in a formally and epistemologically foreshortened form. The plural unity of the subject with a shared predicate signifies nothing other than a single shared nature in many hypostases, a unity of the predicate in many propositional subjects, of which each possesses it as if his own. Here lie the roots of the objectivity of judgement, the *I*'s testing of itself against every other *I*, *Allgemeingültigkeit* [universal validity]. Kant's epistemology, and epistemology after Kant, considers *universality*, bindingness for every thinking human being, as a formal mark of the truthfulness of a judgement. Positivists of Feuerbach's type speak openly of the species-character of truth, to such an extent that they identify this formal mark with the essence of truth: truth, for them, is an idea of the species', whilst error is an idea of the individual's. (A similar idea, but with a point of view further colored by utilitarianism and Darwinism, is put forward by Nietzsche, who equates truth with usefulness, and, moreover, with what is useful for the species.) Auguste Comte and the positivists expressed this idea in a religious and dogmatic form in the doctrine of humanity as a single being, a *Grand-être* [Great-being]. In essence, both Kant and Comte, the first in a carefully epistemological form, and the second in a crudely dogmatic one, recapitulate—in an extremely incomplete way, of course—the Christian doctrine of human nature, of the *one Adam* as all of humanity.

The problem of the *I as a plural unity* should have arisen for philosophers long ago, as also, above all, the question of how the alien *I* is to be understood both in its strangeness to and in its affinity with my own *I*. The singularity of this question lies in the fact that the alien *I* cannot

be understood as lying within the domain of the *not-I* or predicate; it is not a predicate. Yet at the same time predication is the only domain of cognition and self-cognition, the domain in which the *I* knows its own nature. It is necessary, therefore, to say that we do not and cannot know the alien *I* as an object or as its own proper domain and nature. There is a special way for the subject to know a subject, but not an object: this way out of one's self is *not* through one's own nature, but from self to self, that is, to the *thou*. And the only organ of such cognition, a cognition not accountable to Kantian epistemology, is this exit from the self through which I know myself as another. This is love, the oneness of many, the knowledge of oneself outside oneself. "Love thy neighbor as thyself"—this commandment of both the Old and the New Testaments possesses, as do all the commandments, an ontological basis in the nature of things. It suggests above all that my neighbor, *thou*, is thy *I*, and by virtue of that love with which thou lovest, thou naturally affirmest thy own *I* as the unshakeable foundation of existence, but thou also affirmest the other *I*, must affirm it; and with this thou fulfillest the law of thine own existence, thou realizest thine own *I* in its true plenitude. This very thought also provides a guiding thread to the assessments of the question of *conciliarity* [*sobor'nost*] with which contemporary consciousness is preoccupied. The essence of conciliarity is sought on the basis of unity of object, of predicate, of love for one and the same thing. In this way, the essence of conciliarity is understood as believing *the same*, feeling *the same*, thinking *the same*—as agreement in opinions. It can be said, however, that all this is not enough, for all these are only derivative signs, and are not what is meant when the dogma of the one conciliar church is proclaimed, in which *conciliarity* does not bring us together into a mere sameness, but into a *unity*. Sameness of opinions is what unites a sect, a school, or a party, which can be cohesive and disciplined and yet can still prove to be as far removed from conciliarity as a body of soldiers which can be governed by one authority and one will. Conciliarity consists, above all, and in its original foundation, in a unity *in the subject*, in hypostaticity, which can be for each human being as though it is his or her own *I*, and love is also this ability of the *I* to identify itself with the other *I*, to love another as itself. And this is why conciliarity is in fact a *unity* and at the same time a *plurality*; this is why, too, all enter the church, yet at the same time the church is one; everyone who is truly in

the church has everyone within himself, is himself the whole church, and, at the same time, everyone has him. This is why it is not possible to say that the church is an association, for an association is only an external expression for the church, a schema or an image of it; the church is more correctly defined as a uniplural being, which contains everyone within itself, and in this sense the church is the mother of all, who at the same time gives to each person a place within herself and pours herself into each person. Needless to say, in the present age barely a trace of conciliarity is detectible, since egoism, the antithesis of conciliarity, is the law of our life. Nevertheless, conciliarity is the abiding foundation of our existence, and if our life were freed from its burdensome and denatured veil, people would see their own wealth in love: "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). Let us, though, keep here to the epistemological and metaphysical aspect of the question alone, without digressing towards this incidental theologoumenon. Here it is necessary to show that real conciliarity is at the same time that catholicity and universal bindingness, *Allgemeingültigkeit* [universal validity], which is also so sought after by epistemology. To free oneself from subjectivity—this means to be a conciliar (that is, a true) *I*, to be in the truth, and therefore to know it. This means to be a true subject, who does not deface his or her own predicate, but leaves it free to reveal itself. In other words, this predicate must serve for each *I* and for the subject in general; there is in it no sort of partiality, no moment of heresy, that is, of selection.[10] Objectivity and catholicity of understanding cannot, then, be sought only beyond the subject, in the object, where the latter is usually sought and found in the properties of judgement, and in the observance of epistemological principles and the like. For none of this formal irreproachability in any way guarantees that the truth will actually be grasped. It is impossible to reduce all cognition to a matter of form, as some recent epistemologists do. Cognition is creation, that is, action, although within determinate forms, beyond which stands the one who is acting. With regard to "practical reason," that is, the domain of moral action, the active significance of the subject here is self-evident. It was clear to Kant, too, whose maxim of practical

10 As often in this text, Bulgakov is playing on the sense of Greek *hairesis* as "choice." — *Trans.*

reason runs: act in such a way as any other would have to act in your place, so that it is as if not you alone, but humanity itself, were acting in your person. Do not act as the egoistic *I*, but as the true, the conciliar *I*. The restriction or denial of the conciliarity of the *I* is that which in the language of contemporary philosophy is called, in a pejorative sense, *psychologism*, and the pursuit of life "to the lees"—in which life's pure essence is putatively fermented or crystallized—is such a psychologism. Psychologism is something which is given for the sake of its overcoming by the self-creation of Spirit. Spirit cannot be a given [*dannym*], like a thing; it is a task [*zadannym*]. Spirit is created in the image of God, that is, not in thing-like necessity, but in freedom, and for this reason it must know itself through its own self-creation.

We said that the comprehension of conciliarity in the *I* was accomplished through love and in love, and the epistemology of the subject is comprised of its opposite, self-love, which has many manifestations, from coldness to hostility and hatred. In so far as truthfulness is defined from the side of the subject, arriving at truthfulness depends precisely on this condition of the hypostasis, on whether it is withdrawn into egotistic mono-hypostaticity or is, instead, expanded in a conciliar fashion, impelled by love towards the truth as a hypostatic plural unity. This is why Satan, that pure monohypostaticity, that metaphysical egotism, is also the murderer of humanity and the father of lies, and why his children, the children of egotism incarnate, are also the progeny of lies.[11] For the negation of conciliarity is *in actu* [in actuality] a self-asserting egotism—an egotism which is not a weakness or a condition, as in psychologism, but which is a matter of fundamental self-definition, a noumenal egotism; it is a defamation of God's creation, a defamation of the *I*, which is not egotistical, but conciliar in its nature; egotism is a malicious incapacity for love and a complete abuse of the Holy Spirit. And this is a lie, the origin of lies, for all knowledge and all life flows from the subject, and clean and clear water cannot flow from this poisoned source. The wondrous hymn of love sung by the apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians derives its metaphysical meaning from

11 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).—*Trans.*

this. "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). Consequently, along with the exceptional fullness of self-consciousness on the side of the content (of the predicate, or the object), a particular *quality* of this cognition proceeds from the subject, from the subject's health or sickness, which devalues and weakens this knowledge, and from which such cognition receives a negative coefficient. And this quality is a lack of conciliar self-consciousness, a denial of love. And knowing the truth, as the being of all within one, is replaced, in the world's cold expression for it, by *possessing* the truth—which, in reality, we do not, not at all.

In this way the subject, the hypostasis, is not an empty place, a transcendental point, lacking all colour. On the contrary, it is possible, instead, with Kant and Schopenhauer, to conceive of it as the noumenal character which underlies all empirical self-determinations, that is, which underlies factual knowledge and reality. We are not conscious of the intelligible character—that is, of the nature of the hypostasis in relation to conciliarity, its position and self-perception within the unity of everything, as an atemporal act lying at the very limit of creation—as an *act* of freedom; yet at the same time we experience it as a *deed* of our freedom, for which we are answerable (as Schopenhauer convincingly showed). This deed is in no way *in* being, but *before* being—that is, it is in the subject, and not in the predicate, or even before the predicate, but is rather the origin of the predicate. Does this mean that the deed of the intelligible self-definition of the subject is definitive and inalterable, that this deed is the subject's fate, a predestination, as Schopenhauer taught, and, before him, Calvin? Such it would be, if time were only a phenomenal appearance of timelessness, and did not itself belong to eternity in the form of temporality, if time were metaphysically void, inert and meaningless. But this is not the case. Time has roots in eternity; it, too, is eternity, although in the form of temporality, and fatalism is so much the more without foundation. It is possible to work on one's self over time, and such work can have significance in eternity; in this consists both the meaning of temporal life, and in this alone consists the metaphysical possibility of the Day of Judgement with its sentence for eternity. It is entirely correct that pre-temporal self-definition constitutes a givenness for the subject, some sort of fate for it, its own kind of metaphysical

karma, and that the tree of life does not grow from a void. But the subject's life, its action in the predicate, as action, cannot be understood as a mechanism, but presupposes the presence of freedom, for action is freedom, but within necessity.

It has already fallen to me to show elsewhere (in *Unfading Light* and the *Philosophy of Economy*) that freedom and necessity are correlated concepts, and that both the one and the other are antinomically combined in the life of Spirit. Spirit is the eternally living and eternally acting origin; this is why freedom is its nature and its element. However, this freedom is freedom of action, and, therefore, of self-consciousness, but not the freedom of absolute creation or of omnipotence, which has nothing outside itself and which knows no limit. This creaturely freedom becomes aware of itself through its limits, and it perceives itself thanks to them (like the Fichtean practical I which, incessantly striving to overcome the *Schranke* [limit] of the *not-I*, at the same time needs this limit in order to overcome it). The antinomy of freedom and necessity unfolds simultaneously in two directions: in the subject itself; and in its relationship to the object, in the entirety of the judgement, in life. In the subject, in the self-consciousness of the hypostasis, which, however, is for the hypostasis also a predicate, there collide and wrestle with each other the subject's noumenal nature as givenness and its noumenal freedom as creativity—which latter cannot be reconciled with givenness, but which wants always to originate everything from out of itself—and the result turns out to be *work* on our own nature, an integral which we cannot see for so long as our eyes are closed by time. The relation between subject and object, subject and predicate—that is, being, life—is also an uninterruptibly continuing antinomy. The *I* is of its own nature always inclined to throw its weight about in a Fichtean manner, pretending to absoluteness and consequently to omnipotence. But its object, nature, the predicate, is *given* to it, is in actual fact its limit, as well as being at the same time its nature. Outside this nature and without it the subject is condemned to the wilderness of non-being, which is separation from nature and the dissolution of subject from predicate. The destruction of the copula is death, a dead faint of the subject, but also a dead faint of nature, which cannot exist without the subject either, so that both descend to a state of potentiality. In this way, the *I* requires necessity, which belongs to the predicate, just as the latter exists only on the presupposition of

that freedom which is proper to the subject. Life can never be purely passive, remaining under the sway of necessity. This combination of a creative freedom with a necessity on the basis of which it acts, and a necessity which constitutes the foundation of temporal existence, is the life of this world.

Multi-hypostaticity remains a characteristic property of being. On the one hand, being is an ocean into which all rivers flow, the single moveless substance which absorbs everything into itself. On the other hand, being is proper to every hypostasis, and the hypostasis possesses being for itself and in itself. The hypostasis infuses its own actuality and freedom into being, and being is not one and immutable, but multiple and unstable, is becoming—so that Parmenides and Heraclitus were equally correct about it. The combination of both forms of being—of subject with object—corresponds to a unity of necessity with freedom, and forms the foundation of the two faces of being, which last is a combination of subject and object, a continually self-accomplishing "copula." The immovability and the unity of being is necessity, as is shown with full clarity in Spinoza's metaphysical determinism and in Hegel's dialectical parallel to Spinoza's doctrine. Multiplicity, creative work, fluidity (*évolution créatrice*) is linked, conversely, to a comprehension of the world in the categories of freedom, of personalism, as for J.G. Fichte, Renouvier, and the pragmatists.[12] Both sides are correct, not in an eclectic way, but antinomically. This is also the antinomy of subject and predicate, an antinomy which is both posited and sublated by being, by the copula.

Thus the triune image of substance is imprinted in the judgement, and the name of this image is *the human being.* Substance is the human being. The human being is a hypostasis who truly is, who has his or her being in the world, a subject who receives its predicate from, and is bound to the predicate by, the copula. The human being is a living judgement or, more precisely, is alive in the judgement, which is an archetype and a fundamental cognitive act containing the schema of substance and imaging forth its structure, for each judgement is a living act within substance, that is, within the human being. Of whatever

12 Charles Bernard Renouvier (1815–1903), neo-Kantian French philosopher who influenced, amongst others, Émile Durkheim. *L'Évolution Créatrice* is a work published in 1907 by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941). — *Trans.*

kind a judgement is, whether it be a judgement of cognition or of the will, whether it be contemplative or active, it reproduces the triune countenance of being.

We are aware that the imprecision of our terminology here must long since have aroused the ire of logicians. What are the judgements in question about, and in what sense are they spoken? Judgements of course differ "by quantity, by quality, and by relation and modality," are *a priori* or *a posteriori*, analytic or synthetic and so on, as is usually set out in the chapter on judgements in a formal logic, and also in epistemology. But all these forms [*vidy*] of judgement, closer consideration of which falls completely outside the scope of our enquiry, are only *images* [*obrazy*] *of judgement*, judgement's embodiment, its psychological and logical faces. They derive from, and are to be understood from the point of view of, the nature of judgement as such, from the tripartite formula of its triunity. The logical images [*obrazy*] of judgement, and even judgement's epistemological meaning, rely on the ontological givenness of judgement. And the highest meaning of judgement, the mystery of judgement, must, of course, be sought not in logic, but in metaphysics, which, it goes without saying, finds expression in religion and flows from religion. In all forms of judgement, not only in its personal forms but also in its impersonal ones, we find only innumerable forms of a single judgement, which has for its subject the hypostasis or *I*, and has for its object any content whatever, or everything: *I* am everything or the world. Only this kernel of judgement interests us here. In the same sense, we are not in the least concerned with logic, with the study of its forms or with questions of its realization, nor even with epistemology, which examines these elements in dismantled form, as "categories." What is expressed in judgement is the nature of spirit, that is, of substance. And this philosophical view at once sheds light on the most involved and troubling questions in the metaphysics of that which truly exists [*sushchego*] and being, revealing their true meaning, in place of the significance of the separate philosophical schools or "tendencies" (whose meaning is a philosophical transcription of the word "heresy" in the neutral sense already explained, of the *selection* of one separate aspect as a guiding light). But what is much more important is that in the judgement the depths of our spirit, and, consequently, the nature of the human being, are illuminated as by a flash of lightning. For let us

repeat: the human being is a living judgement or proposition, and life is the process of this proposition's articulation in time. The problem of judgement develops into an anthropological problem — the problem of the human being as substance. For the only knowledge of substance and about substance for the human being is the human being itself, or that which is human in the human being. "Human" by no means signifies something subjective and psychological, in need of being cleaned up by an application of epistemology; what is "human" is also substantial. In other words, we have access to substance and know it solely in and through ourselves. Even if we ourselves in our being are not yet substance, our only window into substance is this "we." For this reason the theory of substance necessarily becomes a philosophical anthropology, and substance — directly or obliquely, immediately or mediatedly — is we ourselves. Thus, in essence, did the matter already stand for Spinoza, for whom even though the human being is only a mode of substance, he or she may, through love for God, be immersed in substance, merge with it, dissolve into it, may, that is, become substance, and only through this becoming is it possible for the human being to have knowledge of substance. In Plotinus's account, where substance — the One — is much more transcendent than in Spinoza's, the situation is the same, because here too the human being, going beyond himself in a state of ecstasy and mingling identically with the One, makes himself substance at that moment, and it is only on this basis that he is able to know the One. On the whole, there can be no disputing the fact that the human being is substance in one sense or another. It is only a question of how his participation in substance is accomplished, and of what kind this participation might be. For my part, I see judgement as the hieroglyph of substantiality, the seal of the mystery of the human spirit; I am attempting, here, to open this seal, to decipher this hieroglyph.

2

From Image to Archetype

THE HUMAN SPIRIT POSSESSES A HYPOSTATIC nature—not uni-hypostatic, but multi-hypostatic—in which is revealed its content, and in which its being achieves reality. The hypostatic spirit has, in its self-consciousness and self-determination, a triune shape, but the many hypostases in which the human spirit exists possess a single common nature. The one is threefold in the form [*obraz*] of its existence [*sushchestvovaniya*] and the many is unified in the nature of its essence [*sushchestva*]. The analysis of the spirit undertaken above leads us, in this way, to a double paradox: a threefold unity and a unified multiple. It seems as if this paradox exhaustively describes the fundamental existence of the human spirit, yet thought can by no means satisfy itself with this, nor may it come to a halt here. The human spirit cannot comprehend itself; it demands an explanation for itself. It is self-evident that such an explanation, if it cannot be given by the human spirit to itself, must be sought outside it and above it, that is, in the Divine Spirit. As spirit, the human spirit cannot differ from Divine or Absolute Spirit so widely that it would be impossible for the human spirit to compare itself in any respect to It, or to comprehend It on the basis of this comparison. As human, that is, as non-absolute, spirit, it at the same time differs from Absolute Spirit in such a way that it is possible for it to comprehend the latter in this very difference. One thing cannot be doubted: the human spirit, as created and relative, cannot be understood *from out of itself.* It bears within itself, in its own contradictions, both the imprint of its own limitedness, and, at the same time, its own archetype, as a task. Absolute, Divine Spirit, the archetype of human existence, is neither an arbitrary assumption nor an auxiliary hypothesis, but is an internal postulate of human spirit itself. Whether God at all is, and what He is like in His own nature, cannot be ascertained by any human hypostasis; it can be ascertained only by God's revelation of Himself to human beings, religion. But without such a revelation it remains an unfulfilled *postulate* of the essence of the human spirit—the evidence of its image, which speaks of an archetype and which necessarily requires that archetype. The correspondence between image and archetype is reciprocal.

Man creates God in his own human image, just as Feuerbach and other atheists of his kind say, but does so precisely because in the image of his own spirit he also knows his own archetype, at least as an ontological postulate; that is, he knows Absolute and Divine Spirit, he comprehends God through his own self or in his own self. He knows that he is created in the image of God, and that his spirit is an icon of the Divine Being. Divine revelation is an objective process which does not depend on human beings; it is God's descent. Yet comprehension of the dogmas of revelation is itself connected to immanent human self-determination, to the nature of human spirit, which cannot comprehend itself or rest content if it does not ascend from itself to its Archetype, and remains instead within its own limits. This situation becomes clearer when the antinomies of the human spirit, the *I* and the *not-I*, have been revealed to be subject and predicate. Hitherto we have attended mainly to the fact that the *not-I*, which is the *I*'s predicate, reveals the *I* to itself. An *I* without a predicate is impotent and void; the *I* requires self-reflection, which it can receive only from the *not-I*. But the predicate, the *not-I*, also at the same time limits the *I* (Fichte's *Schranke*) and negates the *I*, so that Spinoza's *omnis definitio est negatio* turns out, in this sense, to be correct. The *I*, meanwhile, is, according to its own formal estimate of itself, absolute. It is the I, which, as such, sees no limits to itself and hence knows no difference between the created, human *I* and the Divine *I* (whence the Luciferian temptation: "ye shall be as gods," Gen. 3:5). In a certain sense, it is possible to say that nothing can be added to the human *I*, to its hypostasis, just as it is impossible to subtract anything from it: it is one and absolute, not having parts, and knowing no before or after, greater or lesser, or the like. Yet so much the more strikingly does it manifest its limitedness within itself: it is powerless to disclose its own nature or to cope with its own substance, which turns out to be given from without, as its *fatum*, necessity and limit. And the I must choose either a void which lacks predicates, but which protects its absoluteness (one of the faces of Lucifer, that of the self-isolated egoist) or to seek predicatedness and embodiment (another of the faces of Lucifer, namely, that of Satan, who works in the world, as "the prince of this world," to steal the Creator's creation from him).

But every predicate is discursive; it is something, is an indeterminate manifold—which can in no way be absolute. For this reason the

absolute I in its I-ness is not absolute in any of its acts of predication. It is exhausted by its powerlessness to reveal its own absolute countenance. At the same time it may not renounce this countenance, for this absoluteness is its own essence. And the result is the "bad infinity" of temporal life, an eternal marking of time, powerlessness to digest the absolute, a bad infinity which Fichte was content to extol by elevating it into an *ewiges Streben* [eternal striving]. Fichte first introduced this striving into philosophy, and the powerlessness of the *I* to realize its own absoluteness, and its attempts to do so, resulting in this bad infinity, are depicted by philosophers as something absolute or "eternal": the world as *ewige Aufgabe* [eternal task] in Cohen, as an "absolute ought" in Rickert, and the like. This imaginary *Ewigkeit* [eternity] is in fact interrupted by an ellipsis—our own death. And for this reason the formally absolute *I* may not take its own predicate *as an absolute*—a predicate which for this reason begins and ends with an ellipsis.

Such is the antinomy of the hypostasis, of the *first* moment of the triunity. But there is also another way in which contradictions wrestle with each other within the *I*, lacerating it in their strife. The *I*, single and absolute, at the same time knows itself as a *genus*, as a species-*I*. It is unable, in its own self-isolated absoluteness, to exit from itself; yet at the same time it is conscious of itself as one of a number of *co-Is*, as a solidary [*sobornoye*] *I*. This question cannot be settled simply by crossing over from the *I* into an indefinite quantity of other *Is*. The *I* is solidary in its nature and is isolated by its "individuality." Individualism is a sickness of the *I* no less than is depersonalization, the loss or weakening of individuality. The unification of the solidary and the individual characters of the *I* sounds like a postulate which cannot be met, and the task of moving towards this unification, which is grounded in the *I* itself, tears the *I* apart with antinomies. For the *I* must go out into the *we*, whilst remaining the *I*. This antinomical task makes the *I* into a riddle for itself, into an insoluble charade. That which sometimes appeared in philosophy—in Descartes, and particularly in the *Ich-Philosoph* [philosopher of the "I"] Fichte—to be the most reliable and most self-evident Archimedean ποῦ στῶ [*pou stō*, fulcrum] turns out to be situated at the point of an antinomical knife, to be a living paradox, which, obviously, cannot be understood from out of itself. The *I* is compelled to look for the key to its own riddle outside itself, so that it may decode its own cipher.

In this way the subject, the hypostasis, the first limb of the proposition or judgement, the *I*, suffers from antinomies and is unintelligible to itself; it points to a path out of itself and above itself. In other words, the image urgently speaks of an Archetype. The nature of the created *I* can only be understood from the nature of the Divine *I*; the human hypostasis is only an image of the Divine hypostasis. If we are able to learn anything reliable about the latter, then we will be able to comprehend the former. The path of speculation leads us to the fire-breathing Sinai of revelation.

The second limb of the proposition or judgement, the predicate, conceals within itself no less acute difficulties than does the first. The predicate is also absolute, as a predicate, *in respect of its own task*. The predicate must reveal the nature of the hypostasis, its *all*, which is also the *all* of the world, since, as we have already seen, the true predicate is the whole of the cosmos as an idea, as its *logos*. The predicate is the *logos* of the world, nothing more—for what could be a greater predicate?—yet also nothing less—for what else can each word be but the Word, or, more correctly, a ray, a point, an energy of the Word? Thus the predicate is a word about the Word by whom all things were made, and without whom was not anything made that was made (John 1:3). One can say still more concisely and more decisively that the word or predicate is also the *Word*, not in the sense that it is completely identical with it, but in the sense of a unity of the nature of the Word and of words, in the sense that every word is from the Word. Each word is as it were a letter or a sound of the one absolute Word. Every word which is cut off from this, its primal source, ceases to be a word; it is like an extinguished illumination, like the carcass or husk of a word. Words live in the meaning of the Word; ideas are connected and filled with meaning by the Idea of Ideas; an intellectual sun lights all earthly torches from its own fire and light. Such is the nature of the word as an incarnate idea, nor can it be otherwise.

But it seems to follow from this ontological definition of the predicate-word that every predicate-word expresses *everything*, as though each predicate expressed the whole world. And this inference about the universality and ubiquitous applicability of the predicate also follows quite indisputably from its nature. The predicate is indeed *everything* in its own essence. But at this turning Hegel awaits to announce triumphantly that although "being" in an indeterminate form is "nothing," it nevertheless, once we have travelled the whole path of logical determinations and have

completed the task required by dialectical method, becomes *everything*, that is, becomes the Logos, the Idea. The whole of Hegel's philosophy issues from this thought: that every definition, every predicate is the Logos, since each, entering as a link into the dialectical chain, is necessarily bound up with the whole of this whole, that is, with the world-Logos, the Absolute Idea. Every idea and every predicate is, when taken in its essence, the absolute Word—this is a concise statement of the meaning of Hegel's philosophy as a philosophy of predication.

Yet at the same time every judgement is discursive, whilst every predicate is fragmentary and empirically limited. The predicate is always a *something* and only a something; it repels, excludes, and protects itself from the *all*. *Omnis definitio est negatio*: once again we recall this unhappy, and, unfortunately, correct formulation. The predicate can be *deployed* only as a partial definition, as a *something*, not as *everything*. Nevertheless, no predicate can remain within itself; each, necessarily, strives to go beyond itself, and Hegel, correctly, perceived this. There is in the predicate an eternal unrest, a disequilibrium, a busyness and a striving. The predicate strives to accumulate, on every side, every *And*; it proliferates upwards and downwards, it contains endless movement within itself. For thought—and the predicate is, precisely, thought—knows no resting place. This craving for the absolute Logos, by which thought was set alight and towards which it is directed, is its inner strength and energy. Yet at the same time this craving is its fate, its impotence. For eternal hunger and craving, the eternal staff of Ahasuerus, is also a powerlessness. It is a bad infinity, whose nature was so penetratingly explored by Hegel; it is an eternally revolving wheel of fire. It is correctness instead of the Truth, a correctness which assumes ever new faces, each alluring us with the image of the truth which shines through them, but which cannot be taken hold of. The task of the absolute with respect to the relative, or of the relative in the light of the absolute, is the unification at once of the absolute and the relative, of the immanent and the transcendent—such is the nature of the predicate. The relative-absolute or absolute-relative predicate is an antinomy which reason finds intolerable, and from which it can be rescued only by endless movement, by discursive thought, so that it should not explode from within, as forces which meet each other at a right angle yield a diagonal movement which prevents a conflict, but which does not mean that the forces do not meet. In this way, the

predicate too turns out to be a paradox, and reason becomes a riddle for reason. The predicate, just like the subject, cannot be understood from out of itself. It becomes divided in its givenness [*dannost'*], for on one hand it is given [*dano*], while on the other it is a prescription [*zadano*]. It also points *beyond* itself, because it is unintelligible *from* itself. Its riddle is insoluble in the human world, that is, within absolute-relative existence. Either it remains insoluble as such, and then the human being himself is unintelligible and a riddle to himself (like the impossible Delphic instruction, γνῶθι σε αὐτόν [*gnōthi se auton*, know thyself], or the insoluble riddle set to Oedipus); or the human being, as the image of the Divine, is intelligible from his own Archetype. And the mystery of the human being must be sought in God; the riddle of the predicate finds its solution in the Divine Logos. *Such a postulate*, necessary and inevitable, is the only one possible, and follows directly from an examination of the nature of the predicate: either unintelligibility, the paradox of thought's despair with respect to itself, or the vision of one's self in God, an understanding of one's self and one's own nature from the nature of Divinity, as the image is understood from its Archetype.

The third moment of the judgement or the proposition—the copula—expresses being, substantiality, participation in essence. The copula connects both the first two limbs of the judgement, and already bears their stamp upon itself. Being, as we know, possesses neither its own hypostasis nor its own logical face in the judgement. Being establishes existence, in which the subject's act of self-determination receives living reality in the predicate; and in which substantiality reveals itself in such a way that both subject and predicate are only moments of being. Being, which thus has the force of a ground or background, is not susceptible of a self-sufficient definition, yet, nevertheless, it is possible to discover in being, too, the diremption and the antinomicality which characterize the subject and the predicate. *Being is one and indivisible*, as Parmenides taught; it is as much one and indivisible as the world-Logos, the world's *all*. This *all* consists of a single absolute act, which possesses the single, indivisible force of being. Being is of its nature one and absolute; this is its axiom, which, in various ways, is asserted by the philosophy of the identity of substantiality. It is not susceptible to being divided in any way, and there is in it no plurality of any kind; one might suppose that there is no content of any kind in it (Hegel's "nothing") or even that

there is no being in general. Yet thought cannot think this without falling into contradiction, since this *no* is only the negative form of *is*, and the negation of being is at the same time its affirmation. To say *not being* is to say *being is not*, and this *not* either deletes and completely annihilates the very judgement, making it impossible and contentless, or it can be understood only as a *limitation* of being with respect to being itself, and, consequently, in no way as an elimination or denial of being. Much more correct is the other side of the Parmenidean definition—namely that only being is, and that non-being is not—in as much as non-being is only a variant of being.

Nevertheless, this one, immobile, absolute being, multiplies in the copula; it breaks apart into moments of happening, becoming, coming-to-be. It is torn into parts and multiplied in the multiplicity of the predicate. The Heraclitean πάντα ῥεῖ [*panta rhei*, everything flows], as well as all the evolutionisms of every epoch (evolutionisms not as scientific theory, but as metaphysics) are a negation of the absoluteness of being in the name of the relativity of becoming. Yet being's very nature does not permit us to understand it as a becoming without remainder, as a *Werden* [becoming], as can be perceived most clearly of all in the most extreme, and, one can say, the most audacious instance of evolutionism, the philosophy of Bergson. Movement is unthinkable without the immoveable; there is no such thing as an absolute movement or an absolute becoming, just as there is no river without banks, and no time without the hours (to express the matter through a paradox). Movement is possible only upon condition that there be a state of rest, just as becoming is symptomatic of being. Yet at the same time movement, like every process of any kind, evolution, temporality (in opposition to "eternal life"), is also being's impotence, its limitedness. The fate of being here is inseparably shared with that of the Logos of being, as the copula is inseparable from the predicate: the copula is relative-absolute to just the same extent as the subject, since the copula unites what truly exists, the hypostasis, with its ideal image of existence. That which truly exists [*sushchee*] posits that which exists [*sushchestvuyushchee*] in the copula, and this copula is just as dirempted and antinomical as the logos. The copula is both one and many, immovable and yet comprised of movement; it is being and process, relative and absolute. It is just as unintelligible in itself, just as much of a riddle, as the first two limbs of the proposition. It leads beyond

itself just as they do, and can be understood and interpreted only from out of its Archetype, from out of the absolute. The copula, for its part, postulates an interpretation from without. Human-cosmic being must be understood from the being of the Divinity.

Thus the image testifies to the Archetype, and postulates the Archetype as the principle from which it can be expounded.[1]

1 In the work of St. Basil the Great we find the following interesting judgement about the Image of God: "The Image of God is not like an image made by man; He is alive, and, being a true, image-creating image, everything which participates in Him is an image of God. The Image of God is Christ, who, as it is written (Col. 1:15), is the image of the Invisible God" ("Adversus Eunomium," in J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 29, col. 724). The "image-creating" power of the Image of God, that is, His ontological actuality, is precisely what defines the existence of man. To see the Image of God only in Christ, of Whom it is said that He is the image of the Invisible Father, scarcely corresponds to the direct testimony of Holy Scripture, which connects this Image to the Holy Trinity: "in *our* image, after *our* likeness" (Gen. 1:26).

3

The Postulate of Triadicity and Its Dogma

THE DOGMA OF TRIADICITY IS A DIVINE MYSTERY to which human beings can have access only by means of divine revelation, and which is apprehended by means of faith. Since it bears witness to something incomprehensible to us, the dogma is not so much a formula for knowledge or consciousness as an indication of the path, of the truth, and of the whole of the religious life. The religious life *habituates itself* to dogma, and life in the church is nothing other than this self-habituation to its dogmas, a participation in the mysteries of the divine life, in its plenitude: "if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). The human being's contact with the divine frees him or her from the limits of reason, goes beyond reason, so that the supra-rationality [*sverkhrazumnost'*] of dogma is no longer an obstacle. Nevertheless, even as addressed to human consciousness—that is, to the face of reason—the dogma contains within itself a definite idea which has the significance of being a guiding thread for reason, either as a task for reason, as one of its axioms, or as both task and axiom at once. Dogma has a *philosophical meaning*. The efforts of philosophical (speculative) dogmatics are devoted to the discovery of this meaning, and, to this extent, dogmatics is also universal metaphysics. In undertaking an analysis of substance, we have come right up against the postulate of triadicity. The question stands thus: if the Absolute is Threefold Substance, the Absolute's own spiritual nature becomes intelligible for human beings through this Threefold Substance. Reason itself cannot say whether this Threefold Substance at all is, and must accept the answer of faith; yet reason looks for this answer, and the essence of the human being, which would otherwise be an inextricable paradox, demands it. Philosophy comprehends only that which it asks about, or which causes it to "wonder." The content of philosophy and its criteria are determined by the way in which it frames its problems. Philosophy's capacity to take on the meaning of the dogma of Triadicity, therefore,

is determined by the extent to which the *problem* of triadicity arises for philosophy itself internally, at least as a postulate—or, more correctly, precisely as a postulate. For if the dogma in its full content were to enter into philosophy, if it were fully immanent to philosophy, as a philosophical theorem, then it would lose its religious nature, not only as an idea or as a concept, but also as a "myth," i.e., as the evidence of things not seen. (See the introduction to *Unfading Light.*) A dogma cannot be immanent to reason, just as it may not be transcendent to it; in the latter case, it would be nonsensical, absurd, and incapable of being conceptually expressed. Dogma, even though it is incomprehensible, is none of these. Reason affords a logical projection of dogma, like a shadow; but in order even to do this much, reason must find in its own structure, in the schema of its own problems, a way of approaching dogma. To reveal this problematic of reason, to show the full lawlikeness and necessity of dogma for reason, is to reveal the philosophical meaning of dogma. Dogma is an essential exit for reason, is rescue from reason's antinomies and aporias. At the same time, dogma is not a reply to reason itself; any such reply would be immanent to reason, would be a result of reason. Dogma is given to reason transcendentally, that is, by means of revelation, although it can be assimilated by reason or at least given reason's blessing. In the creed which takes the name of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, we read "And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Divinity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.... So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.... And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other: none is greater, or less than another; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together: and co-equal."[1]

The absoluteness of substance in the moment of hypostaticity, in the first of its definitions, as *I*, suffers from the fact that in the disclosure of

1 I have quoted the text from the Athanasian Creed in the *Book of Common Prayer.* — *Trans.*

its own nature, of its own content, of its own logos, it comes up against the *not-I* as its own limit, and reflects upon itself from this *not-I*. The *I* depends upon a *not-I* which confronts the *I* as givenness. Therefore the *I* cannot be absolute, even though it wishes, and cannot even not wish, to be absolute.

The *I* would remain an *I* even in the *not-I*, in its predicate, if it were possible to possess the *not-I* as an *I* which would *at the same time* be a *not-I*. Such a task was precisely what Fichte's thought demanded, and he sought an exit from it with the help of the distinction between the absolute I and the relative *I* which emerges from it and which is connected to the *not-I*. Nevertheless, given the monohypóstaticity within which Fichte's philosophy always remained strangely imprisoned, there is no way out of this difficulty. The way out is shown only by the Christian dogma of the Father, the everlasting begetter of the Son who is the Second Hypostasis of the Divinity.

The *not-I* ceases to limit the absoluteness of the substance of the *I* only if it is also an *I* which remains at the same time a *not-I*—if, that is, it has within itself some new element which reveals the hypostasis. Can there be such a relation, in which the *not-I*, the predicate, the Logos, would be at the same time *I* and *not-I*, would reveal an *I* which it does not limit, which would dwell in the father's bosom, whilst at the same time being a manifestation and image of his Hypostasis? Might the Logos of the I, His predicate, possess such characteristics? In other words, might the Logos of the Divinity, His Matter [*Soderzhanie*], His Word be such an I and *not-I*, both remaining within the I and being an I for itself, being not merely its own reflection in a mirror, a bad infinity of self-reflection, I = I = I = I, but something unconditionally new for the first I? This could not come about through the simple *positing* of a *not-I* within the I, for the *not-I* is limitation at the same time as being expression, but it can come about as a *spiritual begetting*. This is the mystery of the Hypostases of the Father and of the Son.

What is this *begetting*? It is clear that it cannot be exhaustively defined in the language of concepts, but can only be described, for it is a living act which is in its essence something not susceptible of being investigated. What is more, we are speaking here not of begettings or of begottennesses, but of *begetting itself*, of the Father from whom all fatherhood began. (Spiritual) begetting is an act in which the one begotten, the Son,

is not separated from the Father, but remains in the bosom of the Father and, at the same time, reveals to the Father the Father's own self. "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30); "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son" (Mt. 11:27); "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 14:7). Between the Father and the Son a complete identity is established, yet their hypostases are at the same time distinct. By his own act of begetting, the Father reveals Himself; yet he accomplishes this by begetting his Beloved Son. Father and Son are united in a single Divinity, and Love unites Them hypostatically. The Father loves the Son and renders everything unto Him, and the Son loves the Father and creates nothing in which he does not see the creating Father. The Son is begotten out of the essence of the Father, but in such a way that the Father suffers no detriment of any kind to his own absoluteness, for this begetting is an eternal begetting, which must be understood not as having been accomplished and concluded on some particular occasion, but as an act which is continually being accomplished and which exists in all its moments: as Augustine says, *semper gignit Pater, et semper nascitur Filius* [the Father is always begetting, and the Son is always being born]; He is born, and, at the same time, is not separated, but dwells inseparably (ἀδιαστάτως [*adiastatōs*]) in the bosom of the Father. The Father, everlastingly, has the blessedness of begetting the Son, the Son the blessedness of the Father's love. In the creaturely world we have only the body of the begetting, its schema, and this is also why the *meaning* of this begetting is in its essence hidden from us here.

In order that the I can have itself as its own predicate, and can overcome the *not-I* in this predicate, as a limit to its own absoluteness, this *not-I* must therefore also be an I; that is, the predicate must also be a hypostasis, and must have *its own* proper subject, while this subject must also be *the same and not the same* as the first, true, subject: it must be everlastingly *begotten* in the act of the Father's and the Son's love. Everything which the Father has or "knows," he knows and loves in the Son, and everything which the Son knows and loves, He knows and loves in the Father. The indivisibility, but also the immiscibility, is a unity; but a distinction between the two hypostases is also necessarily presupposed by this relationship—by the revelation of the Father in the Son and the Son's knowledge of the Father. The distinction, moreover,

remains irreducible; it is connected, so to speak, to the metaphysical place of each of the hypostases. It is the attribute of the Father to be unbegotten (ἀγεννησία [*agennēsia*]): the beginning was from Him and He Himself without beginning (ἄναρχος [*anarchos*]) and without cause (ἀναίτιος [*avaitios*]). In this sense the Father is sometimes called God of himself, αὐτόθεος [*autotheos*], first God, πρῶτος Θεός [*prōtos Theos*], *Deus princeps*. This is why the image of the Father in us is our hypostatic I, which is self-sufficient and without beginning, which begins from itself and which issues from itself in all its self-determinations, the *noumenon* of human nature.

The personal attribute of the Son, by contrast, is in His being a begotten, beloved Son: "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth" (John 5:20). He is the Only-begotten Son, who dwells in the bosom of the Father, the true Son. The personal attribute of the Son is begottenness—γέννησις [*gennēsis*], *generatio* (but sometimes it is also expressed with more general appellations, illustrating the way in which the Son proceeds from the Father: προβολή [*probolē*], *prolatio, processio, derivatio,* ἀπορροία [*aporroia*], *signatura* and with the verbs προπηδᾶν, ἐκλάμπειν, ἀναλάμπειν [*propēdan, eklampein, analampein*] and the like). God the Father and God the Son are completely equal and one as regards the Divine nature, and in this sense the Son is just as truly God as the Father, and they are one God, not two; but this does not prevent them from being distinct hypostases, of begetting and begottenness. On this relationship are founded the inseparability and immiscibility of both hypostases: fatherhood is inseparable from sonhood, but at the same time cannot be identified or confused with it: here is the unity of two, a dyad, ἕν διά δυοῖν [*hen dia duoin*], and such is every substance, as a unity of its own subject and predicate.

Here then is the only way in which the absoluteness, self-sufficiency, and unlimitedness of substance as hypostasis can be conserved: to overcome the *not-I* by means of a begetting does not mean to *find* or to "posit" the *not-I* as one's own predicate or definition, but to *beget* it in and out of oneself, as one's own proper second hypostasis. This is the only way to get out of the closed, burning hot circle of the I, whilst conserving its freedom and absoluteness: to become (for the time being) dihypostatic, to double the I. But the creaturely, monohypostatic *I* cannot think of itself in any other way than in the *singular* number. It does not know

or permit of any doubling, and it pays for this with the tragedy of the powerlessness of its absoluteness, for, whilst conscious of itself as absolute and limitless, it turns out in each of its acts of self-definition to be relative. This second, doubled I, the I-*not-I*, is the Son, who reveals the Father to Himself and is the Father's own predicate.

The postulate of fatherhood and sonhood leads beyond the circle of the logic of the I. It breaks that circle, and the circle cannot accommodate this postulate. Yet at the same time, it is sufficiently evident to reason (even if reason has not fully understood it) that *if* such a begetting were at all possible and had taken place, then it, and only it, would settle the difficulty. Reason can tell us nothing about whether such a begetting is possible or whether it exists—even though reason comes up against the antinomy of the absoluteness and relativity of the I, and reason itself points *beyond* itself towards the plenitude of Divine existence, towards the Archetype. The predicate, the word of every *I* about itself, points to the hypostatic predicate, the Word, which "was with God and was God" (John 1:1). The Son reveals the Father to Himself, is His own Word, and the Father loves the Son and what is revealed by Him and in Him—that is, *everything*, for "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3), "all mine are thine, and all thine are mine" (John 17:10). The Son reveals what He sees in the Father, His wisdom, goodness, power, and glory.

Is the mystery of the divine begetting of the Son by the Father thus comprehensible to us? Not at all. May its philosophical meaning, however, be brought closer to reason? May this meaning be penetrated by that light by means of which this mystery can illuminate its own problem? Yes, absolutely. Philosophy, of course, sought only to comprehend the identity of subject and object, to remove the everlasting contradiction and discord between them. And the philosophy of identity can find its true path only in the dogma of the Father and the Son. The philosophers of identity sought identity by *cancelling* contradiction, by immersing contradiction in the twilight of the absolute. But the only identity which is not an indistinguishable void, but is instead a unity in difference and in concretion, is a spiritual begetting, Father-Son.

We, earthly fathers and children, have only that light which is reflected to us from true and archetypal fatherhood and sonhood. Spiritual

begetting is inaccessible to us,[2] although everything in our own earthly human fatherhood brings us closer towards it. If, however, we bring together all our own spiritual forces in the apotheosis of fatherhood and sonhood, we are able to perceive all the uniqueness and specificity of this relationship, which differs both from creation and from making things in one's own image. In begetting there is the joy of finding another and yet also a kindred I, the father in the son and the son in the father; of coming out of one's own *I* not into a *not-I*, but into an *I*, an act of substantial love. In this sense, the features of the image of God are traced in human fatherhood and sonhood, although the image is obscured by earthly begetting.

Let us then repeat: the begetting of the second *I*, instead of being the "positing" of the *not-I*, the living predicate, the Son, is an answer to the question of the synthesis of the *I* and the *not-I* which is completely unforeseeable by the logic of the separate, solitary, mono-hypostatic *I*, for there is nothing but the *not-I* outside this solitary *I*. Nevertheless, this answer does not contradict the nature of the *I*, which, as we know, is both individual and collective [*individual'no-soborno*] and to which is given consciousness of the other *I*, together with its own self-consciousness and simultaneously with it. In revealing its own predicate and in laying bare its own nature, the *I* at the same time reveals its own breadth and depth, which is why, at the same time as the *not-I*-predicate, there also appears an *I*-predicate, that is, a son.

There is nothing extraordinary or abnormal for reason here in the fact that the act of the begetting of the Son is not in and of itself intelligible to reason. Every concrete, individual *fact* is, thanks be to God, in this sense unintelligible to reason, without its thereby becoming irrational or anti-rational. It does not belong to reason to "posit," by means of its own "deduction," whatever is beyond the limits of purely logical postulation or deduction; so that reason judges of the fact *post factum*, not *ante factum*.

2 "Thou hearest of begetting; do not seek to know what sort of begetting" (Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 20); "thou desirest an explanation of how there is begetting. The begetting Father and the begotten Son know this" (Nazianzen); "God, because he is non-temporal, without beginning, impassible, inexhaustible, incorporeal, unique and without end, begets in a non-temporal way, without a beginning, without passion, without copulation, and his incomprehensible begetting has neither beginning nor ending" (Jean Damascène, *La Foi Orthodoxe*, ed. B. Kotter et al., 2 vols. [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2010] [Sources Chrétiennes, 535, 540], 1:170 [i. 8]).

And only Kant could be so deranged as to ascribe to the schemas of reason a power to prohibit—and consequently, by means of the law of causality, to abolish—the possibility of any new event in the chain of causes, having ruled out on this basis any new act of creation and any miracle. The fabric of causality is much more elastic than it appeared to Kant to be. And only the power of Hegel's delusions about reason's grandeur could have permitted him to take it into his head to declare that everything actual is rational, in so far as it is a self-determination of reason. Reason does not come first, but second; it defines and registers being, but does not confer power upon it. Hence reason cannot say anything either for or against the begetting of the Son out of the bosom of the Father, but it can accept and interpret this begetting as a *fact*, in so far as this fact is testified to by faith and is proclaimed by religious dogma.

The Dyad, however, does not exhaust Substance, which determines itself as triune. The subject is connected to the predicate by the copula; the predicate possesses only the form [*obraz*] of being, not the force of being, not being itself. To absolute substance must belong absolute being, and (it goes without saying) in absolute unity, plenitude, and force, distinct from any relative being or becoming. And is it necessary to add that if the predicate is itself the hypostatic, divine Word, then to Him must also belong absoluteness of being, life, sentience, power, whereas none of this can be conferred by a relative form of being? At the same time it is clear that if the predicate, the Word, is hypostatic, then the third determination of Divine substance, *Being*, cannot be impersonal and passive either. If the Son is hypostatic, His Being must be hypostatic too. Here too, of course, it is not a matter of "deducing" or of "positing," but of dogmatic givenness. Yet this givenness is quite easy and natural; it enters into thought as if with logical obligatoriness and as if thought were compelled to accept it. For with the begetting of the Son, the procession of the hypostatic Holy Spirit is already given. In the hypostatic form [*obraz*] of the second moment of substantiality is foreordained the hypostaticity of the third as well. Being is able to absolutize itself and to integrate its own endless succession only in the absolute form of the hypostasis, by becoming an I. It is the ontological place of the hypostasis of being to be the third hypostasis. The third hypostasis closes the circle, unifying the first two hypostases by

giving the domain of being to the first and the force of being to the second. The definition of substance can by no means be exhausted by two hypostases and their reciprocal relationship, since the whole form of being is proper to begetting, but not being itself in its force. The words "[a]ll things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3), or, in the corresponding words of the creed, "by whom all things were made," signify that every *form* [*obraz*] of being was determined by Him, and that without Him and in His absence nothing exists; He is not, however, being itself, although He also *has* being in the trihypostatic unity of the Divinity. Together with the divine bliss of the *begetting* of the Son, the Father also knows the divine bliss of the *being* of the Son, of His coming to life. But this Being is also determined by an absolute hypostatic act, which the Church's dogma calls the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father to the Son or through the Son.

The procession of the third Hypostasis from the Father is just as much of a mystery of the life of the Divinity as is the begetting of the Son. The very fact of this procession cannot be explored by man; it is hidden in the depths of the divine life. But the philosophical meaning of this fact is open to reason. Hypostaticity confers absoluteness on being to just the extent that it also confers absoluteness on the predicate. Only such a hypostatic being can correspond to the absolute, hypostatic form of the Word. The nature of substance, which is revealed in *all being*, in the Being of the universal Logos, in the unity of the logical and the alogical principle, the ideal and the real principle, the intellectual and the aesthetic principle, is exhausted in the three hypostatic definitions.

The hypostatic procession of the Holy Spirit, which is the "life-giving" force of being, originates together with the hypostatic begetting of the Son. The begetting of the Son is bound up with the procession of the Holy Spirit (in a way similar to that in which a predicate, a word, an idea necessarily implies a copula, being). This procession *is an act which in its essence is implied by the begetting of the Word.* Just as a logical predicate is indivisible from the copula, so that only when taken together do they disclose the subject, so the begetting of the second and the procession of the third hypostasis are inseparably bound up with each other.

Reason, naturally, has nothing to say about *how* one ought to understand the distinction between begetting and procession, for here it is not

a question of "deducing" or of co-ordinating concepts, but of symbolic signs of the primordial givenness of the Divine life. What is more, we have some basis on which we can comprehend begetting, sonhood and fatherhood from our own human nature. When it comes to the procession of the Spirit this basis is lacking, since we who are clothed in flesh are completely without any absolute force of being proceeding from us; we know it as givenness, that is, as that which has already proceeded into the world and which is perceived by us through this world.[3]

Orthodox dogma speaks of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father. The Father is, as Dionysius the Areopagite puts it, the origin of Divinity (μόνη δὲ πηγὴ τῆσ ὑπερουσίου θεότητος [*monē de pēgē tēs huperousiou theotētos*, the sole source of super-essential divinity]).[4] God the Father is the cause, ἀιτία [*aitia*], *causa*, ἀρχή [*archē*], *principium*, *auctor*, in which is grounded the *single* principle of Divinity, the divine μοναρχία [*monarkhia*, monarchy]. In *this* sense, and only in this sense, it can be said that the Paternal Hypostasis is the first hypostasis, the image of which is our noumenal *I*, which is revealed in the predicate. The procession of the Holy Spirit (ἐκπόρευσις, ἐκπόρευμα [*ekporeusis, ekporeuma*], *processio*, πρόροδος, προβολή, πρόβλημα—ἐκπορεύεσθαι, προσελθεῖν, προιέναι [*prorodos, probolē, problema—ekporeuesthai, proselthein, proienai*]) proceeds from the Father for the same reason as the begetting of the Son; for the Father is the source of Divinity, and from the God who begets the Son proceeds also His life-giving Spirit, which lives, and which gives being. And in this relationship the Son and the Spirit proceed equally from the Father, although in different ways. The

3 "Quid inter nasci et procedere intersit... explicare quis potest?... Haec scio: distinguere autem inter illam generationem et hanc processionem nescio, non valeo, non sufficio" [Who can explain the difference between being born and proceeding? This I know: I do not know how to distinguish between being begotten, on the one hand, and proceeding, on the other; I am not adequate to the task] (Augustine, *Contra Maximinum Haereticum Arianorum Episcopum*, ii.14, in J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 42, col. 743–814, col. 770). "If the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Father, it does so not by being begotten, but by procession [ἐκπορευτῶσ (*ekporeutōs*)]. This other modality of existence is incomprehensible and unknowable, just like the begetting of the Son. We do not at all know in what this distinction consists, nor what the begetting of the Son or the procession of the Holy Spirit might be." (Damascène, *La Foi Orthodoxe*, ed. Kotter, 172; the final sentence is, however, translated from the Russian quotation given by Bulgakov, as no precise equivalent to it is found at this place in the Greek text.)

4 Pseudo-Denys, *Les Noms Divins*, ed. B.R. Suchla, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2016 [Sources Chrétiennes, 578–79], 1:382 [ii. 5]).

first hypostasis is in the position of the subject by which the predicate is disclosed, is That which truly exists [*Sushchee*] which generates that which is existing [*sushchestvuyushchee*] and which in its turn is revealed through two moments: the predicate and the copula, the Word and the Spirit. In this way, if the Paternal and Filial hypostases, the Father and Son, compose between themselves a Dyad, in the sense that they are reciprocally turned towards each other, a bi-unity of begetter and begotten, then the Son and the Spirit compose another dyad, making up the bi-unity of the predicate which reveals the nature of the Father—as Gregory of Nazianzen says, "it is common to the Son and to the Holy Spirit that they are from the Father"—and, in this sense, they stand contrasted with the Transcendent, with the Father. The Son and the Spirit are alike linked to each other through their common procession from the Father (although the manner of this procession is not the same in each case), for which reason They are dyadically unified. Between the First and the Third hypostases there also exists their own dyadic unity of procession, from the Father to the Holy Spirit. In other words, along with an essential unity and parity of divine rank[5] in the relations between the hypostases, there is also a definite sequence or distinction. Triunity does not consist of three unities indistinct from each other, as if they were numerical atoms arranged arbitrarily, but of concrete, living hypostases, which stand in a specific relationship to each other. Why, and in what sense, then, is the third Hypostasis the third, rather than a variant of the second, since both the second and the third proceed together from the essence of the Father? Here begins the Catholic divergence in the dogma of the Holy Spirit, which gives rise to the question as to the precise sense in which the character of the third Hypostasis is to be understood. This question can even be expressed as follows: is the relationship between the Father and the Holy Spirit also dyadic, similar to (although not identical with) the dyad of the Father and the Son, or is it, on the contrary, triadic, in the sense that in the place of the first limb of the Father-Son dyad, the Father, it is necessary to set a dyad: the Father and the Son *together*,

5 "Divinity is the infinite shared nature of Three infinites, where each considered in itself is God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each conserving its own personal properties, and the Three considered together are also God, the former on the grounds of a unity of essence, the latter on the grounds of a unity of origin." Gregory of Nazianzen, Oration 31, in J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 36, col. 133–71.

filioque [and the Son]?[6] This question can itself also be put as follows: is the First Hypostasis *paternal* (not in the sense that it begets, but in another sense not accessible to human reason)? Is the Father the origin both of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, or does the Third Hypostasis, instead of possessing only a single origin, proceed from both?[7] The whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in the reciprocal relations of its hypostases, hangs in the balance in this question. For the procession of the Holy Spirit, although not identical with begetting, is nevertheless connected to paternity, as to its origin. Since the source of the Holy Spirit's procession has also been extended to the Son, this procession as it were also transfers to Him a paternity, and makes of Father and Son co-originators, if not simply co-fathers of the Third Hypostasis. It goes without saying that the mysteries of intra-divine life cannot be fathomed by our propositional definitions; here, however, there is a direct contradiction of the dogma of the sempiternal begetting of the Son from the Father. If the Father is the originator of the Son through an everlasting begetting, and if He is the primordial originator of the Holy Spirit, as even the Catholics acknowledge, how is it possible to consider the First Originator as insufficient for the procession of the Holy Spirit, and to add to this act the further participation of one Begotten by this Originator?[8]

6 Bulgakov alludes to the *filioque* clause which was added to the Nicene Creed at the Third Council of Toledo (589) to specify that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and from the Son. The clause was the subject of a medieval dispute between the Roman and Orthodox churches, and is often thought of as the central doctrinal difference between the two. Bulgakov argues in his study of the Holy Spirit, *The Comforter*, that the difference between the churches over the *filioque* is by no means insuperable and that the precise nature of its significance has been misstated. See Bulgakov, *The Comforter*. — *Trans.*

7 It is true that Catholic theology introduces a distinction between the part played by the Father and that played by the Son in the procession of the Holy Spirit: "the Father is the uncaused origin or originator of the Holy Spirit who does not Himself have an originator (*causa improducta*), the origin who does not Himself have an origin (*principium inprincipiatum*), the primordial (*principalis*) source; but the Son is the origin of the Holy Spirit, an origin which is not *lacking an origin* (*causa ex causa*), an origin which depends upon the fundamental origin, the Father" (Makarij [Bulgakov], *Dogmaticheskoe Bogoslovie* [Dogmatic Theology] 1:319). However, this distinction introduces only details which do not affect the fundamental thought, which is precisely that the Father and the Son in their dyadic combination give rise to the Holy Spirit, which without doubt also contravenes the dogma of the Holy Trinity in its pure form, for on this view the Holy Trinity is also understood not as a triunity of equal individual hypostases, but as a complex, dyadic dyad.

8 The ideas of Catholic theology on this question are quite unconvincing and even strange. "If the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, the Spirit could not really be

In a word, there is no kind of internal basis for the peremptory requirements of the Catholic dogma of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it brings only confusion and a contravention of the dogma of the Holy Trinity. The order or structure of the divine Monarchy determines the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, the First Originator. From the Father who sempiternally begets the Son, the Holy Spirit too proceeds. Having revealed by means of His own Word the mystery of His Nature, the Divine All, the Father proceeds into the Spirit as life-giving force, which confers life on *everything*. The Logos is the Reason of Being, His Word; the Spirit is the Force of Being, is Life, Love, the Blessedness of Divine Being. The Father loves the Son and gives Him all that is His own, upon which the Son answers Him with an act of reciprocal love, with a recognition that "all that is Mine is Thine," and this Love becomes life, the original force of being in the Holy Spirit. It is not of course appropriate to speak of temporal succession in Divinity, in the Absolute, yet, conversely, it is quite in order to speak of an ideal succession and correlation. And the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Third Hypostasis means that Its place in the Holy Trinity is defined with reference to the already existing relationship between Father and Son; the procession of the Holy Spirit is connected to the begetting of the Son, since the Holy Spirit (as Augustine and Ambrose, for example, sometimes define it) is the Hypostatic Love of the Father for his Only-Begotten.

---

distinguished from Him, for the Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in whom all are One, are distinct from each other only in their oppositional relation. If the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, there would be no sort of oppositional relation among them; they would not be opposed, but completely separate (*essent non oppositae, sed disparatae relationes*)" (*Theologiae cursus completus* [Paris, 1841], 8:642). This naïve argument is sufficiently refuted by the suggestion of Metropolitan Makarij (*Dogmatischeskoe Bogoslovie*, 1:345): "[t]he Church has from time immemorial distinguished the Divine Persons not through this or that relation of opposition among them, but through the belief that the Father is unbegotten, the Son begotten of the Father, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father." Even more naive is an idea such as this: "[i]f the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son as well as from the Father, this would mean that the Father would be distinct from the Son in two ways, that is, first by the Son's being begotten by the Father, and second by the Holy Spirit's proceeding from the Father. But we can accept only one difference, only one peculiarity in each of the persons of the Divinity, for Its perfection consists in their having amongst them the greatest possible unity and the least possible distinction, and, consequently, in none of the Persons' having more than one distinguishing personal mark" (cited in ibid.). We cannot, however, give a full discussion of the question of the *filioque* here.

This is a correct remark, but it has been incorrectly understood, and for that reason a distorted interpretation of it was received by scholastic theology, a circumstance which led to the question whether the Holy Spirit might proceed not from one, but from two, hypostases. This question cannot, indeed, arise in relation to the second Hypostasis, who is immediately begotten from the depths of the Father and who has nothing between Himself and His Begetter. But it naturally and even inevitably arises in relation to the Third Hypostasis, precisely in so far as It is the Third, and, consequently, is to be understood with reference to the relationship between the First Two. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father in His movement to beget the Son; it is the Fatherly embrace of the Son. And this participation of the Son, through whom the Father as it were offers or occasions Himself to send the Holy Spirit, cannot be denied; on the contrary, this is precisely the meaning of the orthodox dogma of the Holy Spirit as the *Third* Hypostasis. As was explained earlier, being does not exist separately from one who exists, separately from the subject or separately from the subject's specificity, from the object. Being, on the contrary, is always concrete, is the being of something for someone, the copula. The Holy Spirit, who is the life-giver, proceeds from Him Who Exists, from the Father, in reply to the Word begotten and uttered by Him about Himself. It is the Hypostatic Being of the Father in the Son and of the Son in the Father. But Spirit's ascription jointly to the Father and to the Son, which makes it the Third Hypostasis, by no means, nevertheless, presupposes Its procession from both the Father and the Son, as the interpretation given by Catholic theology holds. The latter is right to indicate that the Hypostasis of the Holy Spirit comes third, but at the same time it also over-emphasizes the joint participation of both the first hypostases, the dyad of Father and Son, in the procession of the Holy Spirit. This must be understood not as a simple and crude combination of the two (*una spiratione*), but in a more subtle and more complex sense. It is well known that many fathers of the church refer to the procession of the Holy Spirit jointly from the Father and the Son; at such points the ambiguity of the conjunction "and" is most often replaced by a thought which, if insufficiently definite, nevertheless also introduces a descriptive expression with the requisite nuance of thought by using the preposition *chrez* [through], διά [*dia*], *per*: who proceeds from the

Father through the Son,[9] or this is replaced by yet another descriptive expression: who proceeds from the Father, but who is also "proper" (ἴδιος [*idios*]) to the Son (Athanasius).

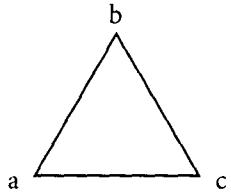
The fathers' indefinite references to the Holy Spirit's proceeding both from the Father and from the Son have to be understood in the light of these definitions and of the meaning of the theological thought harbored in them. The theological thought here is that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but towards the Son, and, in this sense, also through the Son; or it can also be expressed by saying, albeit with great imprecision and ambiguity, that the Spirit proceeds from Both, without, however, by any means forgetting the distinction between the parts played by the First and the Second Hypostases. It is impossible completely to deny the role and significance of the Second Hypostasis in the procession of the Holy Spirit, for the reason that He would otherwise not be the Third Hypostasis, but (as has already been shown) only a variant of the second, which would form, with the Father, a second independent dyad.

9 In St. Basil the Great, for example: "The Spirit appeared from God through the Son (δι' υἱοῦ πεφεγμέναι [*di' huiou pephegmenai*])"; in Gregory of Nyssa, "shining through Him (the Son), but having the cause of its being from the light of the archetype (δι' αὐτοῦ ἐκλάμπων [*di' autou eklampōn*])"; in St. Cyril of Alexandria, in whose work, in a way typical of him, both formulas are combined, and the first is understood by means of the second: "The Spirit, which has its existence from both, that is, proceeds from the Father through the Son (or is shared with the faithful) is the Spirit of God the Father and at the same time of the Son"; in St. Maximus the Confessor: "The Latins by no means recognize the Son as the cause (αἰτίαν [*aitian*]) of the Spirit, because they know that the *sole* cause of the Son and the Spirit is the Father, the first by begetting, the second by procession, and they affirm only that the Spirit was sent through the Son—δι αὐτοῦ προιέναι [*di' autou proienai*]"; and in St. John Damascene: "The Holy Spirit is not the Son of the Father, but the Spirit of the Father, and proceeds from the Father. He is also the Spirit of the Son, but not because he is from Him, but because he proceeds through Him from the Father, for there is one Cause—the Father." For many testimonies from the fathers of the church, with varying shades of meaning, see Metropolitan Makarii's *Dogmaticheskoe Bogoslovie*, 1:302 ff.; B. Silvestre's *Dogmaticheskoe Bogoslovie*, vol. 2; the Catholic *Theologiae cursus completus*, vol. 8 (*de Trinitate*); and the works of Zernikav on the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, etc. Compare also the well-known essay of Prof. V.V. Bolotov.

Translator's note: Khoruzhij, ed. cit., 579, gives further details of some of these sources: Bishop Silvestr (Malevanskij), *Opyt pravoslavnogo dogmaticheskogo bogosloviya s istoricheskim izlozheniem dogmatov* [Attempt at an orthodox dogmatic theology, with a historical exposition of the dogmas], 5 vols. (Kiev, 1878–91); Adam Zernikav, *Ob iskozhdenii Sv. Dukha* [On the Procession of the Holy Spirit] (Königsberg, 1774–76); V.V. Bolotov, *Uchenie Origena o Sv. Troitse* [Origen's Doctrine of the Holy Trinity] (Saint Petersburg, 1879).

In such a case it would, strictly speaking, be impossible even to speak of the Holy Trinity, since the circle of Triadicity would not close; instead it would be necessary to speak of a bi-unity of Dyads, each possessing a common member, of a right angle—

—but not of a triangle:



This is why, when we speak of the presence of two dyads in the Holy Trinity, the first of the Father and the Son, and the second of the Son and the Holy Spirit, this needs to be understood not in the sense of a new division of the indivisible Trinity, but only in the sense of a distinction amongst the hypostases in their reciprocal relations. The relation of the Father to the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and has in the Father his Primordial Origin is to be understood dyadically only in a provisional sense, in contrast to the relationship between the Father and the Son, for the Father is related to the Holy Spirit which proceeds from Him in the Son or through the Son, and in this consists, although obscured and distorted, the thought of the Catholic dogma. In other words, the dogmatic consciousness of the universal Church did not yet display such sharp contours on the question of the Holy Spirit as took shape with regard to Christological questions, as a consequence of the acute sharpening of the latter in the age of the ecumenical councils; this is a task for the future (although the theological polemics of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries already discussed these questions with great precision).

In this way, to return to the problem with which we began, the problem of the riddle of human consciousness, we may find its solution only

in the Archetype—in the Triunity of tri-hypostatic Divinity, which has a single essence, for all three hypostases reveal the divine nature, and each hypostasis, while original as a hypostasis, is, as a hypostatic moment of the one Divine self-determination, inseparable from the other hypostases.[10] Or, as Gregory Nazianzen says, "the infinite conjunction of Three Infinite Ones, Each God when considered in Himself; as the Father so the Son, as the Son so the Holy Ghost; the Three One God when contemplated together; Each God because Consubstantial; One God because of the Monarchia."[11] The triplicity of the image of God is familiar and intelligible to us through the triune substantiality of our spirit. The mystery and the incomprehensibility of Absolute Substance consists not in its triunity, but in its trihypostaticity, and, by virtue of this, in the hypostatization of the three moments of indivisible Substance, and also in the origination of the hypostases through begetting and procession. As we saw previously, however, we have in this respect too an indication and a likeness in the nature of our own hypostaticity, since our *I* too is conscious of itself as an inseparable, but also immiscible moment of a certain *we*, and consequently, the *I* knows that it is not monohypostatic. This *non*-monohypostaticity of our *I*—while we can as yet say nothing more of this astonishing characteristic of our spirit—is also a *we*, and the *we* is in truth a great miracle in the *I*. The *we* awakens genuine philosophical wonder in the reason which attempts to conceive it. However, this characteristic in the *I*'s own nature cannot be understood from the *I* itself, but only by its going *beyond* and *above* itself towards the Archetype. The Most Holy Trinity is one in three and three in one. In

10 "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit," says Ambrose, "yet not three gods, but one God who has three Persons, as there is the soul as intellect, the soul as will, and the soul as memory, yet not three souls in one body but one soul which has three powers [*dignitates*], and in these three powers our inner human being reflects the Image of God in an astonishing way." "Even as God is in three persons," argues Dimitrij Rostovskij, "so the human soul is in three powers—intellect, word, and spirit. And even as the word is from the intellect and the spirit is from the intellect, so the Son and the Holy Spirit are from the Father. And even as there cannot be intellect without the word and the spirit, so the Father is never without the Son and the Holy Spirit, and could never be without them. And even as intellect, word, and spirit are three powers of the soul, yet a single soul not three souls: so Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Persons of God, yet not three Gods, but one God."

11 Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 40 on Holy Baptism, at www.newadvent.org/fathers/310240.htm (accessed 1. xii. 2019).

Its hypostaticity, the Trinity is I in each of Its three hypostases, each of which exists inseparably from the I of the other two hypostases, and at the same time the Trinity is a *We*, the mysterious oneness of many, the oneness of several, that is, of three, hypostases. The word of God itself witnesses to this, when God in the Most Holy Trinity speaks of Himself in the first person plural, that is, as a *We*.[12] I = We, Three = One: such determinations as these contradict the rational law of identity. The plural number *We* is by its nature not limited, unlike the dual number which exists in various languages for the expression of a dyadic relationship, but is open to an indefinite, unlimited plurality, a "bad infinity." At the same time, however, it is, in any given complement [*sostave*], closed within itself, since all its members are reciprocally linked by being turned towards each other in a *we*. The *we* is a ring, a circle, which, although it is of variable and undefined diameter, is completely closed, rather than being a straight line which can be broken off at any point. The question is: how many *I*s make a *we*? By its own existence, the *we* evidences the way in which the *I* goes out of itself into another *I*, and consequently this second *I*, at least, is necessary for there to be a *we*: the genius of language already expresses both *I* and *thou* in *we*. In certain languages, however (Greek, Church Slavonic), that genius singles out duality, distinguishing a dyad from a plurality by means of the dual number, as opposed to the plural. By doing this, it testifies to the fact that the dual number is not a full plural; *I* and *thou* and *thou* and *I* are not yet a fully closed *we*, but are only a preliminary step towards it. The *thou* is a path towards the *we*, the origin of the *we*, but it is not yet the *we* itself. A full *we* is something more than *I* and *thou* or than *I* in *thou*, and is also more than *thou* in *I*; it is at least three *I*s, which make up by themselves a full plural number. "For where two or three of you are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20), declares the Lord.

12 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26); "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us" (Gen. 3:22); "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:7). The same thing was shown in incarnate form in the appearance of the three strangers to Abraham, the Divine *We*. *We* as a dual number is found in the New Testament: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30); "that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22); and as a plural number, with reference to the Holy Trinity, in the Savior's promise: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

This "two or three" is, of course, not accidental in defining the power and essence of the church, that living plurality, that blessed human *we*. In accordance with the meaning of the whole of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, it is the Church that is being discussed here, and this passage defines the quantitative minimum for this *we*. First, the Lord distinguishes *two or three*, not, it goes without saying, in the sense of a tautological identity, so to speak, as an example, as if one were going to continue "or four or five," and so on, but in the sense of degrees of the *we*, of the basic *we* and the full *we*. Secondly, the first *we*, which is not a full *we*—*two*—becomes a full triunity, since the Lord himself is the *Third* (such is marriage, which is concluded "in Christ and in the Church," and which already establishes a small church; such, too, is friendship). The second *we*, *three*, is already a full *we*, human society, which, although it can also grow and increase, already contains within it the fullness of the triple number, is already the Church. In this way, *three* is the basis (and hence also the minimum) for a *we*, or, as Pythagoras, the ancient promulgator of the mystery of number, taught, "each and every thing can be defined by means of three,"[13] for *three* includes within itself the whole power of number. However, the problem of hypostaticity remains alien to Pythagoras himself, as to the whole of ancient thought, and so does any application of an interpretation of number to its solution.

In the Divine triunity of the Holy Trinity is given the full *We*, complete and enclosed within itself. This is by no means yet the case with the dyad, the even number, which the Pythagoreans correctly judged as an undefined, feminine, and unstable number, standing in need of an uneven number for its completion and consummation. This is correct also in relation to the question which interests us: the diremption of *I* and *we* without doubt destroys the enclosedness, the abstractedness, and the isolation of the I, and also destroys the impotence and

13 Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, I, 1: καθάπερ γάρ φασι καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι, τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὰ πάντα τοῖς τρισὶν ὥρισα. τελευτὴ γὰρ καὶ μέσον καὶ ἀρχὴ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἔχει τὸν τοῦ παντός, ταῦτα δὲ τὸν τῆς τριάδος [*kathaper gar phasi kai hoi Puthagoreioi, to pan kai ta panta tois trisin hōrisa. teleutē gar kai meson kai arkhē ton arithmon hekhei ton tou pantos, taura de ton tēs triados*]. "For, as the Pythagoreans say, the universe and all that is in it is determined by the number three, since beginning and middle and end give the number of the universe, and the number they give is the triad." Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 1:447–511; 447.

incompleteness of the *I* which are linked to these, for *I* is an *I* only in, with, and through the *we*, and *vice versa*. The *Thou* is the *I*'s window on to another monad, a window which Leibniz failed to notice; it is this which reveals the embrace of two in one. But unity still predominates too strongly here. The *I* looks at itself in the *thou*, but sees in it only another *I*, its own mirror; it can come to a halt as it were in mid-step before this mirror-like bi-unity, and the *we* simply remains incompletely revealed, half-accomplished. What is needed is a simple *I* which carries this transition through to its conclusion, which leads the *I* into the *we* by standing face to face not only with a solitary *thou* but also with the *Thou* as such, for a second iteration of the *thou* also destroys this solitariness. The *I* and the *thou* constitute an incomplete, restricted *we*, in which the nature of the *we* has not been fully accomplished. The *I* sees itself in the *thou*, as in its own mirror, and to a certain extent it is still aware of the *thou* only as itself, but as appearing outside itself. In a certain sense, the *I* posits the *thou* for itself, as its own *not-I*, appearing on this particular occasion as a *thou*. Here the *I* has thus not yet completely emerged from itself, since the dyad *I-thou* is merely the first and most basic form of the overcoming of the *I* and of a progression *beyond* and *out of* the I—family and friendship. However, if this emerging comes to a stop, and if the *I* hardens within this dyad, then what results is an egoism *à deux*, and the *I*'s emergence from itself through the *thou* to the *we* does not take place. For this reason, the *I-thou* dyad finds its own justification and meaning only in a further development *beyond* the dyad—in other words, as a link in the plural chain of the *we*. The third *I*, or the second *thou*, already removes the possibility of a *mirror-like* relationship between the *thou* and the *I*, of a dyadic egoism. Besides the *thou*, which is *immediately* correlated with the *I*, appears the *we*, which already subsists *outside of* this direct and to some extent mirror-like correlation, yet at the same time *enters into* this correlation, unifying the *I* and the *thou* and at the same time maintaining their distinctness and removing any mirror-like quality. The second *thou*, or the third *I*, brings the *we* to completion. All further *thou*s present the possibility, but not the necessity, of a *we*, and this plurality is of a triune kind, introducing no new elements into the structure of the *we*. This is why the plurality of human hypostases, the *we*, is simply an image of Divine triunity come true: three *I*s in a *We*.

The peculiarity of the third *I* in relation to the first and the second lies in the fact that it completes their coupling; it opens up the fullness of *we* for the *I* and the *thou*. If, in the dyad, the *I* exists only for the *thou*, and the *thou* for the *I*, here an *I* appears which is a *thou-too* (and indeed an *I-too*), an Also as such in relation to these *two*. By moving the point from which it starts, the triad (or plurality) can possess each *I* as an *I-too* or as an *I-thou*, that is, as a *co-I* or a *co-thou*. In grammatical terms, this situation is expressed by the *third* person pronoun, *he*, which also has a plural number, *they*; to it answers the *we*, that is, many *co-I*s, or *you (plural)*, that is, many *co-thou*s. (The third person, of course, also has a dual number in some languages.) In grammar, the third person, generally speaking, is ambiguous, and, for this reason, it harbours the danger of subreptions; Adam's fall into sin weighs the third person down. In its genuine, personal sense, it can signify only *thou-too*, as a further possibility of the *I-too*. True, it leaves the *thou-too* half-shadowed, half-realized, as if waiting for its turn, and hence tarrying in a certain incompleteness in the accomplishment of personhood, yet at the same time it is the necessary background for a full and definitive realization of the *I* and the *thou*, which, in bringing themselves into being, bring the third person into being too. In a word, the third person really is the *third* person, which necessarily presupposes *before* itself and *with* itself the first and the second persons, and which, at the same time, harbours within itself the possibility of realizing the first and the second persons, and, in this way, contains them. The *he* is, in this sense, a mystical gesture which expresses a *third I*, that is, the fulfilment of the solidary [*sobornoj*] nature of the *I*, of its pluri-unity. And only in this sense is *he* a personal pronoun. Yet in the *he* a certain catastrophe is also taking place, a fall from the proper sphere: the personal pronoun is dirempted, and acquires an impersonal significance, an a-personal, demonstrative, relative significance. Grammatically and logically, this is only a development of the personal pronoun, but ontologically what is happening here is a leap from persons to *things*, from the personal to the thing-like. The person is objectified; the subject becomes an object; a living, hypostatic relationship of person to person, which, interiorly and essentially, is love, becomes a relationship of a person to an object; the hypostasis freezes into the hardened form of the *he*, into a cold non-love instead of a hypostatic relationship. It can be said that the whole life

of that which is evil in the world is built according to the categories of the *I*'s self-love, an *I* rent asunder from the *we* and knowing the *thou* only as its own mirror, and of a demonstrative, objectifying *he*, which is mingled with the objects of the world as the *not-I* (the position of Fichte's science of knowledge). In truth this is a monstrous abuse, which is the consequence of a universal unfeelingness, and of the scarcity of love in the sinful human being. To a living and loving understanding of the *we*, there are no dead, but only the living; there is no *he*, which could never go together with a *thou* and which could never, as a *he*, enter into a *we*. In this lies the fundamental difference between the *Church* and every human association (we find the extremest expression of this objectification of the hypostasis in the way in which the very problem of personhood is altogether absent from the radical sociological determinism seen in Owen, Marx, and the like).

The Divine Triplicity is determined by the internal life of the Divinity, which reveals itself tri-hypostatically in the begetting of the Son by the Father and in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father to the Son. Yet at the same time this triplicity also reveals with exhaustive completeness the nature of hypostaticity, I as *We*, in so far as three I's are already a complete *We*, and no more is required for the sake of its plenitude. The image of God shines forth not only in the nature of the human being, but also in the human being's hypostaticity, in the solidarity [*sobornost'*] and catholicity of the nature of our I, which of its own nature always requires a collective [*derzhat' sobor*]. And in this sense it can be said that the Holy Trinity furnishes the Archetype not only of the nature of an individual human being, but also of human community, that is, of the human *we*. Man exists in many individuals, who possess not merely a similar, but actually a single, common, nature. Man is a single Adam, even though the children of Adam have many faces. In this sense medieval realism (which is essentially only a repetition of the substance of the Platonic theory of ideas) is the truth itself: general concepts possess reality as universal predicates (ideas) of multiple subjects, and man, humanity, is the common predicate for all human hypostases or subjects. Adam (the old Adam) is the universal human being or humanity as such, and the new Adam, Christ, is truly the Man, who, by becoming incarnate, took on human nature. This renovated nature was as it were a new shared predicate for human hypostases. In

human beings, however, the image of Divine hypostaticity appears only to the extent that humanity's human, creaturely nature can contain it. In place of tri-hypostaticity, without separation and without confusion, what inheres in man is mono-hypostaticity, which isolates and surrounds itself with the line of the *not-I*, and if it goes beyond this line, it arrives in the plural infinity of society, the human *we*.

For the Divine Trinity, the I and the *We*, which possesses in Itself a consummate plenitude of hypostaticity, the creation of new *I*s, of human hypostases, in whom God desires to have for Himself *other* selves in his likeness, is purely and entirely an act of munificence towards and love for humanity, a gift given by Divine Love, and by It alone. It is by no means an act of metaphysical necessity or of some kind of divine fate, which *modi* adhering to substance would, say, bring about *more geometrico*. Each new hypostasis who emerges beyond the Divine Plenitude could in a certain sense *not have been*; there is in them as such no ontological necessity for their being. They are *created* by Divine love and omnipotence (which, as such, is situated *beyond* any antithesis between freedom and necessity), for the Wisdom of God's "delights were with the sons of men" (Proverbs 8:31); "God reposes in His saints."[14] The God of Love was willing, of His ineffable love and kindness, to light from His Light innumerable myriads of spiritual suns or stars, that is, hypostases, not only in the human world, but also in the angelic world—"in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Angels do not possess in themselves, in its fullness, the tri-hypostatic image of God which the human being possesses, but they possess within themselves the image of Divine hypostaticity; they are hypostases. And hypostatic being is also given to the human being, a god "by the grace of God." The one trihypostatic God begot Divine sons, multiplied Himself in them, became a *We* with them, and received them into His Divine *We*. This was accomplished both through the original begetting of the human spirit from out of God's essence ("and man became a living soul," Gen. 2:7), and through the introduction of Humanity into the Divine Trinity in the hypostasis of the Son, who indeed became man and rose in the flesh from earth

14 Khoruzhij (ed. cit., p. 579) notes here an allusion to the Church Slavonic text of Isaiah 57:15 ("For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones").

to heaven. "That they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee" (John 17:21). The ineffability of the Divine love and kindness, which appears in the creation of new hypostases, created gods, in this venturing beyond the bounds of His own trihypostaticity, sequestered and absolute within itself, exceeds all thought: it is from this amazing miracle of God's love that all the other miracles of His omnipotence derive their significance. The Lord can by His word create worlds, yet the human soul, the hypostasis, is better than the whole world, and, in order that it might be saved, the Good Shepherd leaves heaven and its glory and takes upon himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7). And the fact that God says *thou* to human beings, that He by His Word acknowledges, and, consequently, creates the human being's personhood, and the fact that He gives to the human being, to a created being, the power to approach God as *Thou* (by teaching him to pray to Him as a Father: "Our Father, who *art* in heaven"), that is, He accepts a creature into the Divine *We*, this is a miracle of God's charity, a miracle more stupendous than all the starry worlds and abysses of the universe. And this new, created *we*, the heavenly host of angelic hypostases together with humankind in all its peoples, forms an ontologically singular multi-hypostatic *unity*, which overcomes the many-facedness of the one human nature, and reveals this unity as the *Church*.

The Most Holy Trinity proceeds from the absoluteness of triunity to the multiplicity of hypostases, which is unified in the Church. If God begets, in and through the Church, innumerable hypostases, the Lord himself has the Church not as Divine, but also not as extra-Divine (or created); not as Absolute, yet also not as relative. The essence of the Church lies on the very border between absoluteness and non-absoluteness, between Divinity and creatureliness. This is the Divine Sophia, the Wisdom of God, the intellectual world, the object of the trihypostatic Love of God, the Divine *All*, as an intellectual organism of Divine ideas, the heaven of heavens. That which the Son reveals in God the Father as His might and His word, and that to which the Holy Spirit gives life, this *All*, being, on the one hand, the revelation of the nature of Divinity, is also at the same time the Glory of the Lord, in whose light His own inaccessible Divinity is clad, a Glory which is at one and the same time shut up in His temple and apparent in His miracles. This glory of God, which exists for God as His radiance and emanation, can be hypostatized in created

hypostases, without being itself a hypostasis (and no "fourth hypostasis" is therefore introduced into the Divinity).[15] But these created hypostases already go beyond the bounds of the plenitude of the Divine triplicity, of the Divine *I-We*, being in a certain sense, from the point of view of Divine absoluteness, surplus to it. Such is the property of *created* [*tvarnykh*] hypostases:[16] they are *created*; they are images, and, as it were, iterations. Their foundation is not in themselves, but outside and above them — in the Archetype.

15 See my essay "Hypostasis and hypostaticity" in the collection in honor of P.B. Struve. (And see, now, Anastassy Brandon Gallaher and Irina Kuklota, ed. and trans., "Protopresbyter Sergii Bulgakov: Hypostasis and hypostaticity: scholia to *The Unfading Light*," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 49:1–2 [2005]: 5–46. — *Trans.*)

16 A strikingly clear intimation of the meaning of the triad and the tetrad is found amongst the Pythagoreans, who saw in the tetrad something like a compressed created ALL. The tetrad contains within itself the plenitude of number, its life, its mysterious source and root; the tetrad harbors within itself a whole decade (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10). The first square and the first complex number, the tetrad is neither a product nor a sum; it contains within itself the positive strength of begetting, the reproduction of number. The corners of the square quadrilateral were consecrated to the great mother-goddesses: Rhea, Demeter, Aphrodite, Hera, Hestia. Four is the first positively feminine number. The triad is the radical origin of disclosure, the number of showing, while four is the origin not of outer appearance alone, but itself signifies the essence in appearances. See Prince S. Trubetskoj, *Metafisika v drevnej Grezii* [*Metaphysics in ancient Greece*] (Moscow, 1890), 201–2.