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The Logic of Palamism

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Abstract:

The teaching of St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) is usually considered as a paradigmatic case of Eastern Christian mystical theology. It is held that it goes beyond rational thinking and is based on antinomic premises. Contrary to this widespread view, I try to give a consistent account of two crucial ideas of Palamism: the distinction between essence and energies, and the concept of deification. In doing this, I discuss and develop some formal analyses by Pavel Florensky (1882–1937). It proves that Palamas' teaching is no less rational than any other metaphysical theory. This result casts a new light on the alleged irrational character of Eastern Christian theology, which aspect is sometimes thought to be an obstacle in the dialog between the West and the East.

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1. Introduction

The teaching of St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) is widely considered both as the peak of traditional patristic and Byzantine theology and also as the main source of contemporary Orthodox theology. The status of Palamas in the Christian East may be comparable only with the position of St. Thomas Aquinas in the West. The teaching of these two masters is often contrasted. Palamas is usually presented as a perfect example of the dominant eastern trend of mystical theology based on experience, whereas Aquinas is thought to be a paradigmatic case of a typical western rational and conceptual theology. If one takes into account that Palamas was involved into a long-lasting struggle with Barlaam of Calabria, who was supposed to be a Thomist, the contrast between these two great figures reflects difficult relationships between the Eastern and Western Christendom.

One of the most popular opinions on Eastern Christian theology is that it goes beyond rational thinking: at least much further than the Western one. Indeed, many commentators suggest that the teaching of St. Gregory Palamas cannot be squeezed into a tight schema of western rationality. Particularly, his crucial distinction between the essence and energies of God is often seen as antinomical, both by his critics and his followers. Orthodox archbishop Basil Krivoshein, one of the main advocates of Palamism in the 20th century, remarked: 'Here we are faced with a theological antinomy which, in view of the whole tendency of Gregory's teaching, must be taken to have ontological [...], objective character' (*Krivoshein* 1938, p. 140). The same opinion was formulated by Vladimir Lossky, a theologian who considerably popularized Palamas in the West: 'We are taken in the presence of an antinomic theology which proceeds by oppositions of contrary but equally true propositions' (*Lossky* 1974, p. 51). Finally, archbishop Yannis Spiteris, a

contemporary Catholic scholar, warns his western readers that ‘Palamas uses concepts, which are contradictory, though consistent in God’ and therefore,

approaching the problem of Palamism using intellectual categories—the attitude, which is sometimes present in discussing famous Palamitic distinction between essence and energy—is not the best method (*Spiteris* 1996, p. 96).

I would like to challenge this popular view. Generally, I believe that theology of the Eastern Church is no less rational than western thinking. Particularly, I shall discuss here the notorious Palamistic essence/energies distinction and the concept of deification in order to extract deep logic underlying Palamas’ theology. It will be shown that there is nothing especially inconsistent in Palamism. This paper continues my attempts to provide a logical analysis of some crucial ideas of the Orthodox theology (*Roek* 2010; *Rojek* 2010a).

I am not a pioneer in a logical analysis of Palamism. It was father Pavel Florensky (1882–1937) who, exactly a century ago, in 1913, first attempted to analyze in a formal way the Palamas’ distinction between essence and energy (*Florenskij* 2000, pp. 268–274), and discuss the logical definition of identity in the context of Orthodox teaching on deification (*Florensky* 2004, pp. 53–79, 365–374). As far as I know, after Florensky’s death in a Soviet Labor Camp in 1937, nobody continued his project.¹ Therefore, I shall take his analysis as my starting point.

First, (§2) I will briefly present the historical background of the discussion, dogmatization, falling into oblivion, and finally rediscovering Palamas’ teaching. Then, I will outline the essence/energies distinction and the concept of deification of man (§3). The two elements of Palamism derive directly from the religious experience in which God reveals himself and unites with man. Next, I will undertake to analyze these two topics, starting with Florensky’s formal remarks (§4–5). I will propose a plain formalization of essence/energies distinction, and discuss some issues concerning identity and indiscernibility that are crucial for the analysis of deification. In Conclusion, (§6) I shall highlight the specific character of Palamas’ philosophy, which falls into the category of ‘theological philosophy’ (*Rojek* 2009), that is a philosophy which draws its basic concepts and axioms from theology².

2. Historical Remarks

The theory of essence and energies, however philosophically or even physically it may sound, originally is of no philosophical nature. The essence/energies distinction was formulated in the 14th century to solve some strictly theological problems connected with religious practice and experience of the pious Byzantine monks called *hesychasts*. Strikingly enough, the teaching of Palamas was rediscovered in the 19th century when dealing with another controversy, namely the practice of the Orthodox monks called *onomatodoxists*.

2.1. Hesychasm

Hesychasts developed a technique of prayer, consisting of concentrating mind and body in silence. Monks practising hesychasm maintained that during long praying some of them experienced a vision of ‘divine light’ (*Krivoshein* 1938; *Meyendorff* 1998; *Mantzaridis* 1984; *Spiteris* 1996). This practice raises controversies in two points: first, concerning the role of body in the spiritual life, and second, the very possibility of experiencing God. Palamas’ anthropology and metaphysics provided a theoretical explanation of the possibility of hesychastic religious experience.

Palamas formulated his doctrine during fierce and long-lasting polemics with his three opponents: Barlaam of Calabria, Gregory Akindynos and Nicefor Gregoras. The discussion started with Barlaam’s severe criticism of hesychasts’ practice. He objected to the involvement of body in praying, and argued that since God remains essentially unknowable and inexperienceable, the reported light could not be divine. Palamas, a seasoned monk from Mount Athos, retorted in his

most famous work *The Triads* (1983, 2003), where he argued for the integral character of a human being on one hand, and for the distinction between unknowable essence and knowable energies in God on the other. The other two opponents argued not against hesychasm in general, but rather against Palamas' own theory, thus giving him a stimulus to clarify his doctrine in *Treatises* (2007) and the final systematic work *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters* (1988). As usual in Byzantium, this theological dispute was instantly linked with political, national, dynastic, ecclesiastical and class struggles, and consequently, Palamas, as well as his followers, got embroiled in a civil war.

Eventually, Gregory Palamas celebrated a great triumph as in 1341, 1347 and 1351, local councils in Constantinople officially confirmed his teaching and, in turn, condemned Barlaam's, Akindynos' and Nicefor Gregoras'. In 1352, the decree on Palamism was included in *Synodikon*, a concise summary of Orthodox faith read out in all churches on the second Sunday of Lent called 'The Triumph of Orthodoxy'. As a result, 'hesychasm and its Palamite interpretation became the official theology of the Orthodox world' (*Bradshaw* 2004, p. 235). Palamas died as the archbishop of Thessalonica, and swiftly was canonized. The Orthodox Church venerates him on a very prestigious day in the liturgical calendar, namely on the third Sunday of Lent.

There are many interpretations of the controversy over hesychasm. The Orthodox tradition likes to perceive it as a struggle between the West and the East, Philosophy and Theology, Rationalism and Mysticism, Paganism and Christianity. A great Russian Orthodox philosopher, Aleksej Losev, wrote in the 1920s:

In the persons of Barlaam and Akindynos Orthodox Church has condemned the whole Renaissance, which has just begun, and in which all western nations engaged, perhaps to the end of their existence, since the western man without Renaissance would not be western anymore. Barlaamic dualism along with the grow of rationalism becomes Cartesianism and Occasionalism; with the grow of subjectivism [...] it becomes Kantianism, and with the fall of the sense of the transcendent becomes Positivism, etc. (*Losev* 1993a, pp. 872–873).

Other commentators were usually less radical, though, in general, they saw Barlaam and Palamas as two distinct figures representing the West and the East, as well as Reason and Faith. The debate between them was interpreted, for example, as a clash between western thomistic and eastern patristic theologies (*Lossky* 1957, pp. 76–77, 220), western kataphatic and eastern apophatic traditions (*Krivoshein* 1938), western rational and eastern experimental theology (*Meyendorff* 1983, p. 13; 1983, p. 139), and so on.

In view of new historical research, some of these opinions must be revised. There can be no doubt that Barlaam was not an 'eastern thomist'; he knew scholasticism only poorly, and if he had been influenced by some western thinkers, it would rather have been St. Augustine than St. Thomas (*Bradshaw* 2004, p. 230). Some western authors even hold that Thomism virtually agrees with Palamism (*Mascall* 1971; *Siemianowski* 1993). At any rate, western influences on Barlaam should not be exaggerated. The polemic between Barlaam and Palamas, as even Lossky (1964, p. 126) finally admitted, was an internal discussion between the two eastern traditions, not simply between the West and the East.³

Nevertheless, scholars usually agree that the most important issue in the debate was the role of rational thinking in theology, and most of them would agree with Vladimir Lossky:

It was a conflict between mystical theology and a religious philosophy, or, rather, a theology of concepts which refused to admit what seemed to it to be an absurdity, foolishness. The God of revelation and of religious experience was confronted with the God of the philosophers, on the battlefield of mysticism, and, once again, the foolishness of God put to naught the wisdom of man (*Lossky* 1957, p. 221).

In my opinion also this popular view should be revised. First of all, contrary to the opinion of his opponents, Palamas was a very well educated and capable philosopher. Before he became a monk, he studied in Constantinople and was famous for his deep understanding of philosophy. His biographer noted that once, on the occasion of a public discussion on Aristotle's logic, Palamas'

teacher exclaimed in the presence of the emperor: ‘If Aristotle himself had been here in flesh and blood, he would have praised him’ (Meyendorff 1998, p. 29). Even when Palamas argued against ‘secular wisdom’, he did it with a sound knowledge of it. The controversy with Barlaam and others was, therefore, a struggle between two different philosophies, and not simply between theology and philosophy. Moreover, it was Barlaam who really denied human cognitive power, not Palamas, since Barlaam respected secular sciences while holding that they could not give true knowledge of God. On the contrary, Palamas did not value human wisdom, but was much more optimistic as regards the capacities of human cognition. After all, a close examination of Palamas teaching shows that there is nothing especially irrational in it, and in the following parts of the study, I will try to prove it.

2.2. Onomathodoxy

The works of Gregory Palamas were practically forgotten for hundreds of years. He was known solely for his popular ascetical writings; systematical treatises were rarely read and copied. Only at the beginning of 20th century, Orthodox philosophers and theologians rediscovered them. Palamism quickly became an intellectual foundation of the modern Orthodox theology, and provided it with the feeling of distinction from the western tradition. Palamas was first rediscovered in Russia in 1910s. The main reason was a theological controversy concerning the status of the names of God, which broke out in some Russian monasteries at Mount Athos (see Leskin 2004; Alfeev 2007).

Religious practice of pious monks of Athos again became a trigger for a theological debate. Onomathodoxists (*imâslavcy*) claimed that since the names of Gods were divine energies, therefore they were God himself. This belief, which was only a newer version of Palamism, was discussed and condemned by some Orthodox authorities. Father Pavel Florensky wrote a foreword to a book by a monk Anthony, one of the onomathodoxists’ leaders, in which he noticed a similarity between onomathodoxy and the teaching of Gregory Palamas (Florenskij 2000, p. 287–294). This issue was discussed by some Moscow philosophers, who subsequently prepared extensive works on this topic (Florenskij 2000, p. 104–363; Losev 1993a, pp. 865–900; 1993b, pp. 613–880; Bulgakov 1999; cf. Leskin 2008; Obolevitch 2011). This philosophical activity initiated the ‘vogue for Palamism’ among Russian lay intellectuals. Fr. Basil Lourié, an Orthodox theologian and a severe critic of Florensky, admitted: ‘With no doubt traces of that vogue lead to Florensky as a source’ (Lur’e 1997, p. 340).

This philosophical interest in Palamism evoked a reaction of professional theologians. Basil Krivosheine, a Russian learned monk of Mount Athos, published in 1930s an influential essay on the thought of Palamas (Krivoshein 1938). Vladimir Lossky, during World War II, gave the famous lectures on mystical theology, in which he praised Palamas’ teaching.⁴ However, the real turning point was a great work of John Meyendorff, who prepared the first modern edition of *The Triads* and an extensive introduction to the doctrine of Palamas (Meyendorff 1998). From this moment on, St. Gregory Palamas acquired in the Orthodox theology a position comparable to that of St. Thomas Aquinas in Catholicism. This parallel is not so surprising if one takes into account that Lossky and Meyendorff were students of Etienne Gilson, one of the leaders of the 20th century Neothomism.

3. The Teaching of Palamas

The aim of Gregory Palamas was an explanation of the following two related facts: revelation and deification. Both have religious character and are specific to Christianity. Palamas was not interested in general natural theology but rather tried to construct special metaphysics for Christian experience and hope. His question was: ‘What should the world be like since revelation and deification are possible?’ Since the concept of personal God, in general, and the concepts of revelation and deification, in particular, do not fit in a classical philosophical conceptual scheme,

Palamas decided to introduce some metaphysical innovations, such as the essence/energies distinction.

3.1. *Two Religious Facts*

Christian understanding of personal God assumes that although God is essentially unknowable for human beings, he may decide to reveal himself in the world. Therefore, Christianity goes beyond negative theology, and asserts that God may decide to manifest Himself. This specific concept of revelation is expressed, for instance, by St. John:

‘No one has ever seen God; the only Son [...] he has made him known’ (*John* 1:18).

Similar statements might be found elsewhere in the Scriptures. Even in the Old Testament, though God says that ‘man shall not see me and live’ (*Ex* 33:20), God ‘used to speak to Moses face to face’ (*Ex* 33:11). Ultimately, the destination of man is a full revelation of God. ‘We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is’ (1 *John* 3:2).

This last statement leads to the question of deification. Personal God may not only be manifest, but also may unite himself with human beings. Christian salvation is thought exactly as a kind of union with God. St. Peter used once quite a philosophical expression:

he [Jesus our Lord] has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that [...] you may [...] become partakes of the divine nature (2 *Pet* 1:4).

This union of man and God was described in Scripture in many ways, for instance as being ‘the temple of God’ (2 *Cor* 6:16), ‘children of God’ (*John* 1:12; *Gal* 4:7), ‘heirs of God’ (*Rom* 8:17; *Gal* 4:7), and finally simply ‘gods’ (*John* 10: 34). The patristic tradition introduced a special word for this union: deification (*theosis*) (*Mantzaridis* 1984). God, though remains essentially inaccessible, may somehow share Himself with the creatures.

Christian revelation and deification were not only theoretical premises for Palamas, they were realities experienced by monks of Mount Athos. Hesychasts believed that during their prayers God truly revealed Himself and really deified them. The teaching and experience of the Church was, therefore, the starting point of Palamas’ theology.

In order to explain the possibility of revelation and deification, Palamas introduced the distinction between essence and energies. God not only consists of one essence and three hypostases, but also of one essence and many energies, perhaps infinite number of them. Energies are distinct, yet not separable from essence. Being such, they are really God himself, though are not God’s essence. God therefore has the unknowable and inaccessible essence, and knowable and accessible energies.

Hence, energies play a double role in Palamas’ ontology. On one hand, revelation consists of energies’ manifestation, and on the other, deification means sharing the energies. Now, I would like to analyze these two aspects in details.

3.2. *The Essence/Energies Distinction*

The distinction between essence and energy was not really invented by Palamas. The concept of energy had been more or less explicitly used by the Greek Church Fathers before, not to mention Aristotle (*Bradshaw* 2004). Palamas himself willingly admitted his debt to Saint Dionysius, St. Basil and St. Maximus the Confessor. Moreover, local Constantinopolitan synod, in 1351, officially linked the essence/energies distinction with the teaching of the Sixth Council on two energies in Christ (*Losev* 1993a, p. 895). ‘It would be no exaggeration to say that patristic tradition had already formulated such a teaching in a general form, and that Palamas merely took it to its furthest conclusions’ (*Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 105). Nevertheless, during the heated discussions with opponents, Palamas developed such a detailed account of essence/energy distinction as no one has ever before.

The distinction between essence and energies seems, in fact, quite intuitive. Things manifest themselves. It is plausible to suppose that manifestations (energies) of a thing are not exhaustive. There probably is always something hidden in a thing (essence), the rest which has not been actually manifested. One thing can have many different manifestations depending on specific circumstances in which they are produced. As Pavel Florensky formulated it:

Being has its *inner* side, in which it turns to itself without involving anything else, and an *outer* side, in which it turns to other beings. These are two sides, but they are not joined to each other since they are primary unity; they are one and the same being, though turned to different directions. [...] In patristic terminology these two sides of being are called essence or substance, *ousia*, and act or energy, *energeia* (Florenskij 2000, p. 255).

Energies ‘manifest’ (*Triads* III, 2, 7), ‘present’ (II, 12), ‘express’ (II, 14) the essence. They ‘characterize or present [the essence], though do not present *what* it is, that is what it is as regard to essence’ (II, 23). Essence, though is ‘present’ in each of the energies (*Triads* III, 2, 7; *Treatises* III, 3), nevertheless ‘transcendents’ (*Triads* III, 2, 7) and ‘surpassess’ (*Treatises* II, 19) all its energies.

What are energies after all? Palamas understood them very broadly, apparently uniting a few traditional ontological categories under one label. David Bradshaw (2004, p. 273) indicated that it encompassed at least three categories: ‘realities’, ‘attributes’ and ‘operations’. For instance, in the case of God, energies include realities such as uncreated light or the gifts of the Spirit, attributes such as infinity, immortality, life, and, finally, some operations like the act of creating, providence and foreknowledge. Realities seem to be separate things, while attributes are plainly inseparable and dependent, whereas operations presumably presuppose causality. Is there a common mark of all these categories?

One way to look at Palamas is as inviting us to reconceive what have traditionally been regarded as distinct categories [...] as species within a broader genus, that of acts of self-manifestation (Bradshaw 2004, p. 273).

Indeed, Palamas introduces quite a new general category, and as yet there is no reason to object to it.

It is worth comparing Palamitic notion of energy with the traditional concept of accident. Palamas himself did it in a few passages, pointing out both similarities and dissimilarities. As John Meyendorff remarked,

Nothing shows Palamas’s main preoccupation better than these hesitations; that preoccupation was to free theology from Aristotle’s philosophic categories which were clearly inadequate worthily to express the Mystery (Meyendorff 1998, p. 225).

This also shows best, in my opinion, his strenuous attempts to formulate a new, more adequate category.

There are three crucial features of accidents (*symbebekos*): dependency, contingency and non-coextensivity (Brunschwig 1991). Contrary to substances (*ousia*), accidents are dependent constituents of a thing; contrary to properties (*idion*), they need not to belong to the substance and are not specific for just one species. What about energies? John Meyendorff (1998, p. 225) referred to the following passages from Palamas:

[energy] is neither essence, nor accident, and if some theologians have used the word “accident” that was only to show that everything in God is not essence (*Capita*, 127); accident does not always exist; energy is similar to accident in this respect since it does not always act, as well as does not always not act. Therefore energies resemble accidents in that respect, that might create or not create, but differ from accidents in this, that they cannot not exist (*Against Akindynos* VI, 21);

God [...] is able to grant the Wisdom and actually grants it [...] and He possesses it not as a property, but only as energy (*Against Gregoras* II).

It seems that these statements correspond, in turn, with the three abovementioned features of accidents. First, exactly like accidents, energies exist in a thing. Second, they differ from accidents

in respect of contingency. In some sense, energies are contingent, in the other, they are necessary. Palamas distinguished an *energeia* from the corresponding *dynamis*. *Energeia* is the use of *dynamis* (Bradshaw 2004, p. 239). Palamas wrote: ‘there is a beginning and end, if not of the creative power itself, then at least of its action’ (*Triads* III, 2, 8). Both *energeia* in this narrower sense and *dynamis* are energies in a general sense. Energies may begin and end only as a temporal realization of necessarily existing *dynamis*. In short, *energeia* resembles in this aspect accident, while *dynamis* is more like property. Third, it seems that energies are not specific for one species only, and can characterize other beings. Divine wisdom, for instance, may be transferred to human beings, so it is not a property in a strict Aristotelian sense. The similarities and differences might be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Energies and Aristotle’s categories.

	Accident (<i>symbebekos</i>)	Property (<i>idion</i>)	Energy (<i>energeia</i>)
Dependent	+	+	+
Contingent	+	—	— (as <i>dynamis</i>) + (as <i>energeia</i>)
Coextensive	—	+	—

This brief comparison reveals, I believe, that Palamas wanted to adjust traditional philosophical concepts to his purposes. Energies, in some sense, are more dynamic than properties and more static than accidents. One of the most important advantages of the category of energy is that it embraces natural as well as voluntary manifestations, and therefore fits in the concept of personal God.

The attributes-energies, to St. Gregory Palamas, by no means are abstract concepts applicable to the divine essence, but living and personal forces, [...] manifestations of personal God (Lossky 1974, p. 57).

Apparently, though Palamas went beyond the inherited philosophical tradition, he tried to adapt it to a new content, and not simply to abandon it.

I have presented the essence/energies distinction as a perfectly general ontological account. I think that there is strong evidence for this interpretation. Palamas taught: ‘The natural energy is the power which manifests every essence, and only nonbeing is deprived of this power’ (*Triads* III, 2, 7); ‘no nature can exist [...], unless it possesses an essential energy’ (*Triads* III, 3, 6; see also e.g. *Treatises* II, 14, 24). According to Palamas, all beings have its essence and energies; God is only one of the applications of this general distinction. We nevertheless owe theology the proper formulation of this distinction.

Some commentators suggested, however, that either the essence/energies distinction is applicable to God only or this distinction, in the case of God, somehow differs from the other case. On one hand, Basil Krivoshein insisted:

The distinction between substance [i.e. essence] and energy is quite different from ordinary, logically definable and classifiable distinctions which exist between created objects. More than ever, here, we must remember the antinomism of our conception of God, which does not fit into the ordinary framework of logic (Krivoshein 1938, p. 143).

On the other, Yannis Spiteris held:

We should not apply concepts of essence and energy to God in a general meaning delivered by human reason. We might apply these concepts to God only in a metaphorical way (*Spiteris* 1996, p. 55).

Both these limitations seem to me unnecessary. Palamas adopted a downward methodology. He formulated the concept of energy for the particular case of God, and then used it for other cases. Therefore, we should not hesitate to apply it to creatures as well as God. This point was clearly formulated by Pavel Florensky:

all intellectual efforts of Palamas and his followers were historically focused on a restricted domain, but in fact the principles stated by Palamists concern an immensely broader field than it might seem at first glance; indeed, it is difficult to determine where they have no application (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 272).

Palamas frequently repeated that energies are ‘not identical’ with essence, (*Triads* I, 3, 23) nor ‘distinct’ (*Treatises* II, 12), though ‘inseparable’ (*Triads* III, 2, 13; II, 3, 15; III, 1, 34; III, 2, 20; II, 3, 37; III, 1, 24; *Treatises* II, 28, 32) from it. ‘It is impossible to separate from acting nature [...] its corresponding powers and energies, even though they differ from it in other ways’ (*Treatises* I, 10).

Being distinct, and yet inseparable, is a mark of non-substantial entities. In fact, as Palamas often said, energies are not ‘hypostatic’ but ‘enhypostatic’, that is they need to be connected with a hypostasis (*Triads* II, 3, 6; III, 1, 9; III, 1, 18; III, 2, 23; *Treatises* II, 10). In other words, energies are ontologically dependent on their essence. That is why they are so tightly connected with essence; dependency is the best known ‘ontological glue’ (*Mertz* 1996). Dependent entities are exactly distinct, yet not separable entities.

Palamas, in many passages, pointed at the ontological dependency of the energies.

Energy descends from essence, not essence from energy. The former is a cause, the latter is an effect; the former exists on its own, the latter does not exist on its own (*Treatises* II, 10).

He [God] gives them [energies] existence, but He does not receive its existence from them (*Triads* III, 2, 25).

Finally, essence and energies are analogous to Sun and sunbeams. ‘There is not even a trace left after sunlight when the Sun is set’ (*Treatises* I, 30).

The relation between essence and its energies should not be conflated with causality. Cause and effect need not coexist, whereas energies actually depend on essence. Palamas on many occasions wrote that essence ‘produces’ (*Triads* III, 1, 23), ‘creates’ (*Treatises* II, 44) energies, or that energies ‘follow’ (*Treatises* II, 26) from essence. However, sometimes he also maintained that essence ‘causes’ energies (*Triads* III, 2, 7; *Treatises* II, 19). Commentators rightly pointed out that he did not understand this kind of causality in a usual way.

The energies are not effects of the divine cause, as creatures are; they are not created, formed ex nihilo, but flow eternally from the one essence of the Trinity (*Lossky* 1957, p. 73; see also *Krivoshein* 1938, p. 143).

Palamas has also stressed the difference between the creation of things and producing energies. He devoted to this topic the whole treatise *On the divine energies*. ‘Created beings are not processions [*i.e.* energies], [...] but effects of God’s processions’ (*Treatises* I, 7); ‘a creature is an effect of divine energies not the energies themselves’ (*Treatises* III, 19).

Palamas insisted that since essence and energies are not separable, they do not, strictly speaking, make a whole. Things are not mereologically compounded of essence and energies. ‘That what appears, or can be thought of, or can be given [*i.e.* energies] is not a part of God’ (*Treatises* III, 6). Nor ‘elements’ are of God’s nature (*Treatises* II, 23), since ‘no being is composed of its own acts’ (*Treatises* III, 25). He asked rhetorically: ‘What kind of whole can be built by a mover and moving, that is by acting principle and its energy?’ (*Treatises* I, 22).

It is interesting to notice that Palamas’ distinction strikingly resembles the classical scholastic notion of formal distinction (*Tweedale* 1991). According to some medieval western

philosophers, beings may be conceptually different, yet really inseparable. Conceptual difference means that things have different definitions, belong to diverse categories. Exactly the same definition may be found in Palamas: ‘We do not treat the unity of essence and energies as if they had the same meaning, but as something inseparable’ (*Treatises* II, 8). This coincidence calls into question the thesis on specificity of the essence/energy distinction. However it does not deny originality neither to Palamas, nor Scotus. There could hardly be any intellectual exchange between the learned monks in the East and the West.

Some Orthodox commentators tried to moderate somehow this coincidence. Basil Krivosheine (1938, p. 152), for instance, eventually admitted that essence/energy distinction corresponds to scholastic *distinctio realia minor*, but ‘very relatively’ and ‘very inexactly’. At the same time, he understood Palamitic distinction as a *pragmatike diakrisis*, that is a real (not mental—*kat’epinoein*) distinction (not separation—*diairesis*). This is precisely meant by scholastic formal distinction. It seems there really is no gap between the eastern and the western distinction.

The distinction between essence and energies was introduced by Gregory Palamas to explain the possibility of experiencing God in hesychastic praying. Indeed, hesychasts could contemplate God himself, though not in His inaccessible, divine essence, but in knowable, uncreated energies. It is so because divine energies are no less divine than divine essence. Energies ‘are not out of God’ (*Treatises* I, 32), they are ‘God Himself, though not in the respect of the essence’ (*Treatises* I, 15, 32). ‘God is entirely present in each of the divine energies’ (*Triads* III, 2, 7). Therefore, both the essence and the energies might be ‘named with the same words’ (*Treatises* II, 4).

The energies or divine acts belong to the existence of God himself; they represent his existence *for us*. It is therefore not only justified but necessary to apply thereto the attributes proper to the divine Being; they are God (*theos*) and Deity (*theotes*) (Meyendorff 1998, p. 217–218).

3.3. *The Metaphysics of Deification*

The essence/energies distinction was formulated not only for the explanation of the possibility of revelation; the most fundamental truth for Palamas, as well as to the whole the Eastern Christian tradition in general, was the reality of deification (Meyendorff 1983, p. 2). The whole Palamas’ theory was, in fact, an attempt to provide ontological explanation of the mystical union with God.

By his doctrine on [...] divine energies Gregory Palamas gives an indestructible theological foundation to the traditional mystical teaching of the Orthodox Church, since only on the basis of this doctrine is it possible to consistently assert the reality of the communion between God and man [...] without falling into the pantheistic confusion of creature with Creator (Krivoshein 1938, p. 207).

According to Palamas, the union with God is at the same time the highest cognition of God (Mantzaridis 1984, p. 114–115). Strictly speaking, this way of knowing has no intellectual character. Palamas understood deification as a real transformation of human being in which man ontologically unites with God. Becoming an object of knowing is, however, definitely the best way to know.

What is the ontological mechanism of deification? It appears that Palamas formulated a considerably innovating and illuminating solution. He noticed once:

dwelling of the light of grace in a soul is not a simple connection [...] but amazing internal communion, in some sense inexpressible and unparalleled (*First Letter to Barlaam* 43, Spiteris 1996, p. 84).

Before Palamas, patristic theology developed two distinct concepts of union—namely essential union of divine Persons in the Trinity and the hypostatic union of two essences in Christ. Palamas proposed a third solution. God and man unite neither by essence, nor by hypostasis, but by energies.

God in His completeness deifies those who are worthy of this, by uniting Himself with them, not hypostatically—that belonged to Christ alone—nor essentially, but through [...] energies (*Against Akindynos* V, 26, *Meyendorff* 1983, p. 164; cf. *Lossky* 1957, p. 87).

It is worth noticing that such analysis of eternal life seems to differ significantly from the theory of mere beatific vision developed in the western theology (*Bradshaw* 2004).

According to Dionysius the Areopagite (*CH* I, 3; cf. *Treatises* III, 7), deification (*theosis*) consists of both assimilation (*aphomoiosis*) and unification (*enosis*). Palamas carefully distinguished these two concepts. He perceived assimilation as a result of man's own effort to imitate God. It consists of ascetics and virtuous life. All Christian moral teaching concerns the way in which man can imitate their divine example. Nevertheless, Palamas insisted, that assimilation is only a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of deification (*Treatises* III, 7; see also *Krivoshin* 1938, p. 72; *Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 88). The main reason for this was the fact that imitation is a human action, whereas deification is a gift of divine grace. As St. Paul said, '[God] saved us [...] not in virtue of works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace' (2 *Tim* 1:9). Hence, Palamas taught:

Every virtue and imitation of God on our part, indeed, *prepares* those who practise them for divine union, but the mysterious union itself is *effected* by grace (*Triads* III, 1, 27; italics mine).

The crucial component of deification is unification. Palamas understood the union of man and God as sharing by man divine energies.

God, while remaining entirely in Himself, dwells entirely in us by His superessential power; and communicates to us not His nature, but His proper glory and splendor (*Triads* I, 3, 23).

'Power', 'glory' and 'splendor' are obviously names of divine energies. Deified man is endowed with divine energies, which become his own energies. Human being retains their created human essence and obtains uncreated divine energies.

The divine life [...] belongs to the divine nature even when man benefit from it (by grace, not by nature); hence it constitutes the means of a communion both personal and real with God, a communion which does not involve the impossible confusion of the natures (*Meyendorff* 1998, p. 217).

Thus, in some specific sense, man partially becomes a God. As Palamas put it:

He who achieves deification is fittingly defined by both: he is on the one hand unoriginate, eternal and heavenly [...] on account of the uncreated grace that eternally derives from eternal God; he is on the other a new creation and a new man [...] on account of himself and his own nature (*Reply to Akindynos* III, 6, 15, *Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 112).

Palamas quoted with approval St. Maximus' phrase:

The one, who is considered worthy of it, by grace would be everything that God is by nature, save only the identity of nature (*Treatises* II, 34; cf. *Lossky* 1957, p. 87).

Therefore, it may be said that 'them, who participate in energies and act in accordance with them, through God's grace are made gods with no beginning and no end' (*Third Letter against Akindynos*, *Spiteris* 1996, p. 78).

The possibility of human deification is given through Christ in the Church (*Mantzaridis* 1984, pp. 41–60; *Meyendorff* 1983, pp. 163–164). The human nature assumed by Christ was deified first due to the hypostatic union. Now, thanks to Sacraments, people are able to participate in that nature and to be endowed by divine energies.

To Palamas, the communion of the sacraments signifies the union with the human nature of Logos of God, which, united hypostatically with the second person of the Trinity, was deified and became the source of deification to man (*Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 54).

In the result of a sacramental life, ‘Christ’s uncreated life and energy become the property of the man who is united with Him, and in whose person Christ himself lives and operates’ (*Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 128).

4. Ontological Dependency, Relational Order and Energies

In this part, I would like to present some formal analyses of Palamas’ teaching. As I noticed in §1, Father Pavel Florensky attempted this a century ago. It should be highlighted that his analyses were in fact one of the first applications of contemporary logic to the traditional metaphysics. Now, I would like to discuss and develop some of his ideas. The first one concerns the formal analysis of essence/energy distinction as a kind of ontological dependency.

4.1. Florensky’s Analysis

In 1913, archbishop Nikon published a critical assessment of onomathodoxy. Pavel Florensky prepared an extensive commentary on Nikon’s paper, aimed at defending the monks of Athos. In one place of this commentary, Florensky sketched in a margin note a logical analysis of onomathodoxy (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 316). Though the commentary has not been published yet, then the logical analysis sketch was developed further in §10 of the fundamental paper ‘Onomathodoxy as a Philosophical Principle’ in 1922 (*ibidem*, pp. 272–274). Florensky tried to give a concise formalization of the basic idea of Palamism. In order to do it, he formulated all possible positions in the debate on essence and energies. ‘There are four abstract possible analyses of essence and energy relation, which may be formalized by four double logical inclusions’ (*ibidem*, 273). Let ‘*A*’ represent the energy, ‘*B*’ represent the essence. Florensky formalized possible types of interconnections between them in the following way (I intentionally leave Florensky’s old-fashioned notation without any changes):

(F1) $A \supset B : B \supset A$,

(F2) $A \supset \neg B : B \supset A$,

(F3) $A \supset \neg B : B \supset \neg A$,

(F4) $A \supset B : B \supset \neg A$.

Florensky characterized (F1) as ‘immanentism,’ (F2) as ‘extreme positivism,’ (F3) as ‘Kantianism,’ and, finally, (F4) as ‘Platonism.’ Immanentism conflates energy and essence, extreme positivism denies the possibility of revelation of essence, and Kantianism entirely breaks the connection between these two realities. Platonism, which is, according to Florensky, identical in this respect with Palamism, holds that energy ‘presents the reality itself,’ ‘really exposes the essence,’ though ‘does not exhaust completely the reality, which appears,’ since essence is ‘not reducible to phenomena’ due to its being ‘an independent reality’ (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 274). Florensky believed that (F4) is the proper formulation of these intuitions.

The logical core of theological disputes in the 14th and 19th centuries boils down to only this epistemological formula. [...] This is the general sense of onomathodoxy as a philosophical principle (*ibidem*, p. 274).

Unfortunately, the formula (F4) raises at least three serious doubts. First, it is not clear what the letters ‘*A*’ and ‘*B*’ really stand for. Do they represent propositions, concepts or rather objects? Florensky wrote ambiguously that the ‘terms of thinking’ may be equally propositions and concepts (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 272; cf. *Florensky* 2004, pp. 425–426). Second, how should the symbol ‘ \supset ’ be understood? Florensky characterized the relation between *A* and *B* both as ‘implication’ and ‘inclusion’ (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 273), but perhaps he really meant some other relation? Finally, it is unclear whether the sign of negation stands in the right place.

I shall start with the last problem. It seems obvious that, regardless the particular interpretation of the symbols, the negation should stand in *de dicto*, not in *de re* position. For now, the formula proposed by Florensky is simply defective. The modern version of (F4) would be

$$(P1) \quad (A \supset B) \wedge (B \supset \neg A).$$

It seems that this formula plainly fails to capture the meaning of Palamism in Florensky's informal interpretation. It means that if A , then B , and if B , then not- A . Therefore, it denies the very existence of energy. This result may be obtained in a formal way. By the law of transitivity of implication it follows from (P1) that

$$(1) \quad A \supset \neg A.$$

The formula (1) may be true if and only if A is false. Hence, Palamism would be true if and only if there were no energies at all. It evidently contradicts Florensky's intention. Formulas (F2) and (F3) face the same problem. The formal interpretation proposed by Florensky is somehow too strong since it implies that there is no energy or essence at all. Therefore, I propose to change the position of negation to *de dicto*. Formula (P1) should be formulated in the following way:

$$(P2) \quad (A \supset B) \wedge \neg(B \supset A).$$

If A , then B , and it is not the case that if B then A . Florensky had a well known passion for the use of logical and mathematical formulas. Unfortunately, they are quite often inaccurate or simply mistaken. In the Polish edition of his works, it was necessary to make numerous corrections of obvious mistakes in the text (Florenski 2009, pp. 35, 37, 38, 181, 183, 184). It is hard to say whether these mistakes were made by Florensky or by his editors. At any rate, I think that (F2)–(F4) is a case which should be corrected in this way.

My proposal of this correction (Rojek 2010b, p. 54) evoked a criticism of Bogdan Strachowski (Strachowski 2010, p. 194; cf. Rojek 2010c). He pointed out that changing the place of negation in the case of (F3) leads to contradiction. The modified *de dicto* Kantianism runs as follows:

$$(2) \quad \neg(A \supset B) \wedge \neg(B \supset A)$$

This formula is inconsistent since the thesis of logic is that $(A \supset B) \vee (B \supset A)$. Therefore, according to Strachowski, one should seek a different way to make Florenski consistent. Indeed, a mere change of the negation's place is not sufficient for a uniform and consistent interpretation of Florensky's formalizations. I think that what is really needed here is a modal logic which would secure the consistency of *de dicto* interpretation of (F3). I shall come back to this problem in §4.2.

Now I would like to roughly sketch two different interpretations of Florensky's analysis. The first one takes 'A' and 'B' as names of propositions and '⊃' as an implication. The second interprets 'A' and 'B' as names of objects and '⊃' as a specific relation between energy and essence. Both interpretations assume that the negation should stand in *de dicto* position.

4.2. Dependency Interpretation

Florensky suggested that the formula ' $A \supset B$ ' means 'if there is energy, there is essence' (Florenskij 2000, p. 272). Thus, 'A' and 'B' should be read as existential propositions: 'there is energy' and 'there is essence'. On the ground of this interpretation, (P2) would be an assertion of one-sided ontological dependency between energy and essence. The existence of energy presupposes the existence of essence, whereas the existence of energy does not presuppose the existence of energy.

The formula (P2) may be further improved to go along Florensky's intention more precisely. It seems plausible to insert modal concepts into the formula:

$$(P3) \quad \Box(A \supset B) \wedge \neg\Box(B \supset A).$$

Necessarily, if there is energy, then there is also essence, and not necessarily, if there is essence, there is energy. This formula expresses exactly the ontological dependency in proper modal terms. Florensky could not use the modal concept as modal formal logic was not invented at that time yet.

The advantage of the modal reformulation of Florensky's formalization is that it gives a uniform and consistent interpretation of Kantianism (Rojek 2010b, p. 211). Now, the corrected and modalized version of (F3) is the following:

$$(3) \quad \neg \Box(A \supset B) \wedge \neg \Box(B \supset A),$$

that is, after some obvious transformations,

$$(4) \quad \Diamond(A \wedge \neg B) \wedge \Diamond(B \wedge \neg A).$$

These formulas do not lead to contradiction since, though $\Diamond(A \wedge B) \supset \Diamond A \wedge \Diamond B$ is a thesis of standard modal logic, the reversed implication $\Diamond A \wedge \Diamond B \supset \Diamond(A \wedge B)$ is not. Kantianism holds that energies and essences might exist independently. Energies do not necessarily reveal, and essences do not necessarily manifest themselves. There may be energies without corresponding essences and essences without energies. I think that this modal description closely fits in Florensky's intuitions.

The sense of Palamism may be even more accurately captured in modal quantifier calculus. The principle of Palamism can be reformulated as follows:

$$(P4) \quad \Box(\exists x \text{En}(x) \supset \exists y \text{Es}(y) \wedge x < y) \wedge \neg \Box(\exists x \text{Es}(x) \supset \exists y \text{En}(y) \wedge x < y),$$

where 'En(x)' stands for 'x is energy', 'Es(x)'—'x is essence', and 'x < y'—'x is energy of y'. Perhaps, instead of essence, one should speak about hypostases, which are ultimate substrates of both energies, and essence, but I will not develop this topic here (see *Triads* III, 2, 12; *Meyendorff* 1998, pp. 213, 214–215).

Now, are these refined Florensky's formulas appropriate? Do they express the Palamitic distinction between essence and energies well? I shall focus, in turn, on the two terms of Florensky's formula, namely on the one asserting the dependency of energy on essence, and the second asserting the independency of essence on energy.

First, with no doubt, as I indicated above in § 3.2, Palamas held that energies ontologically depend on essence. The existence of energy presupposes the existence of correspondent essence. Nevertheless, it seems that standard ontological dependency captured in Florensky's formalization is not sufficient for a proper analysis of Palamas' distinction. On the ground of this interpretation, there would be no difference between energies and effects of essence. For example, the divine grace, as well as the world, equally would not exist without the existence of God's essence; the difference is that energies, contrary to effects, are inseparable from essence. Thus, the proper formalization of essence/energies distinction should adopt a more sophisticated concept of ontological dependency.

It seems that such a concept was formulated by a Polish phenomenologist, Roman Ingarden (1964), who distinguished 'non-self-sufficiency' ('*Unselbständigkeit*') on one hand, and 'dependence' ('*Abhängigkeit*') on the other.⁵ Non-self-sufficient beings need some other beings for their existence; dependent beings are not-self-sufficient but, moreover, must also belong to the other being. Effects may be thought as simply non-self-sufficient, whereas energies seem to be dependent in the Ingardenian sense.

Second, as I argued above, essence is not entirely independent of energy, otherwise energies would simply be accidents. Energy as *dynamis* is essential for essence. The essence cannot exist without having its natural *dynamis*, though *dynamis* is not essence. On the contrary, energy as a realization of potency is accidental in relation to essence. Therefore, Florensky's analysis holds only for acts, not for the potencies.

4.3. Relational Interpretation

I would like to show that at least one more interpretation of Florensky's formalization is possible. Bogdan Strachowski (2010, p. 197) suggested to treat 'A' and 'B' as names of objects, not propositions, and '⊃' as a sign of a specific ontological, not just logical implication. Now, I would like to follow his suggestion and sketch a relational interpretation of Palamism.

The natural basis of this interpretation is the primitive relation ‘is energy of’. The plausible reformulation of the principle of Palamism would be as follows:

$$(P5) \quad \forall x \forall y (x < y) \supset \neg (y < x).$$

This formula states that if x is energy of y , then y is not energy of x . It is a clear indication that the relation of being energy is not symmetrical. What are the other formal properties of this relation? From (P5) it follows that it is also irreflexive:

$$(5) \quad \forall x \neg (x < x).$$

It seems clear also that $<$ is transitive:

$$(6) \quad \forall x \forall y (x < y) \wedge (y < z) \supset (x < z).$$

Therefore, $<$ would be a relation of sharp order. Essences and energies may be defined as simple and co-simple elements of an ordered set $\langle U, < \rangle$:

$$(7) \quad \text{Ess}(x) \equiv \neg \exists y (x < y),$$

$$(8) \quad \text{En}(x) \equiv \neg \exists y (y < x).$$

The existence of the root of the $\langle U, < \rangle$ would mean that everything is energy of one object, presumably God. Palamas insisted, however, that there is a difference between being energy and effect, and that the creations are not divine energies. Therefore, in Palamitic universes there would be no root of the relation $<$.

Perhaps the other set of formal properties would be more adequate for Palamism. The basic relation can be understood more broadly as ‘being energy or being identical.’ That would be a relation of unsharp order \leq . The modified principle of Palamism would assert that:

$$(P6) \quad \forall x \forall y (x \leq y) \supset \neg (y \leq x) \vee x = y,$$

therefore, \leq would be of anti-symmetrical character:

$$(9) \quad \forall x \forall y (x \leq y) \wedge (x \leq y) \supset x = y.$$

The relation \leq would also be reflexive and transitive:

$$(10) \quad \forall x (x \leq x),$$

$$(11) \quad \forall x \forall y (x \leq y) \wedge (y \leq z) \supset (x \leq z).$$

The definitions of essence and energies would be as follows:

$$(12) \quad \text{Ess}(x) \equiv \neg \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \leq y),$$

$$(13) \quad \text{En}(x) \equiv \neg \exists y (y \neq x \wedge y \leq x).$$

The analysis of the essence/energies distinction in terms of unsharp order makes it possible to express this distinction within the well known logical calculus. The same formal properties have, for instance, ‘ ϵ ’ in Stanisław Leśniewski’s ‘ontology’ (*Stupecki* 1955), ‘ontological connection’ in Jerzy Perzanowski’s (1996) ‘ontologies’, or ‘Moda’ in Vyacheslav Moiseev’s ‘projectively modal ontology’ (*Moiseev* 2002; 2010, pp. 243–308).

5. Identity, Indiscernibility and Deification

As I indicated, the essence/energies distinction was introduced by Palamas mainly for the explanation of the nature of deification. Florensky suggested that deification might be understood as identity of properties; this leads him to the rejection of the Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles. I shall follow his idea and point out two problems of the deification theory.

5.1. Florensky on Identity

According to Basil Lourié (*Lur’e* 1997, p. 339), Pavel Florensky discovered the teaching of Gregory Palamas only after the Athos dispute. The search for arguments in support of the revolted monks lead him to Palamas’ writings. There is almost no evidence of Florensky’s acquaintance with Palamas’s writings in the earlier works. In *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (2004), the most important of Florensky’s books, Palamas is mentioned only in a few footnotes. Nevertheless, in that work Florensky outlined an interpretation of the patristic notion of deification. True, Florensky did

not relate his analysis directly to Palamas and neglected the essence/energy distinction, but his interpretation seems to be very close to the core of Palamas' teaching.

In Chapter V of *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (2004, p. 53–59), Florensky analyzed the concept of love. To him, love—primarily love between God and man—is not a mere psychological attitude, but a genuine ontological process. Love is a real unification of lovers. Florensky insisted that through love two distinct persons may become a really one being. He even used as the book's motto the Latin sententia *Finis amoris ut duo unum fiant*—'Love is completed when two become one'. He analyzed Biblical and patristic evidences of the reality of unification between man and God. He was, therefore, concerned with the very same problem as Palamas.

When developing the ontology of love, Florensky made some surprising remarks on the logical concept of identity. The two supplements, added to the main text, were devoted directly to the analysis of the concept of identity in classical philosophy and in contemporary formal logic (Florensky 2004, p. 365–374). First, he criticized the modern western philosophers for neglecting identity in favor of resemblance. Florensky said: 'when there is talk of identity, what one means—more or less decisively—is fullness of similarity, not mere' (Florensky 2004, p. 60). Christian metaphysics, in contrast, allows properties to be numerically identical, not mere similar.⁶ With no doubt, the issue here was the problem of universals, which concerns precisely the possibility of existence of numerically identical properties in many distinct things (see e.g. Armstrong 1978). Florensky made an appeal to the classical trinitarian terminology and called the modern nominalistic philosophy *homoiousian*, in contrast to Christian *homoousian* realism (Florensky 2004, p. 59; cf. Slesinski 1984, pp. 136–138). Second, Florensky protested against the bundle theory of thing. Namely, he accused positivistic logicians of a desire to 'destroy the autonomous nature of the individual and reduce it to a sum of traits' (Florensky 2004, p. 371). A thing is not merely a combination of traits since it contains an irreducible 'carrier of traits' (ibidem, p. 368). Finally, he rejected the following logical Principle of Identity (I use its contemporary formulation):

$$(14) \quad x=y \equiv \forall P (P(x) \equiv P(y)).$$

According to Florensky, this classical definition 'replaces the question of real numerical identity with the question of the formal similarity of traits' (2004, p. 372), whereas these two questions differ fundamentally. Florensky held that it is possible for distinct things to have numerically one nature. The three consubstantial divine Persons are the most eminent example, which also serves as a paradigm of the unity of lovers. Hence, the Principle of Identity excludes the possibility of the Trinity and deification (though deification, as Florensky should have added but did not, does not mean sharing the nature, but energies).

Florensky's reasoning, though not completely clear, is perfectly sound. Realism in the question of universals combined with the criticism of the bundle theory leads by necessity to the rejection of the Principle of Identity. More precisely, it leads to the rejection of the Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles:

$$(15) \quad \forall P (P(x) \equiv P(y)) \supset x=y,$$

which is one of the components of the (14); the reverse Principle of Indiscernibility of Identicals is usually accepted as trivial. This reasoning, implicitly present in Florensky's remarks, plays a crucial role in analytic metaphysics as an argument either against the bundle theory or against realism (Armstrong 1978, p. 81; Loux 1978, pp. 131–137, 155–156; Moreland 2001, p. 141).

At this point, it seems that, to Florensky, the real union of lovers consisted of sharing all the relevant properties. Indiscernibility is meant here in a realistic manner, namely as sharing numerically identical properties. Actually, Florensky spoke about natures, but his analysis applies perfectly to energies as well. Indeed, such a unity is real and internal, contrary to merely external similarity.

Thus, Florensky virtually distinguished two kinds of indiscernibility: *homoousian*, with universal properties on one hand, and *homoiousian*, with particular, yet exactly similar properties, on the other. The Principle of Identity of Indiscernibles is not valid in both cases. The realistic

indiscernibility, which Florensky sometimes misleadingly called ‘numerical identity of things’, may be defined as follows:

$$(D1) \quad x=_{\circ}y \equiv \forall P \forall Q ((P(x) \equiv Q(y)) \equiv P=Q).$$

The right side of the (D1) is intended to be equivalent to the right side of (14). I inserted the indication of identity of properties ‘P=Q’ just for a clear comparison with the nominalistic indiscernibility:

$$(D2) \quad x \approx_{\circ} y \equiv \forall P \forall Q ((P(x) \equiv Q(y)) \equiv P \approx Q).$$

‘P≈Q’ means that properties P and Q resemble each other. In this case, all properties of things can be similar, yet not identical. Since identity follows resemblance:

$$(16) \quad P=Q \supset P \approx Q,$$

the realistic indiscernibility follows the nominalistic:

$$(17) \quad x=_{\circ}y \supset x \approx_{\circ}y.$$

The concept of *homoousian* indiscernibility is, therefore, stronger than *homoiousian* one.

Unfortunately, the analyzed text of Florensky is rather obscure. It is not clear, for instance, whether he distinguished merely two competitive theories, or rather two distinct domains in which these theories hold, or perhaps even two stages of ontological development of one thing. First, he suggested that the theory of resemblance is characteristic of ‘the Western, Catholic view of life’ (Florensky 2004, p. 367). In the same spirit Robert Slesinski (1984, p. 137) argued that David Hume’s views perfectly fits in the description of *homoiousian* philosophy. Second, Florensky contrasted the domain of *things*, which is governed by the theory of resemblance, and the domain of *persons*, in which the theory of identity is valid (Florensky 2004, p. 58–59). Things have similar properties, whereas persons can share their actions.⁷ Third, he suggested that particular entities can move from the world of mere resemblances to the world of identity. For a human being this can be achieved in the process of ascesis and moral life aimed at deification.

I am not going to analyze Florensky’s view further. For now, I would just like to point out that the presented interpretation seems to overcome the crucial problem of Florensky’s theory identified by Robert Slesinski.

His understanding of numerical identity, if not properly understood, could appear to be the Achille’s heel of his whole suggested system, and, in truth, could subject it to the charge of pantheism. Specifically, how can Florensky reconcile the consubstantiality of the divine Hypostases with the consubstantiality of created species in terms of numerical identity? (Slesinski 1984, p. 136).

The answer for this question is straightforward if we complement Florensky’s theory with the essence/energies distinction. By ‘numerical identity’ of things Florensky meant numerical identity of their properties in general. Numerical identity of natures yields ‘consubstantiality’, which characterizes the Persons of Holy Trinity; numerical identity of energies yields ‘synergy’, which characterizes (not only) Holy Trinity, but also human beings living in God. Indeed, without the Palamitic distinction it is uneasy to avoid the charge of pantheism.

5.2. The Problem of Synergy

What is the use of Florensky’s analysis for interpretation of Palamism? I think that he rightly indicated the ontological dimension of deification. Deification consists of a real change of properties. He was mistaken, nevertheless, in suggesting that man can be consubstantial with God. This is such a bold theological mistake that one might wonder whether Florensky in *Pillar* used the word ‘nature’ in a strict sense. In any case, everything that Florensky said on natures holds for energies in Palamism.

Florensky distinguished two interpretations of union with God, namely in terms of identity (D1) and resemblance (D2). They may be now formulated on the ground of the essence/energy distinction:

$$(D3) \quad x =_e y \equiv \forall z \forall z' ((x < z \equiv y < z) \equiv z = z'),$$

$$(D4) \quad x \approx_e y \equiv \forall z \forall z' ((x < z \equiv y < z) \equiv z \approx z').$$

Things are energetically indiscernible in the realistic sense if and only if they share all their energies, and in the nominalistic sense if and only if they have all energies exactly similar. The former case might be called realistic synergy, the latter—nominalistic one. As I indicated in §3.3, to Palamas *theosis* consists of both assimilation and unification. (D4) may be considered as a formal expression of full assimilation, whereas (D3) captures the meaning of unification. One should note that by virtue of (16), unification implies assimilation:

$$(18) \quad x =_e y \supset x \approx_e y.$$

Therefore, assimilation really is only a necessary but not sufficient condition of deification.

I suggest that deification consist of strict identity of energies, and not mere resemblance. It must be observed, however, that there is no agreement among commentators on this crucial point. Some authors suggest an analogy between the relation between the two energies in Christ and the energies of man and God in deification. But this, as I argue, unfortunately leads to the resemblance, not identity theory.

Patristic theology before Palamas used the notion of energy in two cases: Christ and the Holy Trinity. On one hand, Christ is the only person with two natures, and, hence, has two numerically distinct, yet reconciled, human and divine energies. The Third Constantinopolitan Council clearly stated that in Christ there were ‘two natural principles of action [*i.e.* energies] in the same Jesus Christ our lord and true God, which undergo no division, no change, no partition, no confusion’ (Tanner 1990). This statement was aimed against monoenergism, which accepts only one ‘principle of action’ in Christ. On the other hand, the Trinity consists of three divine Persons, one nature and one divine energy shared by all the Persons (Treatises I, 21; Meyendorff 1998, p. 215; Spiteris 1996, p. 105). ‘The energy of the Three Divine Hypostases the is one not by analogy [*i.e.* not mere similar] (as with us) but truly also one in number’ (Capita 138, Krivoshein 1938, p. 141). Therefore, we are also told that, in the case of human beings, we are dealing with many distinct energies, which, nevertheless, may be similar to one another and assimilated to divine energies. ‘Human acts are similar, but not identical’—Palamas stated firmly (Treatises I, 21; cf. Meyendorff 1998, p. 215). These distinctions may be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The variety of patristic ‘identities’.

	hypostases	essences	energies
numerical identity	=	=	=
excluded	=	=	≠
Monoenergists Christ	=	≠	=
Orthodox Christ	=	≠	≠
The Holy Trinity	≠	=	=
human beings	≠	=	≠
deification according to (D3)	≠	≠	=
deification according to (D4)	≠	≠	≠

What is it like in the case of human and divine energies? Is it analogous to the case of Christ or to the case of Holy Trinity? Most commentators use here the term ‘synergy;’ energies of man and God are supposed to be somehow ‘united.’ However, the specific meaning of this term may vary. Particularly, it is often not quite clear whether synergy presupposes numerical identity or mere resemblance.

John Meyendorff, for instance, suggested that the relation between human and divine energies mirrors the analogous relation in Christ.

It is not through his own activity or “energy” that man can be deified—this would be Pelagianism—but by divine “energy”, to which his human activity is “obedient”; between *the two* there is a “synergy”, of which the relation of the two energies in Christ is the ontological basis (*Meyendorff* 1983, p. 164; italics mine).

Therefore, divine and human energies would have the same characteristic formulated by the Sixth Council: ‘no division, no change, no partition, no confusion’ (see also *Strachowski* 2010, p. 203). In this interpretation, however, they still are two numerically distinct, yet exactly similar and reconciled, energies.

It seems that Pavel Florensky held opposite view. He also spoke about ‘synergy’ (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 256), but evidently, he understood that term in a stronger sense. He maintained that energies may ‘join’ (ibidem, p. 358), ‘knit’ (ibidem, pp. 257, 263, 359) and ‘fuse’ (ibidem, p. 257) one another.

Beings, staying neither mixed in their essences, nor reduced to one another, nor dissolved in one another, can at the same time really unite through energies. This union must be understood neither as adding one act to another, nor as mechanical pushing one being by another, but as mutual braiding of the energies, co-operation, *synergeia*, in which there is neither one, nor the other taken separately, but something new emerges (*Florenskij* 2000, p. 256).

I think that what Florensky had in mind was simply the identity of energies. One and the same energy is both divine and human, and at the same time is something new in the sense that it is no more solely human or solely divine. Some authors are even more radical. Basil Lourié suggested that ‘there is no more synergy in the deification; in this sense it should be said that deified man has no human energies, only divine’ (*Lur’e* 2006, p. 390).

It appears that Palamas held the identity view. As I pointed out in §3.3, he insisted on the real union of man and God. Resemblance, even exact one, does not suffice for this purpose. On the ground of the two energies approach, deification would be merely external imitation of God. This approach was directly criticized by Palamas. It would be only a *homoiousian* imitation, not *homoousian* union.

Palamas did not endorse the thesis that deification is analogous to hypostatic union. It is, as Palamas admitted, an ‘unparalleled’ connection which differs both from relations in Christ and in the Holy Trinity. The reason for different models for Christ and deification is that, in the case of Christ, divine and human energies do not need to be united in a strong way since the two natures of Christ were already united by one hypostasis. In the case of deification, there is no such common hypostasis, and the Christological model leads to unduly weakening of the relation between divine and human energies.

There is one analogy which may serve as an additional support for the identity interpretation. Palamas repeated that God unites with a man as soul with body: ‘He is conjoined to them as a soul is to its body’ (*Triads* III, 1, 27; III, 1, 29; I, 3, 23). How did Palamas understand the soul-body relation? The most important point, for now, is that he believed there are energies common to both soul and body (*Mantzariadis* 1984, p. 84). ‘There are, indeed, [...] common activities of body and soul, which [...] serve to draw the flesh to dignity close to that of the spirit’ (*Triads* II, 2, 12). The grace of the Spirit, transmitted to body through the soul, ‘grants to the body also the experience of things divine, and allows it the same blessed experiences which the soul undergoes’ (ibidem). Therefore, by virtue of analogy, divine energy would be common to God and man, not just similar.

5.3. *One-sided and Two-sided Deification*

At the end, I would like to address one more question. The proposed formal interpretation of deification (D3) involves equivalence: all energies of God are energies of deified man, and all

energies of man are energies of God. This interpretation has, *prima facie*, strong evidence in the texts. Palamas wrote for example:

The *entire* Divinity comes to dwell *in fullness* in those deemed worthy, and all the saints in their *entire* being dwell in God, receiving God in His *wholeness* (*Triads* III, 1, 27; italics mine);

He [God] unites Himself to them to the extent of dwelling *completely* in them, so that they too dwell *entirely* in Him (III, 1, 29; italics mine; cf. *Krivoshein* 1938, p. 203).

It seems that every divine energy becomes human and reverse; all human energies become God's own energies.

But at the same time, some passages suggest a different interpretation. In *Against Akindynos* (V, 26) Palamas said: 'God in its fullness deifies them who deserve it [...] through *a small part* of the uncreated energies and the uncreated divinity' (*Meyendorff* 1983, p. 164; italics mine). It might be thought as if all human energies were divine, but not all divine energies were human. This may be formalized in the following way:

$$(D5) \quad x =_{e^*} y \equiv \forall z \forall z' ((x < z \supset y < z) \equiv z = z'),$$

The equivalence present in (D3) is replaced here by implication. In this case, deification is, as if, one-sided. Man entirely partakes in divine energies but not in all of them.

Which interpretation is correct? For sure, from the existential point of view, it seems that one-sided deification is perfectly enough to fulfill human aspirations. It appears that, contrary to the first impression, the evidence in favor of the first interpretation may be reconciled with the second. The point is that to Palamas 'God is entirely present in each of divine energies' (*Triads* III, 2, 7). It is thus because energies are 'not parts of God', and therefore 'the whole' God appears in each of them (*Treatises* III, 6). So 'a small part of uncreated energies' is enough to have 'entire Divinity'; not all divine energies are required to it. Moreover, the analogy to soul and body seems to support the second reading. Though all bodily acts might be at the same time acts of the soul, there are, nevertheless, some acts of soul which are not bodily. Thus, even though all human energies may be identical with divine, God can have some energies which are not shared by man.

6. Conclusion

The distinction between essence and energies is usually considered as antinomic and, therefore, mysterious, and perhaps mystical. For instance, according to Vladimir Lossky (1974, p. 53), it is 'a theological antinomy', which points at 'mysterious distinction in God's very being'. Similar opinion might be found in many others commentators (see e.g. *Losev* 1993a, p. 866; *Spiteris* 1996, p. 97; *Leskin* 2008, p. 118). Since the essence/energies distinction constitutes the core of Palamas' teaching, which is considered the peak and source of the Orthodox theology, the opinion on its antinomic character spread into the whole Eastern tradition.

I tried to show that Palamas' teaching on energies and deification is no less rational than any other ontological positions. No true antinomy was found. Moreover, his teaching may be analyzed with the help of some logical tools. Even the most mystical elements of Palamism, such as the divinization of human nature, can be expressed in a formal way consistently. Furthermore, the use of formal logic may help in noticing some problems usually neglected by commentators.

I believe that the opinion on the allegedly antinomic character of Palamism arose from its specific methodological character. Usually, theology accepts some concepts and axioms from philosophy. Palamas clearly saw the inadequacy of existing philosophical notions in explaining revelation and deification. However, he did not forsake the project of philosophical explanation of religious truth, but adapted the reversed methodology. To him, philosophy should accept concepts and axioms from theology. Elsewhere I labeled such theories a 'theological philosophy' (*Rojek* 2009). Palamas, therefore,

neither sacrificed revelation to philosophy nor contented himself with a dry repetition of patristic opinions, but tried to base his teaching about God on the Church's faith

and experience. Thus, man has knowledge of God's existence through His energies which are sent into the world (*Mantzaridis* 1984, p. 106).

The consequence of this methodology was modification of the existing ontological conceptual scheme. For instance, he modified the Greek philosophical categories of accident and property to reach the appropriate ontological concept of energy (see above §3.2). That is why some of his theses may seem 'antinomic' and 'mysterious' from the previous point of view. The question 'what is mysterious?' is, nevertheless, reversible in philosophy. If one accepts essence/energies distinction as an axiom, this distinction would be no more *explanandum* but rather *explanans*.

As I tried to show, Palamas' teaching was not restricted to philosophy of God merely. The essence/energy distinction, though formulated in the context of God, applies to all beings. Therefore, Palamism has a downward structure: creatures are governed by principles holding for Creator. Palamas' ontology might be called a 'theology of being'. Since Palamas' philosophy was designed to explain some specific Christian facts, it has a specific Christian character.

The answer for the question about the character of Palamism has grave consequences for the ecumenical dialog. Some authors accepting the antinomic nature of essence/energies distinction hold that this nature even facilitates the agreement between the East and the West. If Palamism was not a rational philosophy but rather some mystical poetry, there would be no moot point for a dispute with supposedly more rational western thinking. From this point of view, any rational interpretation of Palamism would even be an obstacle for the ecumenical efforts.

We believe that the ecumenical dialog requires, among other things, the reinterpretation of Palamism through depriving it of all conceptual content, through its purification from philosophical jargon and [...] through its clarification as a type of mystical theology (*Spiteris* 1996, pp. 120–121).

I adopt here the opposite view. The logical reconstruction of Palamas' teaching reveals its deep foundations, which are not so alien to western philosophy. Therefore, philosophical, and even logical, interpretation of Palamism may become a foundation of such an ecumenical dialog which would avoid rough stereotypes of 'the intellectual West' and 'the mystical East'.

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Notes

1. Aleksej Losev, a student and a friend of Florensky, tried to express the principles of onomatodoxy in the terms of set theory (Losev 1997; Troickij 1997). However, I will not discuss his views, since they need an interpretation themselves and cannot be considered as a true logical analysis.
2. The quotations of *Triads* are taken from the (incomplete) English translation (1983). The passages from *Triads* which have not been included in the English edition are in my own translation based on the Russian complete edition (2003). Due to the lack of the English edition, all the quotations of *Treatises* are in my own translation based on the Russian (2007) and Polish editions (Zogas-Osadnik 2012, pp. 257–344). I adopt the following abbreviations: *Treatise I* for *On union and division*, *Treatise II* for *On the divine energies* and *Treatise III* for *On deifying participation*.
3. It is interesting that Lossky removed phrases on 'eastern Thomists' in English translation of his 1944 book. Cf. Lossky 1944 and Lossky 1957, pp. 76–77, 220.
4. Agnieszka Świtkiewicz (1997, p. 156) noticed a 'great convergence, and at some points even identity' between texts by Krivoshein and Lossky. Indeed, Lossky relied on Krivoshein's interpretation and often simply repeated passages from his work.
5. I modify the English translation of Ingarden's terminology (Ingarden 1964), which is very misleading.
6. Florensky often spoke about the numerical identity of things but he evidently had in mind the numerical identity of properties (natures or energies) of numerically distinct things. His standard examples of 'numerically identical things' were the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity; they are plainly numerically distinct, though have numerically one nature. The question is, however, not so clear, since in some places

Florensky claimed that the terms ‘hypostasis’ and ‘nature’ are synonymous, and therefore the Holy Trinity is antinomic (*Florensky 2004*, p. 39–52).

7. This means that Florensky could accept the bundle theory for things since things are individuated by individual properties (cf. *Florensky 2004*, p. 368). Persons may share universal properties, so they must have a substratum, or—as Florensky would say—hypostasis.

The Logic of the Incarnation

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Abstract:

I argue that by distinguishing and employing the intuitive notions of essence and fundamentality we can see that the incarnation, as stated in the Chalcedonian Creed, is a logically coherent scenario.

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The problem of the incarnation is that, supposedly, there once was a person who was both fully human and fully divine, at the same time, in the same place. But humanity entails being limited in certain ways, which is ruled out by divinity, and divinity entails not being limited in certain ways, which is ruled out by humanity. So, how can one and the same person have ever been fully human and fully divine?

The problem of the incarnation is just a particular case of a more general metaphysical problem: how can there be cases of some possible concrete object x and two seemingly mutually exclusive intrinsic properties F and G , such that x has both F and G in a world w at a time t ? Substitute the person Jesus Christ for x , *being divine* for F , *being human* for G , the actual world for w , some time in the past for t , and we have the particular problem of the incarnation in Christianity. But then from a purely theoretical standpoint we should first abstract away from the particular problem of the incarnation and search for an answer to the more general metaphysical problem, independent of any particular instance of it. The more cases a theory can handle, the better it is.

In what follows, I first suggest a strategy for solving the more general metaphysical problem by moving from mere truth to a mixture of essential and fundamental truths (section 1). I then show how this strategy solves the problem of the incarnation in particular (section 2). I end by replying to some anticipated objections before briefly distinguishing my account of the incarnation from some other types of account (section 3).

I assume throughout that we strive for coherency without violating classical logic.

1. The Strategy

Here is a logically perspicuous statement of the general metaphysical problem of which the incarnation is a particular instance:

1. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
2. $\forall x (Fx \rightarrow \sim Gx)$
3. Fa
4. Gb
5. $a=b$

where $\Phi[x/y]$ means we substitute the free y in Φ for one or more occurrences of the free x in Φ .

Lemma 1. Any set of propositions of the form 1–5 is mutually inconsistent.

Proof: by 2, we instantiate: $Fa \rightarrow \sim Ga$. By 3, it then follows that $\sim Ga$. By 1 and 5, it follows that $\sim Gb$, which directly contradicts 4. *Q.E.D.*

Note that the metaphysical problem is not an *immediate* formal contradiction. That is, the question is not how something can be both F and $\sim F$. That I take it is just straight forwardly impossible. The question is rather how something can be both F and G , if being F entails something that is formally inconsistent with being G .

But then the easy solution is to deny premise 2 for the properties F and G at hand. In the case of the incarnation, this means denying that being human entails not being divine. This can perhaps best be done by denying that being human entails that one is limited in certain ways that being divine entails one is not. In short: one needs to argue that being human is compatible with being divine, and vice versa.

But, arguably, this is not the best solution. There is no reason to think premise 2 is false in all cases of the general problem. So, theoretically speaking, the solution suffers from insufficient generality.

But denying premise 1 amounts to denying the classical logic of identity, and as far as I can see, that results in more confusion than clarification. And premises 3–5 are just the scheme for the particular cases we try to understand, so denying any of 3–5 amounts to simply denying that there are any such cases. But then, on pain of violating classical logic, there is no premise left to deny. What else can be done?

We can broaden our theoretical framework, rather than violate classical logic. The framework I suggest includes two notions of some controversy, but the controversy nowadays mostly concerns *how* to understand them, not *whether* we can understand them. I will therefore not defend the overall legitimacy of these two notions, but rather explicate some seemingly necessary conditions for how to understand them.

The first notion needed is that of an *essence*. This notion can and has been understood in various ways, but what seems common to most such ways is that the notion of an essence is a modal notion: the essential properties of x are the properties that x as the thing it is cannot exist without. In terms of possible worlds, we might loosely say that E_x is the essence of x just in case x instantiates E_x in all possible worlds in which x exists. But this must in the end be just loose talk because it provides the wrong kind of essence. For example, the number 7, which presumably is a necessarily existing thing, necessarily has the property of being the successor of 6, which presumably is also a necessarily existing thing, but then the property of being such that 7 is the successor of 6 is part of my essence, which is wrong, at least on any intuitive understanding of the term.¹ Essence is a modal, but *hyperintensional* notion.

The second notion needed is that of *fundamentality*. This notion too can and has been understood in various ways, but what seems common to most such ways is that the notion of fundamentality is a categorical (non-modal) notion: the fundamental properties of x are the properties of x (partly) in virtue of which all other properties of x are instantiated, but themselves not instantiated in virtue of any other properties of x .² We can say that one property F of x is a *more* fundamental property of x than another property G of x , if x instantiate G (partly) in virtue of x instantiating F . But, ultimately, we want (I take it) to be able to talk of *the* absolute most fundamental properties of x , the properties of x that are not instantiated in virtue of any other properties of x . So, by ‘fundamental’ I henceforth mean the latter absolute notion.³

Note that while the notion of an essence is modal (involving metaphysical possibility), the notion of fundamentality is categorical (non-modal). The two notions need therefore not be necessarily co-extensional notions. Neither is any one of them necessarily co-extensional with the notion of just having a property *simpliciter*, or what we might call a *mere* truth about something. That these notions are not necessarily co-extensional is crucial for the solution that follows. So, let

me give a plausible example of each one of the four kinds of cases that supports this point.⁴ First, I can sit, but sitting is neither an essential nor a fundamental property of mine. Second, I am a biological being, which is an essential property of mine, but not, I take it, a fundamental property of mine. Biological properties are, plausibly, reducible to other properties. Third, negative charge is both an essential property of electrons (i.e. part of what it is to be an electron) and a fundamental property of electrons (i.e. not had in virtue of anything else about them). Fourth, I am mereologically composed of some particles, and being composed of *those very particles* is a fundamental property of me, but not an essential property of me. I could have been composed of a (slightly) different collection of particles.

In other words, we have the following matrix showing non-co-extensionality of our mere, essential and fundamental truth (note: it's not too hard to come up with other cases, if you find any one of them controversial):

	Fundamental truth:	Non-fundamental truth:
Essential truth:	Electron x is negatively charged	I am a biological being
Non-essential truth:	I am composed of <i>these</i> particles	I am sitting

With the overlapping, but non-co-extensional notions of essence and fundamentality onboard, we must view the general problem we started out with in a new, more sophisticated light. We can no longer just consider whether something instantiates a property or not, but must now consider *how* it instantiates it. That is, we can no longer just consider whether x is F, since that led us into paradox, but must consider whether x is essentially F as well as whether x is fundamentally F.

Let's treat e and f as predicational modifiers, and write 'Fx' whenever x is merely F, ' eFx ' whenever x is essentially F, and ' fFx ' whenever x is fundamentally x . We might loosely think of e and f as being analogous (but nothing but analogous) to adverbial modifiers: just as x can be F, but also be F essentially and be F fundamentally, so x can, for example, walk, but also walk slowly, walk funnily, etc. Or we might loosely think of e and f as being analogous (but nothing but analogous) to adjectival modifiers: just as x can be F, but also be essentially F and be fundamentally F, so x can, for example, be red, but also be dark red, homogeneously red, etc. But as we will see shortly, these analogies might in the end be just loose analogies, limited in central ways.

More should of course be said about these two notions of essence and fundamentality, but let's for now simply take some such notions for granted, and see what happens to the general metaphysical problem we started out with. The above set of propositions 1–5 is a scheme of which we now must consider the cases of essential and fundamental truth. Here is the case of essential truth:

6. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
7. $\forall x (eFx \rightarrow \sim eGx)$
8. eFa
9. eGb
10. $a=b$

Lemma 2. Just as 1–5, 6–10 is likewise mutually inconsistent.

Proof: by 7, we instantiate: $eFa \rightarrow \sim eGa$. By 8, it then follows that $\sim eGa$. By 6 and 10, it follows that $\sim eGb$, which directly contradicts 9. *Q.E.D.*

And the same goes for the case of fundamentality: just substitute f for e in the above proof.

But what if, as we have already seen, the cases of essential truth and fundamental truth can cut across each other? Then the above proofs can be blocked, and the paradox resolved.

Here is such a case:

11. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
12. $\forall x (eFx \rightarrow \sim eGx)$
13. fFa
14. eGb
15. $a=b$

The set of propositions 11–15 is not mutually inconsistent like 1–5 and 6–10. By 12, we can instantiate: $eFa \rightarrow \sim eGa$, but we then have nothing by virtue of which we can discharge the consequent (by Modus Ponens), which is needed to derive the contradiction. It does not help to, by 12, instead instantiate: $eFb \rightarrow \sim eGb$, and then by 14 discharge the negation of the antecedent (by Modus Tollens); the result doesn't contradict 13, by 11 and 15.

Here is a (admittedly somewhat tendentious) model showing formal consistency: we let our domain D consist of a certain statue and the clay it is made of, we let 'F' be *atomistic* (in the historical sense of a mereological simple) and we let 'G' be *statue-shaped*. Then, plausibly, whatever is essentially atomistic in D (the clay) is not essentially statue-shaped (because the clay is essentially atomistic, but could also have been scattered across the floor), so 12 is satisfied. Letting 'a' denote the clay and 'b' denote the statue, we also get that 13 is satisfied: the clay is fundamentally atomistic (according to completed physics, it is composed of mereological simples we might assume). Proposition 14 is also satisfied because the statue is essentially statue-shaped (the statue could not have been scattered across the floor). Finally, at least according to many *live* metaphysical theories (hence the somewhat tendentious part of the model), for example, counterpart theory (Lewis, 1986), or the theory of occasional identity (Gallois, 1998), proposition 15 can be satisfied as well: the statue is nothing but the clay (statue=clay). So, at least if any of the two latter theories are consistent, 11–15 is established as a mutually consistent set of propositions.

If one is unconvinced by the viability of the metaphysical theories the model rested on, one should feel free to try to come up with a better model. But in any case the type of contradiction that we derived in the cases 1–5 and 6–10 is blocked in the case of 11–15 due to the formal inability to discharge the consequent or the negation of the antecedent in any relevant instance of 12.

But the acute reader will have noticed that there still is a formal problem. Walking does not entail walking slowly, and being red does not entail being dark red, but obviously walking slowly entails walking, and being dark red entails being red. So, one might think, likewise being F does not entail being essentially/fundamentally F, but obviously being essentially/fundamentally F entails being F. So, we have to accept, among others, the following two additional claims:

16. $\forall x (eGx \rightarrow Gx)$
17. $\forall x (fFx \rightarrow Fx)$

By instantiations of 16 and 17, we get: $eGb \rightarrow Gb$ and $fFa \rightarrow Fa$, which from 14 and 13 entails: Gb and Fa . By 11, it then follows that Ga and Fb . But then we are back at our initial problem: one and the same thing is both F and G, so from 2 we then get our initial contradiction just as we did to begin with!

But by inspecting the matrix I gave earlier showing that mere, essential and fundamental truth are non-co-extensional, I believe it is pretty clear what should go: at face value, 16 and 17 are false. The matrix shows that there is no entailment from mere truth to neither essential or fundamental truth, nor an entailment from essential truth to fundamental truth, nor an entailment from fundamental truth to essential truth. So why believe there are entailments from essential and fundamental truth to mere truth?

One reason is by the analogy with adverbial and adjectival modifiers. Walking slowly entails walking, and being dark red entails being red, so, by analogy, being essentially/fundamentally F entails being F. But mere analogy is too weak. We are asking for a reason to believe the analogy is that strong.

Another reason is intuition. It just seems pretty clear that being essentially/fundamentally F entails being F; after all, how can anything be essentially/fundamentally F *without* being F? But the

intuition is too weak. I can explain it away, so it carries no justificatory weight. The intuition is something like this: being essentially/fundamentally F is *factive*, so being essentially/fundamentally F must entail being F. But all the factivity we need is given already by the tautological fact that being essentially/fundamentally F entails being essentially/fundamentally F. In other words, assume a is essentially/fundamentally F. Then a is F *because* a is essentially/fundamentally F. So, if a is essentially/fundamentally F, there is no *additional*, or *separate* fact of a being F. When we truly say that a is F (in the case considered), we really express the fact that a is essentially/fundamentally F.⁵

So, 16 and 17 are either expressing tautologies of the form $\forall x (eGx \rightarrow eGx)$ and $\forall x (fGx \rightarrow fGx)$, respectively, or they are false. As shown by the matrix above, we can make sense of cases of mere truth that are neither essential nor fundamental truth (e.g. that I am sitting). But we cannot make sense of an essential/fundamental truth that is also such a case of mere truth. An essential/fundamental truth is an essential/fundamental truth, not some other truth in addition to that.

So, in short, here is my suggestion for a strategy in terms of which we can search for a solution to particular cases of our general metaphysical problem. We have the initial scheme:

1. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
2. $\forall x (Fx \rightarrow \sim Gx)$
3. Fa
4. Gb
5. $a=b$

As is, this scheme (just like 6–10) is inconsistent. So, for any instance of it, we must, on pain of paradox, ask ourselves whether we can “modify” away the paradox by the help of e and f . Since e and f can cut across each other, the formal paradox can be blocked by modifying one of the predicates (and hopefully its corresponding property) with e and the other with f . In this way, and (it seems) only in this way, one blocks the road to paradox without violating classical logic. There is of course no guarantee that all instances of the general problem can be thus made formally consistent. But we now have a general strategy by which we can consider it case by case. In short: move from operating with just truth to a mixture of essential and fundamental truth.

Interestingly, the problem of the incarnation is a particular case that yields to this strategy.

2. The Incarnation

According to the Chalcedonian Creed, which I will here take to represent Christian Orthodoxy, there is one and the same person being truly God and truly man... one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures... the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person.

Accepting that being human rules out being divine, the Chalcedonian Creed presents us with an instance of the general metaphysical problem we started out with. Here is the instance of our schema for this particular problem:

18. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
19. $\forall x (Hx \rightarrow \sim Dx)$
20. Hj
21. Ds
22. $j=s$

where H is *being human*, D is *being divine*, j is *Jesus*, and s is *the Son* of the Trinity (God = the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit⁶).

Lemma 3. As is, 18–22 are mutually inconsistent.

Proof: by 19, we get: $Hj \rightarrow \sim Dj$. By 20, we then get that $\sim Dj$. By 18, 21 and 22, we get that Dj . Contradiction. *Q.E.D.*

But the Chalcedonian Creed takes no stand on whether the two natures in question are both essential natures, both fundamental natures, both neither essential nor fundamental, or one of each. So, by our above strategy, we modify the predicates in various ways by *e* and *f*, and thus get consistent versions of 18–22. Consider this case:

- 23. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
- 24. $\forall x (fHx \rightarrow \sim fDx)$
- 25. eHj
- 26. eDs
- 27. $j=s$

By 24, we get: $fHj \rightarrow \sim fDj$ and $fHs \rightarrow \sim fDs$, but from neither one of those two instances can we discharge the consequent or the denial of the antecedent by the help of 25 or 26, which is needed to derive a formal contradiction. Or, consider this case:

- 28. $\forall x \forall y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi[x/y] \leftrightarrow \Phi[y/x]))$
- 29. $\forall x (eHx \rightarrow \sim eDx)$
- 30. fHj
- 31. fDs
- 32. $j=s$

From 29, we get: $eHj \rightarrow \sim eDj$ and $eHs \rightarrow \sim eDs$, but, again, from neither one of those two instances can we discharge the consequent or the denial of the antecedent by the help of 30 or 31, which is needed to derive a formal contradiction.

So, by such modifications, we simply don't get the same contradiction as we did in the unmodified case of 18–22. So, by the modification strategy, the incarnation leads to no contradiction, even if we accept that humanity excludes divinity (within one and the same way of truth). So, by accepting essential and fundamental modifications of truth, Christian orthodoxy is a logically consistent doctrine (at least along the axis of the incarnation).

But there is another problem. It seems Christianity is, in fact, committed to the following set of propositions:⁷

- i. eHj
- ii. eDs
- iii. $\sim eHs$
- iv. $\sim eDj$
- v. fDj
- vi. fDs
- vii. $\sim fHs$
- viii. $\sim fHj$

I take it, for a Christian, that ii, iii, vi and vii are obvious. In defense of proposition i: if Jesus was not essentially human, he could have been something non-human. But just like I could not have been non-human and still be what I am, so Jesus could not have been non-human and still be what he was. Or so it seems to me, when I think of people as something biological. In defense of iv: Jesus could have been a completely ordinary human being, witnessed by the seemingly perfectly coherent scenario that Christians are wrong about the historical Jesus of Nazareth being divine. It is not incoherent to imagine him as an interesting, but ordinary fisherman, the human son of an even more ordinary carpenter. In defense of v: Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, which is the Son, which is fundamentally divine, so by Leibniz's Law, Jesus is fundamentally divine too. Finally, in defense of viii: by vii, the Son is not fundamentally human, but the Son is identical with Jesus, so, by Leibniz's Law, Jesus is not fundamentally human either.⁸

Lemma 4. By virtue of Leibniz's Law (LL, or proposition 18/23/28 above) and i–iv, we get four new contradictions on our hands.

Proof 1: i+LL entails eHs , which contradicts iii. *Q.E.D.*

Proof 2: ii+LL entails eDj , which contradicts iv. *Q.E.D.*

Proof 3: iii+LL entails $\sim eHj$, which contradicts i. *Q.E.D.*

Proof 4: iv+LL entails $\sim eDs$, which contradicts ii. *Q.E.D.*

No similar contradiction results from combining either one of v–viii with LL. This is no accident. Note the structure: propositions i–iv deal with essential truths; propositions v–viii deal with fundamental truths. Essence is *modal*; fundamentality is *categorical*. The contradictions are derived from combining LL with i–iv, which deals with essential truths, which are modal truths; but not from combining LL with v–viii, which deals with fundamental truths, which are categorical truths. Conclusion: essential, but not fundamental truths fail to be closed under LL. So, the last four paradoxes are traditional paradoxes from applications of LL to instantiations of modal properties!

This is an interesting result. The last four paradoxes are of the same kind as, for example, the paradox of the statue and the clay. Let *Statue* be a statue made from some clay; call it *Clay*. Assume that $\text{Statue} = \text{Clay}$. Statue, but not Clay has the property of being essentially statue-shaped. So, by LL, we get that $\text{Statue} \neq \text{Clay}$, contradicting our initial assumption. Likewise, assume $\text{Jesus} = \text{Son}$. Jesus, but not Son has the property of being essentially human. So, by LL, we get that $\text{Jesus} \neq \text{Son}$, contradicting our initial assumption.

The natural response is thus to solve the four paradoxes above in the very same way we solve the other traditional paradoxes with respect to the combination of modal properties and LL. As such, it is not a pressing problem for Christianity in particular, but a general problem for everyone. We are all companions in guilt at this point.

This is of course not the place to defend my favorite solution to the traditional paradoxes, but let me just briefly mention it: *counterpart theory*.⁹ Counterpart theory is the theory according to which no object exists in more than one possible world. In other words, there is no trans-world identity. So, for example, object a exists in one and only one possible world w . The modal truth at w that a could have been F, even though a is not in fact F at w , is true because there is another possible world w^* containing some b numerically distinct from a , but which resembles a in the relevant respects picked out in the context at hand, and b is F in w^* . In short: any way a could have been is represented by other things similar to a in other possible worlds in fact being that way in those worlds.

A result of counterpart theory is that the essential properties of things is not fixed once and for all, but differs a bit from context to context, depending on how one conceptualizes the thing one is talking about. So, for example, when we focus on Jesus as a human being, we (might, if we are somewhat scientifically oriented in that context) focus on him as a biological being, and as such he is not essentially divine, or non-biological. In such a context, i and iv are true. But when we focus on Jesus as the Son of the Trinity, we naturally think of him as being necessarily divine, and as such he is not essentially biological, or non-divine. In such a context, ii and iii are true. Nonetheless, in both contexts of focus, $\text{Jesus} = \text{the Son}$, the one and only person that, according to Christianity, has sometime in the past, walked around in the one and only actual world.

According to counterpart theory, claims of essence are thus not “deep” metaphysical claims, but rather contextually variant claims, the truth of which depends on which properties we focus on. Nothing similar is going on with claims of fundamentality. The fundamental properties of a thing are fixed once and for all, independent of all contexts, and independent of which properties we focus on. Claims of fundamentality are thus “deep” metaphysical claims: they are claims about what a thing is *really* like, behind all appearances and more and less pragmatically appropriate ways of speaking of it in our ordinary day-to-day life.

Conclusion: propositions i–iv are contextually variant, but propositions v–viii are not. The four paradoxes above arose because we treated i–iv as not being thus contextually variant. At least

so goes my favorite solution to such traditional modal paradoxes, and hence to the above modal paradoxes of the incarnation in particular. But the reader should feel free to come up with his own alternative. It is in any case not Christianity's problem in particular.

3. Objections, Replies and Distinctions

Before I consider some objections to my solution to the problem of the incarnation in particular, let me be clear on what I have *not* done. I have not defended the general distinctions between mere truth, essential truth and fundamental truth. I simply claimed that there are some such distinctions, and that these distinctions, whatever they are more exactly, or whichever names we ought to give to them, helps resolve the general metaphysical problem, of which the problem of the incarnation is a particular instance. I have also, in my mind, not fully defended the assumption that the three notions fail to be co-extensional, but simply claimed with the support of an intuitive case that they are not.

I have not defended counterpart theory as a solution to the incarnation. I simply showed how to employ it in solving the last four paradoxes I raised, but there might be other solutions that in the end turn out to be better. In any case, these paradoxes turned out not to be peculiarities of Christian doctrines in particular, so we are all companions in guilt on this point.

I have not, of course, argued that the incarnation, or any other instance of our more general problem, has actually happened. I was intentionally abstract and non-committal. I am only interested in showing a way for an instance of our general problem, and the incarnation in particular, to be a logically consistent scenario, and so without violating classical logic. I believe we at present have no way to prove the truth of any of the central Christian doctrines, but there are ways of proving their classical logical consistency, which have been my present interest.

With these caveats onboard, let me now reply to a few anticipated objections. First, one might object that since, on the above account, we have $\sim fH_j$ (i.e. claim viii above), we really have that Jesus is not fully human, which violates the Chalcedonian Creed. But the reply should be obvious by now: $\sim fH_j$ does not entail $\sim eH_j$; and essential truth is full truth in any reasonable sense of 'full truth.' So, Jesus is fully human by being essentially human, not by being fundamentally human (which he is not). Likewise, by the above claims (i.e. iii and vii) we have that $\sim fH_s$ and $\sim eH_s$, so one might object that the son is not human. But again, $\sim fH_s$ and $\sim eH_s$ do not entail $\sim H_s$; and mere truth is full truth in any reasonable sense of 'full truth' (for example, it is fully true that I am sitting right now). So, the son is fully human by being merely human, not by being either essentially or fundamentally human (which he is not).

Second, one might object that we still have a paradox when it comes to mere truth, witnessed by 18–22, so there is, in one sense, still a paradox within Christian doctrine. *Reply*: as long as we stay exclusively within one of mere, essential or fundamental truth, I have granted that at least one of the premises must go, witnessed by the paradoxical 1–5 and 6–10. In the particular case of 18–22, 19 is obviously what must go: being human doesn't entail not being divine precisely because something can be essentially human, but fundamentally divine. This is no acceptance of the "easy" solution rejected at the outset, according to which being human and being divine are not mutually exclusive. On my account, they are mutually exclusive within one of the truths, but not across them.

Third, one might object that the modifiers *e* and *f* only modify our predications, not the real properties of the world. And then, when we consider the real properties that are instantiated in the world, our initial paradox comes back with full force. But this objection is not taking my proposal seriously. Rather, it is simply restating the initial paradox in exclusive terms of fundamental truth, i.e. propositions 6–10, with *f* in place for *e*. But my proposal explicitly granted the inconsistency of 6–10 with *f* in place for *e*. The whole point of my proposal is to show that one must *mix* essential truth and fundamental truth such that the paradox goes away. It is therefore no objection to my

proposal to simply insist that there is a paradox in the case in which one is *not* thus mixing the truths.

Fourth, one might object that while I invoke different “categories” of truth, Christianity only operates with one notion of truth, so I have simply changed the subject rather than solved the problem. *Reply*: I am not invoking different *categories* of truth. Rather, I am invoking three different *ways of instantiating a property*, namely merely, essentially and fundamentally.¹⁰ In whichever of those three ways a property is instantiated, it is true—in the one and only sense of ‘true’—that it is instantiated in that way. So, when I speak of three different truths, I really mean the one and only truth of three different ways of instantiating a property. And note: Christianity should be no enemy of such talk. Consider: “We are all fundamentally creatures of God” and “Humans are essentially searching creatures.” Compare: “Jesus of Nazareth is essentially a human being” and “Jesus of Nazareth is fundamentally God.”

Let me end by briefly distinguishing my account of the incarnation from some other types of account.¹¹ First of all, my account is not a version of *Kenoticism*, the view according to which the Son ceases to be divine while being human. The main worry for this type of account is that he is not fully divine, which violates the Chalcedonian Creed. On my account, the Son is always fundamentally divine, so he is always fully divine.¹²

Second, my account is not a version of *Compositionalism*, the view according to which Jesus is a composite such that one of its proper parts is divine and another of its proper parts is human. The main worry for this type of account is that he is not fully human and fully divine, but only partly each, which violates the Chalcedonian Creed. On my account, the whole person is fully (fundamentally) divine, and fully (essentially) human.¹³

Third, my account is thus also no version of *Nestorianism*, the view according to which Jesus was really two people, one human and one divine. On my account, Jesus was one person who was fundamentally divine, but essentially human.¹⁴

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Notes

1. Cf. Fine (1994).
2. On fundamentality, see Fine (2001), Schaffer (2009), Rosen (2010), and Sider (2011). I understand the *fundamental* properties and relations to be those in virtue of which all other properties and relations hold, but

which themselves hold in virtue of no other properties and relations; I understand *grounding* to be the relation between the fundamental and the non-fundamental properties and relations; and I understand the *perfectly natural* properties and relations to be the properties and relations that perfectly “carve nature by its joints”, or make for perfect intrinsic similarity among things. Naturalness might also come in degrees. On grounding, see Schaffer (2009). On naturalness, see Lewis (1983; 1986:59–69).

3. Schaffer (2009) accepts that there must be an absolute fundamental level in virtue of which all other properties are instantiated, but Rosen (2010) accepts that there might be infinite descent, no absolute fundamental level, only more and more fundamental levels, *ad infinitum*. My solution in this paper is compatible with both views, but I henceforth talk as if there is an absolute bottom level to fundamentality.
4. By ‘co-extensional’ I henceforth mean *necessarily* co-extensional.
5. I believe the same can be said of the adverbial and adjectival modifiers, and thus preserve a better analogy with *e* and *f*: assume *a* is walking slowly. Then *a* is walking *because a* is walking slowly; that *a* walks is here no separate fact from the fact that *a* walks slowly. The same goes for being dark red entailing being red.
6. On the problem of the Trinity, see Bohn (2011).
7. Note that i–viii supports 23–27 as being the correct case of modification over 28–32.
8. Fundamentality, but, as we will see shortly, not essentiality, is closed under LL.
9. There is a well-known analogous temporal problem of identity in the vicinity here. My favorite solution to the temporal problem is *perdurantism*, or temporal parts theory, according to which objects are sums of temporal as well as spatial parts. On both counterpart theory and perdurantism, see Lewis (1986). There is of course no present need to commit to Lewis’s notion of possible worlds being concrete. For more on persistence in general, see Sider (2001).
10. The nominalist might here interpret me as invoking three different ways of *predication* instead, namely merely, essentially and fundamentally. My solution still goes through.
11. For a nice taxonomy of the different types of views, see Hill’s introduction to Marmodoro & Hill (2011).
12. For a defense of Kenoticism, see Forrest (2000).
13. For a critical discussion of Compositionism, see Le Poidevin (2009).
14. Thanks to Ben Caplan for discussion and comments.

Strauss's Farabi

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Abstract:

This article considers a difference between Farabi's political views and Strauss political view at one part and showing how Strauss has skillfully diverged from Farabi's path on the other part. For this purpose, and because of the wide range of works from both thinkers, I will consider one work from Farabi under the title of *The philosophy of Plato* and one work of Strauss under the title of *Farabi's Plato* which they have already bounded together in a view to the context. It must be discussed and analysis that how and why Strauss took such a view in aforementioned work about Farabi which is not easy to discover. To make the discussion more concrete, I will explain some esoteric notion of Farabi's political view.

As we go further, the fight against *Stultitia* and relativism gets harder,
If we would not prepared.

1. Introduction

It is very likely to speak about the “Modern Crisis” and the fundamental political aspect of it in these days. Also it has been common to consider these issues with respect to “the Ancient Greek Thoughts”. It has been admitted, but not generally, that the same attitude was taken, proposed and cultivated by one of our contemporary thinkers: Leo Strauss. One cannot fully understand of “critique of modernity” before one has study some notable thinkers, among them is Leo Strauss who has presented himself as a interpreter of medieval philosophy and the revealer of esoteric writing of that period which come down to us.

Indeed, he spoke of modern crisis and for his intention, he resort on medieval thinkers and philosophers like Maimonides and Farabi. To begin with, one must be familiar with Farabi's works who was one of the greatest political thinkers of his time and who lived in Islamic society and was aware of penetrating the Idea of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy. The combination of “ration” and “devotion” or the conflation of them.

Strauss, followed the path which had taken by Maimonides, reaches Farabi and believed he has lots in common with his doctrine. But Farabi was not enough legitimate for him for being accepted without Plato (not mentioning Aristotle here). One might believes that the aim of Strauss to address the modern crisis was to fully understand Maimonides, but he found out the possibility only comes with understanding the philosophical teaching of them. For this, he has started among Farabi's work which seems to him to serve his demands, for instance, *On Political Governments*.

It would be potty to accept the common always for the conclusion. Prior to that, it is our duty, if not very deep, to just sketch correctly the intention of Farabi as a philosopher. After that, we commit ourselves to study what was the cornerstone of Farabi's *On Political Government* and what was the Strauss focus on that.

2. Historical Approach

It is obvious that acculturating and also knowing the period of time which each thinker lives in, would be helpful to understand his or her thought and the way of thinking of him. It is crucial to say that no thinker, particularly no philosopher, can be reduced to his time and condition and be regarded as mere figure of political, social, religion, cultural, economical situations, but denying these aspects of life as one of the effective elements, even the weakness one, is sorely unfaithful to the history itself harming our judgment.

Farabi born and lived all his life in restricted Islamic world who was witness of the lack of intellectual aspect, or even believing in it, among the individuals and the whole society. Thinking, criticizing, analyzing was not a popular and favorable act because “all required principles were sent down to us”, has been regarded as *Sharia'a*. Since, according to Islamic tradition i.e. *Shona'a* and jurisprudence principles: *Sharia'a*, the politics regarded as a branch of religion science, and the position of leadership was left to a religious man: *Faghih*. Hence, every attempt e.g. making critical question, emanation, abrogation of the decay [political] principles or even participation in political debate would be defined as interference or, more strictly speaking, invasion to God's principle which has pre-set for us. All Islamic societies' leaders had been *Imam* or *Faghih*, that is no one else are entitled to take their place. This way of ruling has been seen in similar religion principle like Judaism or even pre-Islamic religion such as Ancient Egypt religion and Persian religion known as Zoroastrianism.

Translation movement slightly has changed the way of thinking and caused different view toward humanity and human's place, right and dignity in the city.

Farabi was among those philosophers who looked for the truth in that period of time and for his wide influence, in philosophy in general, and his priceless political ideas, in politics in particular, has been praised by the title of “The Second Teacher” or “The second Master” after Aristotle.¹

Most of his works, if say not all of them, concern with political Ideas. But how can he freely used his critical mind as philosopher and at the same time chose a method to not be harmed by those who would not tolerate his ideas e.g. those who were at the top of pyramid of political power. How he could be a believer and a philosopher at the same time? What did he do to address his political Ideas of his time?

3. Political-Philosophical Approach

Farabi was greatly influence by Greek philosophers, particularly by Plato and Aristotle, and preserved basis of their origin, format of thinking and ideas very well. His technique causes a turning point in his philosophical and ethical-political of his ages thoughts. All of his effort, as it is obvious enough, was not done for double-proving of thought, which was already strongly accepted in his time, but, unlike all of analysis of eastern commentators of his works, accordance to the incentive of changes toward sophisticated situation. Farabi was aware of possible conflict between philosophy and religion and he was the first philosopher who articulate a solution [4, p. 135] to the crisis of his time who found out the way to Eudaimonia's life through re-shaping a ethical-political through of his age. He, as a philosopher, was up to save the both world; the both way of living good and reach ultimate perfection in both world. He, as a philosopher, was a student of those philosophers who were pagans. And he, as a citizen, was a Muslim member of Islamic society.

He was, however, royal to the truth than to his emotion, hopes and beliefs and he found this way, as most other philosopher, even more abstemious than other ways.

The crisis of his time was not moral crisis, in some sense, or nihilism. The crisis of his time was the same of ours. The crisis of “rationality” i.e. feebleness of being wise and cowardice against non-rational desires. To address this crisis he tried to establish his school and was greatly concern

with that decay and was thinking, like any wise philosopher in anytime, of the restoration of political health. Even he was fortitude being forced to immigrate couple of time.

Borrowing the unity of metaphysic and psychology from his Greek predecessors, he has open his way toward political doctrine in his way. Like Plato and Aristotle, he designed his system according to cosmological shape. Noble being known as “unmoved mover”, “first cause” or better say “the pure *de facto* Intellect” located in the most supreme stratum of universe. Human body as a system had draw as similar as universe with the view to the Greek cosmological idea. Whereas as both universe and man combined with “mind and body” or “intellect and form”, the sublime and noble place is intellect in both.

Both (pure intellect² and human intellect) rule over universe and body respectively. With this view, intellect e.g. human’s intellect and also rationality take its nobility and credit back. This way of thinking reveals the character of Farabi’s political idea. Like Plato, and also Aristotle, his politics are strongly connected with cosmology, psychology and metaphysics [5, p.193-194]. For instance, *The Virtues City* or *On Political Governments*. This presuppose the mature study in philosophy and uniquely leads every readers to consider his political views with an eye on his metaphysic idea of his and its origin. We limit ourselves, however, to stress on the structure of *On Political Government*.

The similar way has being used in addressing the idea about the structure of the city as political community. I am trying to describe, is not, to repeat, its origin his love of wisdom. Similarity of his school with his predecessors is obvious in his approach to political community: *Polis*.

Individuals compare with their city are just a component part of it that all together construct cities and governments. Just like body and also the whole universe, human’s society has its levels and grades in itself and in the whole universe. The leader of city, whether it was a prophet-ruler or a philosopher-king, placed in the highest stand. There is an open debate whether we must content in his exoteric context or esoteric teaching.

4. Strauss’ Approach

Farabi was not a mere imitator of his predecessors. Although, Plato and Aristotle’s works were the main source of Farabi’s work. Thus, we must understand his school in two possible ways: First we shall understand his school through his interpretations and how he had connected to his Greek predecessors and then we shall understand his school by itself. He was not only a reader or interpreter but a philosopher who carefully established his school on the infrastructure of his so called pagan predecessors. To do so, he must be familiar with every one of the works which has come down to us as Platonic and Aristotelian works. Farabi, with such a sense of responsibility for nuance survey and investigation, did not write such a topic like “the philosophy of ...” or “...its parts...” without being sure that he has already seen works of that philosopher. Our contemporary scholars would not do that. To be realistic, both *The philosophy of Plato* and *The philosophy of Aristotle* are proofs of our claims.³ Just a quick look, nevertheless, at *The Philosophy of Plato* can reveal the familiarity of writer to almost every one of Plato’s dialogs. Thus, one might ask: what was the intention of the first impression of Strauss toward Farabi? Our main interest is to know whether the impression has made by Strauss is fairly or on the contrary, his intention and desires toward addressing “modernity”, known as “Modern Crisis”, dominate his philosophical character.

According to Strauss, and he was right, that Farabi depicted the main goal of Plato’s mature works i.e. reaching *Eudaimonia* which undoubtedly leads to the question of “How?”. The insufficiency of accepted ways leaded Plato, as Farabi said, to investigate the “other way”. This “other way” which substance of *Eudaimonia* is identical or certainly consist of a “certain knowledge (γνώση) or science (επιστήμη)” and a “certain way of life (βίος)”. The finding of “philosophy” and the “politics” inseparable from the presents of “Philosopher” and “king” and makes first group related to “that science” and the second group to “that way of life”. That is where

Strauss initially began to establish his idea which manifests itself right at the end of his *Farabi's Plato*: the impossibility of virtues city and its leads toward desire way of life.

According to Strauss, it is paradoxical when we consider Farabi's view toward Plato, essentially political, and also Farabi himself attributed to philosophy essentially the political meaning. The paradoxical meaning of Strauss manifests itself when we respect "philosophy" as a science or knowledge completely separated from "the way of life" as a "practical science or wisdom". Strauss believed, or he apparently pretended to, that where as we talk about *Eudaimonia*, we are talking about "desire way of life", then there is no meaning of "virtues way of life" in that. That is all about the "philosophy" and to be "*de facto* philosopher". He obviously, here, negating the meaning of "virtue" related to the "practice" of human beings as fundamentally related to the "wisdom" and "theoretical sophisticate faculty" of human beings in Ancient Greek philosophy e.g. in dialogs of Plato, for instance, *Apology, Crito, Law, Erastia and Menexenus*.

It can be seen that the nuance relation between philosophy, on one hand, and politics and ethics, on the other hand, has been established e.g. between the philosopher and the ruler, between virtues and knowledge. The very intention of Strauss in *Philosophy and Politics* [3, first chapter] is to deeply separate these inseparable way through the notion of *Eudaimonia*. Yet, it has been seen that philosophy on one hand and politics on the other hand do not belong to the same level but they belong to the same realm, take the same investigation, same method and lead to the very same End. End which is desirable for its own sake i.e. *Eudaimonia*. Strauss, on contrary, seems to believe that the cosmological way of concerning metaphysics as the way concerning political order by Farabi must be objected indirectly. Statesman, for instance, depicted the way that to rule *Polis* or have political power called for a special knowledge which has been mentioned as "that knowledge", which what politics relies on.⁴ That view will lead us, unlike Strauss, firstly, of to say that "philosophy is not merely a good thing; no, it is that which is truly useful" [3, p. 60, 13-15, the abstraction of *Erastai*]. And secondly, that *homo philosophus* and *homo rex* are in the same position in the virtues city [3, no. 20-25, *On political government*, second part, chapter 8]. The question is why Strauss attempt to humiliate the equality of them by omitting "the same position" and "in the virtues city" and tried to glare the insufficiency of the both, by separating them for degradation view of philosophy as a leading way to desire way of life but "impossible one" and the virtues way of life which leads to *Eudaimonia* but not human's ultimate perfection?

Farabi, referring to Plato's *Protagoras*, found that "that knowledge" can be attained and does "exist" in the manner that still leads to human's perfection. From the words such as "attainment", "investigation", thinking etc. we can predict that the goal i.e. perfection, is not something fancy which, as Strauss said at the beginning of *Farabi's Plato*, depicted by Farabi as well as Plato. Philosophy as a knowledge, supplies and trains theoretical wisdom, causes flourishing of intellect which separated from body and bodily things; until one move from opinion and reach knowledge [3, *On political Government*, First part, Ch. 12] and royal art supplied by "that knowledge" to lead human beings e.g. individuals as well as the whole society toward *Eudaimonia*. Thus, philosophy proves to contain the royal art since it supplies the virtues way of life which is in need of royal art and the royal art proves to contain philosophy since it supplies "that knowledge" which is in need of philosophy. Both philosophy and royal art are required for reaching *Eudaimonia* while "virtues way of life" cannot be exercised in the lack of knowledge which supplies it i.e. philosophy. Philosophy, on the other hand, cannot be exercised fully without concerning *Eudaimonia* as his humans' perfection. After all has explained, we must not ask about why we need both practical and theoretical faculty in perfection in order to produce *Eudaimonia*. Just because changes happen in human's body and human's soul, it is not for men to move innately toward ultimate perfection and *Eudaimonia*. Thus, we need endowments in both realm and exercise with our both faculty to reach and produce *Eudaimonia* [3, part two, ch.4].

Another point, nevertheless, which has rapidly stressed in *On Political Government* is the roll of Active intellect⁵, its rank and its relation to the second notion of Farabi's school of *Eudaimonia* i.e. the one that occur in hereafter life if man after his intellectual endeavors reach that

level of perfection that he entitled to being combined to and coalesced with active intellect and reaching the level of *intellectus adeptus*. This sort of perfection seems related to his esoteric teaching. Through that, he depicted the way for those who dedicate themselves to the philosophical way of life.⁶

One, can find contradiction in Farabi's doctrine of Happiness at all, as much as can be find in the whole *Ethics* compare with book 10 of the same book, when Aristotle starts to talk about the sufficiency of philosophy. On the other hand, the philosophy in this term concern a wide range of notions rather we use it on a mere contrary to its practical aspect. But we shall not, so far, survey on this aspect, that is take another effort in another time. Here we focus on our main topic and the contradiction between Strauss' Farabi and the real Farabi.

By separating, Strauss, practical philosophy from philosophy itself with a view to their ends as he believes they aim at different goal- and also their method, he tried to degrade philosophy by showing its insufficiency. "Happiness consists in *consideratione scientiarum speculativarum*" [3, p.15], placed right after he illustrated the second Farabi's idea, which is the same in Plato and Aristotle's schools, about the role of philosophy.

Whereas Farabi mentioned opinion about *Eudaimonia* such as reaching money, fame, glory, etc.⁷ he does not disconnected the hereafter *Eudaimonia* from this world *Eudaimonia*. In *Ihsa-al-ulum*, when he talked, in chapter five, on behalf of someone else rather than expressing himself, civil science which divided, but not corollaries, to the jurisprudence (*fiqh*)⁸ and language science (*al-Kalam*)⁹ he depicted that even the one who offer this Happiness must utilizes "that way of life" and exercise virtue and respect that as one of the most element. Yet, it is clear, from the method he take in chapter five, that he is satisfying his *Caliph* of his time by adding the *fiqh* and *kalam* beside the civil science. On contrary, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* has been seen that the only *Eudaimonia* known by him can be achieved in this world. [6, p. 14]

Now we can claim with more certainty that the esoteric teaching of Farabi is, and contrary to Strauss, we shall not interpret that to the "paradoxical way" of Farabi's teaching. The esoteric teaching inevitably forces writer to show some contradiction in his works; or at least the reader seems to feel in this way, but with a astute mind, one must find the right way through his ideas. Maybe Strauss was aware of this aspect when he used his third example of Farabi's view about political science and theoretical science. This is based on suspension of his judgment as to the truth of the super-rational teaching. Thus, one may believes that Farabi made efforts to introduce or better say make a room for revealed theology. But why he would do that when all were neglected, was "rational" aspect of life and manifest itself by the name of "crisis of humanity" in that period. He, as far as I concern, makes room for philosophy by emphasizing on it in different forms e.g. cosmologically, psychological and philosophically. Since his emphasizing on the rational aspect of life and illustrated *Eudaimonia* depends on exercising the theoretical faculty in order to continuously reaching sophisticated level (through philosophy) and exercising in the virtue manner (through ethics and politics concern royal art), his view of "the life after death" was far from accepted opinion which is a heritage from religions and had been chosen by Strauss. To begin with that in order to get hold of Farabi's view, one ought to get familiar with the "ultimate perfection" of men through *On Political Government*. It is in this work that Farabi speaks about immorality in different ways: (a) the idea of Active intellect [3, *On political Government*, first part Ch.5/ second part Ch.5], (2) the priority of Form from Matter, (3) using or describing "immorality" directly and eternal *Eudaimonia* indirectly which implicate immorality [3, *On political Government*. first part, Ch.5,6].

The idea of Active intellect in Islamic philosophy is similar to, or better say borrowed from, Greek philosophy. In Farabi's view, accepted and more logical theory about the immortality and human's soul is the theory which has been presented by Aristotle¹⁰. Where the Aristotle's discussions about this matter end in ambiguity, Farabi would not make any changes through it. Thus, if one has fully understood Farabi's thoughts and its transitions can understand his silence about addressing "immortality" directly. We can briefly offer two main reasons: (a) Farabi has the

same uncertainty as Aristotle had. (b) Farabi has the same idea about immortality as Aristotle had. That is an important reason to not talk about it under the Topic of *The Philosophy of Plato*.

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Notes

1. By solution I mean reconciliation in the favor of ration and awareness of political society. If we do not consider this element, then we can say that the first philosopher who found this conflict was Mohammad Ibn Zakariya Razi (865-925) known as Rhazes or Rasis
2. *العقل المحض*
3. The full articles are *The philosophy of Plato, its part, the rank of order of its part from the beginning to the end*" and "*The philosophy of Aristotle, the part of philosophy, the rank of order of its parts, the position from which he started and the one he reached*."
4. The knowledge (γνώση) has the same root with cognition (γνώσις) which depicted the structure of knowing something with the "attempt" of knowing that thing. That is deliverance of a man from perception to cognition which is related to a mere intellectual realm.
5. *العقل الفعال*
6. We have shown already that the philosophical way of life, in his broad means, does not only concern the theoretical notion but also the practical notion.
7. The Alert on the way of Happiness (Al Tanbih Ala Sabil Al-Sa'ada) I believe, this work still not familiar for English readers.C.f. Attainment of Happiness.
8. *تفه*
9. *الكلام*
10. C.F *Metaphysics - de Anima*



The Reverse Logic of Resolving the Contradictions

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Abstract:

Contradictions have not only a negative role as a limiter of logical reasoning, they are a necessary element of the cognitive process at paradigmatic and philosophical levels. Reverse logic offers the mechanism of correct including of contradictory proposals in the structure of reasoning at these levels. At the base of the reverse logic lies the principle of demarcation between the procedure of obtaining the new propositions and the mechanism of transferring truth between propositions.

The principle of non-contradiction corresponds to traditional notions of reality: nothing can be *something* and can be *not something* at the same time (to be snow and to be not snow to be a quantum and to be not a quantum) or a single object can not simultaneously have the opposite qualities (to be high and low, positive and negative, salty and unsalted). In full compliance with the ontological obviousness of such an idea one of the main laws of logic is a law of non-contradiction. It is formulated both with respect to statements, "the statement and its negation can not both be true," or with respect to predicates "the opposite predicates can not be assigned to a single logical subject. "In most logical systems we derive the following principle "anything can follow from the contradiction" or the weaker one "the denial of any statement follows from the contradiction." Because of this, the systems, which violate the law of non-contradiction, and which may cause contradiction, should be treated as logically incorrect.

However, the development of mathematics and logic in the XX century has brought us to understanding that building the non-contradictory mathematics (which Hilbert was seeking) and generally non-contradicted and rich enough axiomatic theories is impossible (K.Godel). It became clear that despite the fact that the presence of a contradiction in logical systems should still be treated as a mistake, the possibility and necessity of such errors in general case should be taken as a regular inevitability. Therefore rose the task of rethinking a place of contradiction in logic: the detection of contradiction in the system must not be perceived as a death sentence for it, but only as an indication of the inevitable limitations of the system, the inadmissibility of the continuation of reasonings that led to a contradiction (L. Wittgenstein). The contradiction in the logical system is just a "stop" sign at the specific direction of its development, and it is not the lifelong deprivation of its logical rights. Consequently, the law of non-contradiction should be understood not as a prohibition of contradiction, but as the inadmissibility of any logical conclusions from them. To fulfill this requirement first of all the principles "anything can follow from the contradiction" and "the denial of any statement follows from the contradiction", which, in fact, realize the modern versions of paraconsistent logics, should be excluded from logical systems (N. da Costa, D. Battens, etc.). It should be noted that the interpretation of a contradiction as something unacceptable, and not as a source of arbitrariness is consistent with the concepts of reality: the contradiction is never realized ontologically. It can be said, that in the substantive reality the possibility of a contradiction in future determines the movement of the objects towards the circumvention of it.

But it should be noted that the value of a contradiction in the cognitive process is not limited to its role of a logical reasonings stopper. It means that the contradictions shouldn't be treated only as mistakes, paradoxes or inevitable disadvantage of logical systems. Indeed, apart from the fact that we fix the contradictions at the language level or within the frameworks of particular logical systems, that is, in the scope of the law of non-contradiction, we always face the contradictions at a higher paradigmatic level. To such paradigmatic contradictions can be attributed the contradictions between the statements of different logical systems (theories), between the scientific-theoretical and empirical statements. The example of such contradictions is the ratio of axioms in different geometries (eg, Euclidean and Lobachevskian), the comprehension of which led to introduction of the concept of the curvature of space, the paradox of the ultraviolet catastrophe, the resolution of which has given rise to quantum physics, a contradiction in the quantum-mechanical description of light as a wave and as a quantum, etc. The contradictions between the statements in different religious, world-outlook and political systems can be attributed to paradigmatic. It is clear that such contradictions can not be interpreted as logical errors or inevitable "defects" of complex systems. They, as well as the scientific and paradigmatic contradictions reflect some objective laws of describing the World.

It is obvious that the paradigmatic contradictions point not only to limitations of singular systems, but rather on the possible direction of their development, and even more on the necessity of creation the new systems, being the *meta-theories* with respect to the initial ones. The emergence of meta-theory – the geometry in spaces with non-zero curvature – removed the contradiction between the axioms of intersecting straight lines. It can be said that in contrast to linguistic and logical levels, where the contradictions are simply excluded, on the paradigmatic level there is a real resolution of the existing conflict: meta-theory confirms the validity and legality of the presence of the two initially contradictory statements in the sphere of knowledge.

The role of contradiction on the philosophical level, which is next after paradigmatic, is even more specific and interesting. There the contradictions are present not only as a boundary, a transition point, but also as an inherent element of logical systems. The striking examples of incorporating the contradictions into philosophical systems are the dialogues of Plato, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* with its antinomies, and, of course, Hegel's *Science of Logic*. The necessity of including the contradictions into philosophical systems becomes quite obvious if we present the paradigmatic level of knowledge as a substantive for the philosophical level. If we consider philosophy a sphere, which studies and describes the cognitive activity altogether, in such a sphere the paradigmatic contradictions, for example, the contradictions arising at the interface of scientific theories should be described as necessary elements that fix landmarks of the development of knowledge. The philosophical theory, pretending to describe theoretically the evolution of knowledge, should necessarily possess the mechanism for the inclusion of contradictions into its logical structure. Otherwise, we will have a lot of private descriptions of static projections of the cognitive process.

So, in contrast to the paradigmatic level at which the admissibility of contradictions is ensured by including their parties into different logical systems (in fact, there is a partition of the whole language area on closed non-contradictory fields of individual theories), on a philosophical level, where the contradictions are the subject of knowledge, they inevitably should be an element of the theory. That means, that the philosophical thinking, the logic of philosophical systems should not only permit (allow) the contradictions, but also imply the logical need for them. In fact, it is stated, that for an adequate cognitive thinking, inherently including the paradigmatic contradictions, the thinking itself should be contradictory.

However, with all understanding of place and role of a contradiction at the philosophical level of knowledge and even with the examples of theoretical systems with the contradictions, incorporated into them (Hegel) we still do not have any logically relevant mechanism for working

with them. The task is obvious: there is a need for the mechanism of assumption and resolving the contradiction, that is the formal procedure for establishing the truth of the initially contradictory proposals. Further I want to offer the option of solving the specified problem.

The idea of a possible mechanism for resolving a contradiction will be demonstrated with the help of the already mentioned example of ratio of the axioms of intersecting straight lines in Euclidean and Lobachevskian geometries.

We formulate the contradiction in the following way: "the space is of that kind (has such quality), that in a plane through a point outside a straight line we can draw one straight line, which does not intersect the given straight line" (S is P) and "the space is of that kind (has such quality), that in a plane through a point outside a straight line we can draw more than one straight line that does not intersect the given straight line" (S is not-P). We understand that each of the pair of statements is accepted as a true one in its logical system, but this affirmation of truth is not enough for us to resolve the contradiction at the paradigmatic level – at this level the statements are formally contradictory.

The history of cognition tells us the solution: for understanding the essence of the contradiction between the statements of different theories, we need to turn to meta-theory, combining the original geometries. Formally, it means that the meta-theory should have a statement from which the truth of both initially contradictory statements necessarily follows. It is reasonable to assume that the new statement should apply the logical subject of contradiction "the space" (S) and state its heterogeneity, duality, and remove the contradiction with the help of this. For example, a true statement in meta-theory can be formulated as follows: "there is a space with a different curvature: zero, positive, negative" (S₀, S + S-). In substance, this statement affirms that the logical subject ("the space"), which is at the level of theories seems to us united, thus attributing the opposite predicates to it is interpreted as a contradiction, and at the level of meta-theory it is presented as a set of non-identical entities. Consequently, we must rewrite the original statements as follows: "the space with zero curvature is of that kind that in a plane through a point outside a straight line we can draw one straight line, which does not intersect the given straight line" (S₀ is P) and "the space with negative curvature is of that kind that in a plane through a point outside a straight line we can draw more than one straight line that does not intersect the given straight line" (S- is not-P). Thus, the original contradiction is removed.

So, we can conclude that, for formal resolving of a paradigmatic contradiction we should find such statement in the meta-theory, which would have a single logical subject with the original contradictory statements and affirmed the split and the plurality of the subject. Such scheme of argument can be called reverse-logical, since the transfer of the truth here is realized not from the initial statements (they are initially contradictory) to the following one, but vice versa, from the new statement to those, which were previously formulated. Considering, that the new statement has not been received as a result of a conclusion, it may be called *speculative*.

Let us try to analyze the functioning of the reverse-logical scheme at philosophical level. As an example, let us consider the initial contradiction in one of the most famous philosophical systems with the incorporated contradictions – in Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

First of all, it should be noted that Hegel rarely formulated contradictions in standard logical form, and we need to do it instead of him. It is clear that the statement "being is nothing" can not be interpreted as an assigning the predicate "nothing" to the logical subject of "being". Philosophy does not deal with objects outside the thinking at all: "being" is not a thing, not a subject, but a thought, and therefore another thought ("nothing") can not be assigned to it as a predicate. Therefore, in order to formulate a philosophical statement in the subject-predicate form, it is always more correct to introduce the thinking as a logical subject, and as a predicate – something, that is really belongs to thinking and can be assigned to it, that is a thought (a concept). The introduction of one concepts

as the logical subjects and assigning another concepts to them as the predicates, in my opinion, made the formulation and understanding of contradictions in philosophy very difficult.

Considering these simple thoughts, the statement about "being" as the first direct thought of the pure direct, yet not certain thinking should be formulated as follows: "the predicate 'being' is assigned to thinking as a logical subject." Furthermore, from this initial definition of thinking, because in it 'being' acts as a pure, immediate and uncertain, necessarily follows another statement "thinking is nothing." Or in an expanded form: "the predicate 'nothing' should be assigned to thinking, which has clear, immediate being as a predicate (that is, thinking the uncertain being).

So, we have a contradiction: thinking as a cogitative pure indefinite being at the same time is defined as a cogitative 'nothing'. Or in short: (1) "thinking is being" and at the same time (2) "thinking is nothing."

In this situation, in contrast to formal logic, in which a clear choice in favor of one of the conflicting statements should be done, we understand (feel) the truth of both statements. In addition, we have no reasons (rights) for such choice – we have no a priori set axioms (as in formal logical systems), with respect to which we could make a conclusion about the truth or falsity of the given statements. Moreover, the acceptance of one of the statements untrue automatically makes the second one untrue too. For example, if pure thinking is not "nothing"-thinking, it means that it is "something"-thinking, that means something specific, and therefore the predicate of "just being" cannot be assigned to it.

However, the logic must be logic and we can not stay in a situation of uncertainty. That means, that our challenge is to find a basis for resolving the contradiction, to find a new, speculative statement on the basis of which we could make a conclusion about the truth of originally contradictory statements. And such statement is "generated" by the original statements. Really, when we initially assigned the predicate "being" to thinking (presenting it as the thinking of pure direct being), we inevitably had to define it as "nothing" (as nothing-thinking), but, after this step (from being to nothing), we immediately got a new definition of thinking (which was not and could not be earlier): *the thinking as a transition*, as a pure movement, as *becoming*. That is, we can formulate a speculative statement as follows: "thinking has the predicate of becoming (the transition from being to nothing)." That means, thinking under the transition from "being"-thinking to "nothing"-thinking becomes not a direct (pure) thinking, but the certain thinking – the thinking which thinks. Although for the present it do not thinks about something outside itself, but only about itself as a pure possibility of thinking, shown as the movement, the becoming.

We also can discourse as follows: if a statement of pure being is a kind of direct *beginning* of thinking and its initial definition, the second statement of nothing-thinking can be imagined as *the end* of thinking (the end of this immediate thinking). But since in this view of the beginning and the end the thinking itself is revealed, is defined as the unfolding, it acts not as pure and uncertain, but as having acquired the certainty, as the transition from the beginning to the end, as the becoming.

So, we have three statements: two initial and contradictory – "thinking is being" and "thinking is nothing" – and one speculative "thinking is becoming". Here it should be noted that the thinking, which was a logical subject in the first two statements is not identical to the subject-thinking in the speculative statement, in which it has acquired the duration in time and became distinguished in itself. Now being-thinking, and nothing-thinking are acting as points (starting and end) of the becoming-thinking. With respect to speculative statement we can reformulate the original contradictory statements as follows: "thinking as a direct one is a thinking of pure being" and "thinking, which is mediated with the transition, the becoming, is thinking of nothing". That means, that the statement of thinking as becoming removes and permits (allows), the initial contradiction, affirming the non-identity of the subjects of the original statements. Thus, we have implemented and confirmed the reverse-logical scheme: *getting a speculative statement from a pair*

of contradictory statements can be considered valid only if the speculative statement removes the divergence between the initial statements, presenting their logical subjects as distinguished ones, and thus the truth of both initial statements follows from the truth of a speculative statement.

Let us consider some important points of the proposed logic. In the scheme of reverse logic we do not have any a priori true statement: the truth of initial statements follows only from the truth of a speculative one and the truth of the latter "hangs in mid-air". It can simply be accepted, as in classical logical systems is accepted the truth of axioms. And if we continue the discussion in the same way – revealing a contradiction, getting a new speculative statement, resolving the contradiction with the help of it – then the first speculative statement gains a legal status of a true one in the chain of reasonings.

The truth of the statements in this chain of reasonings will always depend on the truth of the last speculative statement. But there is nothing unnatural in it: the situation is similar to the situation in classical logics, in which the truth of all statements is directly inherited from only the admitted truth of axioms. That means, that in both logics the truth of the chain of reasonings in any case depends on an axiomatic statement: in classical systems this statement is at the beginning of reasonings, and in a system built according to reverse logic – in the end. But, there is also a significant difference: the last in the chain (reverse-axiomatic) statement is not the result of our arbitrary choice, but a consequence, the result of the development of the logical system itself. And, if under the expanding of this chain the initial immediate statement can be "received", we can loop the system and, in substance, remove its uncertainty, attachment to the conclusion about the truth of one statement (which Hegel was seeking while building his Logic).

It should be noted that the scheme of reverse logic is quite rational, that means, it does not allow any arbitrariness in the transition to a speculative statement, because it has strict requirements: to declare the distinguishing of a logical subject and an obligation of pursuing the truth of original statements from its truth.

However, there is an uncertain, undetermined, creative point in the very search of a speculative statement – because it does not follow logically from some true statements (our initial statements are contradictory). But it is clear that this point of free creativity is incorporated to the systems built according to classical logic – we always have it on the stage of choosing the axioms. And the necessity of a permanent choice in the reverse-logical scheme affirms its creative specificity.

The next point concerns the role and place of a contradiction in logical systems. It should be noted that in classical logics the prohibition of a contradiction is associated with the requirement of the unambiguity of truth transmission. In fact, the law of contradiction states the impossibility of logical transition from untrue statements to true ones. And since one of the contradictory statements is necessarily false, and the transfer of truth is possible only in forward direction, the contradiction is certainly prohibited. And what do we have in reverse-logical scheme? In it the transfer of truth from statement to statement occurs only from a speculative statement to the initial ones. Consequently, the presence of a contradiction at a certain stage of logical reasoning does not imply the possibility of the transition from the untrue statements to true ones. Not to mention the fact that the very contradiction is resolved by further reasonings.

In connection with the above matter, there is a need to expand the understanding of logic, dividing in it the procedures of getting the new statements and the transferring of the truth between the statements. In classical logic, these procedures are combined: the withdrawal of a new statement automatically implies the transferring to it the truth, which is initially stored in the system of axioms. The proposed in the reverse logic variant of separation of the truth transferring mechanism and the mechanism of formulating the new statements allows us to "work" with the contradictions within the frameworks of one logical system: it should be noted that although the contradictions are removed (resolved) with the help of speculative statements, they can not be taken out of the system,

as they constitute its essential element – the speculative statement is formally attached to them. But the very presence of a contradiction does not affect the truth of the system, because there is no transfer of the truth from contradictory statements to any other statements.

Let us demonstrate the functioning of reverse logic with the help of another, more simple than Hegelian, example. Let us consider the two contradictory statements: "philosophical thinking is scientific" and "philosophical thinking is not scientific" (S is P and S is not-P). We are looking for a speculative statement, which fulfills the requirements of reverse logic: it must have the same logical subject with the contradictory statements, affirm its heterogeneity and the truth of the initial statements should go from the assumption of its truth. A possible version: "philosophical thinking has the thinking of the philosopher as its subject" or "philosophical thinking is thinking of thinking." That means, that in the speculative statement the initial logical subject is divided into two subjects, "the thinking as a method" (S_m) – the thing with the help of which the philosopher thinks and "the thinking as a subject" (S_s) – the thing of which philosopher thinks. Further we have two implications: (1) "if the philosophical thinking is the knowledge by thinking (rational), it is scientific (in contrast to artistic, religious, etc.)," or "philosophical thinking as a method is a scientific thinking" (S_m is P); and (2) "if the subject of philosophical thinking is the thinking of the philosopher itself, that means the clearly unreproducible, unique object, in this case the philosophical thinking is not scientific" or "philosophical thinking as a subject is not scientific" (S_s is not-P). So, we have a system of three true statements built on a pair of initially contradictory statements.

In conclusion, I would like to note the similarity of reverse-logical scheme with the *abduction* – a procedure of searching for the true hypotheses, proposed by C.S. Peirce. Both the abduction and the reverse logic are designed to formalize the creative thinking, as a result of which the credible hypothesis, explaining new facts should appear, or the speculative statement, affirming the truth of previous contradictory statements. In both cases the received statement is not a logical consequence of initial data. In both cases there is a coordination of the assumed truth of a statement with the existing statements. However, there is a significant difference between the abduction and the reverse logic. The hypothesis, resulting from abduction, although appeared *after* fixing the initial data, eventually logically takes the place of a message. That means that separation of procedures of obtaining the statement and transferring its truth to other statements is realized only outside the logical system – the final system (theory) is formed by classical logical rules. In the system, which is built according to reverse logic, the transfer of truth from the late (speculative) statement to previous initially contradictory statements, saving their order in the reasonings is formally legalized.

It should also be noted that the very fact of the "reverseness", determination from the future, realized in the scheme of reverse logic corresponds with our understanding of the specificity of the cognition process: while trying to understand creatively, we intuitively compare our thoughts with the idea, that is not yet "caught", not formulated, but we definitely know, that it exists and are sure of its truth.

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Thinking about Mentalese

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Abstract:

Problem of the language of thought is connected not only with different epistemological points of view on human mind and body, but also with the way we define either language or thinking (or communication). The communication is the essence of language – not vocabulary, syntax etc. Hence I prefer speaking of ‘world-learning’ (during our early cognitive and communicational processes) to ‘language acquisition’ or ‘language learning’. In other words, the processes of perception are prior to any linguistic abilities and also fundamental to the structure of mentalese. The language of thought might be constructed of *intentional forms* whose (intentional) genesis is connected with our perceptual experiences.

Whereas the notion of thinking is not difficult to understand to us, since we know what thinking is (because we sometimes think, cogitate and observe ourselves thinking), the notion of mentalese or thought-language seems to be more than ambiguous. Its ambiguity does not rise from Jerry Fodor’s conception only but rather from different epistemological views of our mentality. If we are physicalists (as Fodor and his followers are) we think about our thinking processes as brain events only. If we follow Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology for example, we do not treat our mind as brain at all. Correspondingly mentalese for physicalists is (and must be) something completely different than for phenomenologists.

Then thinking about mentalese is not easy. Even if we wanted to avoid (so old as philosophy is) the discussion concerning the mind-body problem, we would have to face the problems of 1) thinking and communicating, and 2) thinking, communicating and cognizing, anyway. What about language acquisition? Well, that’s the third problem, too, but not the main problem. To know what language acquisition is, first we have to know what language alone is. Hence, the definition of mentalese is dependent on the definitions of language and of thought. This way we enter the realm of epistemology, but it is not the end of story, since philosophers quarrel each other for ages about what the realm of epistemology is and what epistemologists are allowed to do in their scientific routines.

Lots of linguistic books and linguists say that language is formed by spoken and graphic signs ordered in different ways. From that point of view language is separated from thought and thinking as we can see. And that looks very artificial. When we communicate thinking and cognitive processes are fundamental and prior to any ordering of signs (either spoken or written, printed, typed etc.) – then we should not forget about thinking when defining language. But how to define thinking or thought? Another problem, another philosophical quarrel or intellectual war.

Let us focus on communication instead. How is it possible to us to communicate effectively? It is possible only when we similarly cognize the world around us – it is not the ‘matter of language’. If we lived in different (private) worlds as monads the communication process would not be effective and possible at all. We would be the Babel tower eternal citizens or prisoners. There is

no any language without communicating subjects. Language does not exist when there is no communication processes. The texts of books in libraries, of plays, of poems, of languages' dictionaries, of theories etc. – they do not exist if nobody reads them. Naturally we can communicate without words since many things, feelings and even thoughts are expressed with our eyes or faces, and often there is said that we use nonverbal *language* (as well as utterances) when we speak to some people or audience. The notion of 'the nonverbal' is connected with that one which apprehend the realm of what verbal is.

This way we approach the problem of language again, focusing on word itself. Is word a sign simply and only? Is it a sequel or set of signs (spoken or graphic ones)? We should bear in mind that speaking was the earlier way of human communicating than writing (moreover when there is not a given speech community the given ethnic language is dead, it disappears), so the written form of language is later one to spoken communicating. But what is going on when people say something? Many theorists see the communication process as sign-exchanging only, then they forget about the priority of speech over sign-consciousness. And speaking seems to be impossible without thinking.

Linguists would say that first we have to take lessons (from speaking subjects around us) of articulation until we speak something that makes sense. Psycholinguists point that children understand lots of utterances quite long before they are able to formulate their own linguistic phrases. If we connected the process of language acquisition with the thinking one, namely, a given subject cannot think if he/she has not learned a given ethnic language – then it would be hard to explain the (observed by psycholinguists) phenomenon of understanding some utterances by very young children before their learning language, however.

Some linguists (following Noam Chomsky – and Fodor can be treated as one of the followers in philosophy of mind) solve the problem saying that linguistic (especially syntactic) structures are innate. There exists something like linguistic a priori in human minds (here: brains), that activates and develops during a child development. Why the children who are not spoken to for years cannot develop accurately their linguistic innate abilities then? Is communication not fundamental to language acquisition? And if so, then the linguistic a priori theory is not well-grounded.

Communication always exists in perceptual context (for communicating subjects). When a mother or father wants to communicate with her/his small child, there has to be a clear perceptual context of the communication act – clear to both sides of communication. The adult must see the same objects as the child. The objects are the same whereas the perceptions can be obviously different in some aspects (someone can be closer to some objects, than someone else, something is small for the adult when bigger one from the child's perspective and so on). Linguists say that that situation is the way of language acquisition in early years of child development – adults utter something that is remembered by child and assigned to objects. It does not have to be the right explanation of the cognitive situation, however.

It will not be overestimated if we assume that the small child knows nothing about language, its structures, phonemes etc. and of course about language acquisition process. We can assume that the child hears continuous voice signals not any sets of vocal signs, instead. Moreover the child certainly does not think about the situation in a way: 'well, I'm learning my mother language now, and must be focused on what is uttered to me' (and his/her parents do not approach to the situation that way: 'well, let's teach our baby the word 'dog' at the beginning which is the set of sounds [d], [o] and [g]'). That means the child does not discriminate *linguistic* behavior of the adults and he/she does not *learn language* (*phonemes, words, sentences, texts* and so on) but rather *learns world*. The child's consciousness is focused on *what* is perceived, pointed at, described, showed etc. and not on *what* and *how is said*.

Most of parents are not linguists so they are not very attentive to making the best conditions for 'language acquisition' processes. They rather concentrate on showing different world-objects than speaking perfectly, correctly, slowly etc. The child actually 'learns language' (his knowledge

about lexicon grows month by month, year by year, anyway) on the occasion of world-learning or world-acquiring then, because epistemic structures are prior to any linguistic ones in his/her mind. When we assume that there is no such process as (strictly or pure) language acquisition in early childhood, it will be easier to understand mentalesé.

Cognition processes are prior to any communication, we said. If we did not cognize similarly, we would not communicate effectively. Communication between parents and their child is connected with their common spheres of perception and what is perceived by three of them. First 'world-layer' perceived by a child is the realm of subjects (certainly I do not concern child diseases or mental disorders cases here). Before he/she learns anything with respect to 'things-world', he/she learns the subjects who take care of him/her. The child perceives the community around him/her and then from the members of the community he/she learns other world-layers.

Why bother the child cognitive development? Because mentalesé should be a 'manner of thinking' already in the very early years of child development. In Fodor's view mentalesé is a system of neural symbols causally connected with the world objects, that means the referentiality of the brain-signs or brain-symbols is founded upon causation (from physical objects which (somehow) correspond with the signs/symbols in our brains). As we can see Fodor's language conception does not focus on intersubjectivity of language. Our language is intersubjective because 1) our community use it, 2) it is impossible to learn language individually (without communication with other subjects). There is no any private language, hence we 'learn language' as 'non-private' medium of communication, as 'public' one. We use the same language elements (signs, words, sentences etc.) as other subjects. When we are small children we rather enter into the language sphere which exists in communication processes around us than the linguistic structures enter into our minds. We hear others speaking, laughing, crying etc. – we do not grow up in the space of complete silence. Even unborn children react on parents' voices.

To understand mentalesé we have to understand that we do not have metalinguistic attitude when we think. Of course, a linguist can think about the language structures which he recollects in his analysis, for example. When we think: *I can see the screen of my computer is dirty*, we do not think: *let me take the words: I, can, see, the, screen, of, my, computer, be, dirty – and then I'll make a sentence about my seeing some things*, however. We simply perform a mental operation on some elements (which are understood in philosophy in different ways) in our mind.

Some philosophers say those elements are just words (then mentalesé is language the same as spoken or written one). Some say the elements are only representations/mental pictures (then mentalesé is a pictorial code). Who is right? If we thought in words only, we could not understand what is said to us until we learned the language – and we would not have abilities to imagine geometric figures and other things. If we thought using 'mental pictures' only, it would be difficult to explain the 'word operating' processes in our minds.

And now we can think for a while about mentalesé itself. Let us assume, we think by means of words, sentences, texts. However, we do not speak to ourselves (and then hear what is said by us) or write in our minds (and then read what is written by us). If we assumed that we operate with words when thinking, we should assume also that our mental attitude is metalinguistic, namely, we stand on some higher level in our mind and we 'see the language' which we want to use (and it spreads out like landscape before our mental eyes), choosing that word or sentence to 'express thoughts'. If so, our thinking processes would have to be two (or even more) operations at the same time: either metalinguistic, or linguistic ones. Would the former be linguistic/verbal or not? Would it have the syntax of natural language or not? I guess we are very close to regressus ad infinitum.

Well, if not words and pictures then what are the primary elements of our thinking? It is possible that we do not think with words or pictures but with special intentional forms, which are our apprehensions of words and other contents of our perceptions. Our communication (thinking and talking, writing etc.) is so effective because we do not use any *mental words*. When we communicate our attitude is not to grasp a linguistic layer but to comprehend the subject matter of communication – we intentionally deal with *about what* is communicated. We (very often)

communicate about the results of our cognitions, perceptions etc. – not about our language. We certainly can focus on language itself (especially for scientific purposes), but in our ordinary conversational interactions, we focus on *what about* not on *how it is said* or *what is the meaning of the word?*

The (immanent) intentional forms (they are not intentional objects as referents of our thoughts are) were discovered by Husserl in his analyses of spatial consciousness. He was antipsychologist and antirepresentationalist in his epistemology. His intentional forms are not ‘schemes’ participating in our perceptions but transparent and plastic structures that can be modified in different ways. We use the same intentional form ‘house’ to apprehend perceptually any objects similar to house – no matter their shapes/colours differences (we use ‘house’ to apprehend any house which is on a photography, sketched, drawing or film, as well). The seen objects are different (a house far away seen from car – the house before me, a house filmed in *Number 23* movie), but the intentional form which regulates our spatial perceptions of them is one. It is not a mental *picture* of *some house* (nor any mental *model* of house) because houses are different and our mind does not mirror every house seen by us with another representation.

If there were a representation (or brain symbol as Fodor wants) assigned to a *given* (here and here) object, there would be so many representations (in our mind) as many objects are (and as many perceptual situations of seeing such and such objects are). We do not use a different ‘representation’ to different objects of the same type, however. We can differentiate ‘grandma’s house’ from ‘grandma’s friend, Ms. Molly’s house’, but the criterion of the discrimination is connected rather with the people living or that were living in such and such buildings. And we do not distinguish that way all the houses seen by us when travelling or walking, but only ‘special, familiar objects’.

Our cognition works so fast because the process of world-learning implies different structures than linguistic ones. They are epistemic, so mentalese as a fundamental means of our thinking works in a different way than operating symbols or representations. The elements and structures of mentalese are connected with the complicated contents of our perceptions, hence every theorist who wants to deal with mentalese must get to know with perception analyses especially those of Husserl’s in his works on spatial perceiving (f.e. *Ding und Raum* – lectures of 1907). Generally speaking Husserl proves that every single object seen by us is perceived in thing-context, and our perceptions of spatial objects and any spatiality itself are correlated with movement of our perceptual systems (those of eyes’, head’s, body’s etc.). In other words, we see spatial things because we can move around them as subjects and intentionally synthesize different aspects of seen things. But we have to remember that our mind is not a camera taking photos of every aspect of what is before our eyes – our mind is a living structure and not any mechanism collecting data. The computer-model so widely used by many philosophers as human-mind metaphor (or even a description) abstracts from the whole motor and bodily activity of a human (embodied) subject of cognition and is completely inaccurate when we try to understand the processes of perception and thinking (with mentalese as well) at all. Human perceptual knowledge is not founded upon data collecting. Child cognitive development is not programs or software implementing in small brains.

Having assumed that during perception we see lots of things in one grasp (perceiving is not grasping an isolated object – such isolation is meta-cognitive process), we should assume that world-acquiring is the bottom of any language-acquiring as well. Hence the structures of mentalese are correlated with what is perceived by us from our early conscious living and interacting with other subjects.

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The Christian Orthodoxy in the Modern World



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Andrew Schumann: It is usual to think that Eastern Christianity is not rational, but it is mystic – in its doctrinal and theological studies there is no logic at all. Whether this view corresponds to the reality? Is it true that there is no logic in Orthodoxy? If the Orthodox logic exists, then how it is expressed and in what?

Basil Lourié: I would like to avoid such terms as “Orthodox logic” or any other term making logic a part of the religious beliefs of the Orthodox Christianity. Logic is simply a mean to explain the contents of these beliefs. Indeed, the applicability of the classical logic to this purpose is severely limited: it is useful for some minor points only. The same can be repeated about even non-classical logics respecting the principle of explosion *ex contradictione quodlibet*. This is why many people think that the Orthodox dogmatics is basically illogical, although it does use logics for its peripheral technical issues. I think that this conviction is absolutely wrong. When the Fathers of Church were elaborating a logical language for explanation of the realities of their faith, they had to develop a paraconsistent logic, that is, a non-classical logic where the principle of explosion does not work. This logic not only tolerates contradictions but relies on them. Its very basic structures are contradictory and not only contradictory but contradictory. The most of the paraconsistent logics developed during the twentieth century are based on the contrary contradictions without permitting the contradictory ones. Only the so-called dialethical paraconsistent logic developed especially by Graham Priest, which is based on the contradictory contradictions, has something to do with the basic logical structures of the Orthodox dogmatics. There is a patristic textbook on such logic, the works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite (second half of the fifth cent.), especially his *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia*. It is interesting to trace (as Carlos G. Steel once did) how Dionysius’ dialethic logic is “rectified” to become a usual logic respecting the principle of explosion under the pen of his major Latin Scholastic commentator Albert the Great. Nicholas of Cusa partly noticed this incorrectness of Albert and criticized him, but Scholasticism in general and its Western heirs remained unsusceptible to this very core of the logic of Dionysius and Byzantine

Patristics in general. Long before these Western opponents, the patristic logical dialethicism met its opponents in the East (e.g., Eunomius, Nestorius, John Philoponus...).

Andrew Schumann: From the structuralism position it is possible to assume that there exists someone who possesses Orthodox thinking (i.e. follows the Orthodox logic), but he does not declare Orthodox values, e.g. he does not say the concise statement or does not take communion. Nevertheless, there are also opposite cases: someone declares himself Orthodox, but he does not possess Orthodox thinking. What is it more important for the Orthodox Church either to proclaim himself Orthodox, but not to follow the Orthodox logic, or to follow the Orthodox logic, but not to be Orthodox in words?

Basil Lourié: Logic is only a way of thinking, but the human personality as a whole and even its cognitive sphere are larger than any given aspect of its functioning. Thus, there is no single way of thinking or way of action which would be enough to be a true Orthodox believer. To be an Orthodox, you have, first of all, to have a direct understanding of some reality, which exists regardless of our faith but can be understood with the faith only. You can have a right (“dialethic”) way of thinking but avoid recognising this reality. Of course, you can recognise this reality but have no right way of thinking. In the latter case, you can be an Orthodox if you are either incapable/unwilling to rule yourself by a philosophical reflexion or very critical to your logical capacities in this particular (religious) sphere. Otherwise, you will invent an “Orthodoxy” of your own. Needless to say that this is the main source of the heresies.

Andrew Schumann: Please tell us about the Orthodox Church you belong to. Why isn't it the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the Moscow Patriarchate?

Basil Lourié: Our Church is an heir of the so-called Catacomb (that is, illegal) Church of the Soviet period. She was formed in the late 1920s and the early 1930s by those neo-martyrs and confessors of Orthodoxy who did not follow the way of apostasy of the officially recognised Soviet Church. We don't agree with the major point of faith of our Soviet colleagues that “to save the Church” means the same as “to preserve the Church buildings in our possession” and to preserve legal permission for administration of rites. This basic difference resulted in many differences in canonical and dogmatic matters. Thus, we don't consider them as Orthodox, and they, whereas considering us as being Orthodox by faith, take us as schismatics.

Andrew Schumann: Which cultural and political differences of Russian Orthodoxy from other forms of Orthodoxy can you define?

Basil Lourié: I think that the Russian Orthodoxy is, from a cultural point of view, basically twofold: it is divided into two traditions, that of the Muscovite Church and that of the Kievan metropolis of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, but these traditions were never separated, whereas they were always (from their formation in the fourteenth century) different. Both branches are not self-sufficient. The Muscovite branch was formatted and deformed under the pressure of the very strong Muscovite state. The Kievan branch was formatted and also deformed in the atmosphere of chaotic competition of many different religious and political forces...

Andrew Schumann: In respect to Russian Orthodoxy there are a lot of mass-media scandals: the Patriarch clock, the Patriarch apartment, etc. Why is the image of Russian Orthodox Church so negative in liberal mass-media? Can it be improved? And how?

Basil Lourié: I have to recall that the Patriarchate of Moscow and its image have an only remote relation to the Orthodoxy. I am sure that this critic is justified. The media-scandals around the

Patriarchate of Moscow were developing according to the known rules of dissimulation and perception of the information which was, at first, very unfamiliar and, probably, unwelcome. Such processes could be described in the catastrophe theory as one of the elementary catastrophes, namely, the cusp catastrophe. The year 2012 became the point corresponding to the quick transition from one edge of the cusp to another, that is, to a spurt of negative information after a period of its suppression. My prognosis is that the Patriarchate of Moscow will never regain the credit of confidence which it had in the early 1990s and will continue to be appreciated as a part of the government bureaucracy.

Andrew Schumann: The largest scandal of the last years connected with Russian Orthodoxy has happened to the group Pussy Riot. This scandal strongly polarised the Russian society. Please tell us about your position concerning this event. Whether there was a blasphemy indeed? Who became an interested person in such an impressive international resonance?

Basil Lourié: I consider the Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina (two Pussy Riot's members who are now in jail) in their action in the "Pussy Riot church" (new popular name of the place of their action) as true Russian "fools for Christ" and their action itself as a genuine act of faith and a genial work of art. It was only one beat but precisely in the solar plexus of the monster of a pseudo-Church hybridized with a pseudo-religious state ideology. The monster began to howl with pain and created himself "an impressive international resonance".

Andrew Schumann: What has determined your choice of mission to be the Orthodox priest? Why have you seen in Orthodoxy a special power source and energy for you?

Basil Lourié: Of course, Orthodoxy considered as the Orthodox Christian faith together with the corresponding practice is "a special power source and energy". This is simply a matter of fact. Why? — I cannot answer better than it is answered in the gospels and in the writings of the Fathers, especially in monastic literature. But, according my own choice, I would prefer to be a monk but not a priest. I was obliged to become a priest when our parish lost its rector and, then, its only priest (our former rector, Fr Alexander Zharkov, was shot down in 1997, when he prevented grabbing of our church building by the Patriarchate of Moscow).