Department of Political and Social Sciences

**Community after Totalitarianism.
The Eastern Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and
the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity**

Kristina Stöckl

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

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IV

Abstract

Starting with a definition of political modernity from the angle of its greatest trial, namely totalitarianism, this study pursues two questions: How to conceptualize community after the experience of totalitarianism? And, what can the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition contribute to this debate? In both parts of Europe, totalitarianism raised the same political philosophical challenge: How to conceptualize the relationship between the individual and community in the light of the absolute communization of society and the simultaneous absolute atomization of individuals which totalitarianism had brought about? In contemporary Western political philosophy, the reflection upon this experience has taken three principled directions: the unequivocal embrace and conceptual elaboration of liberalism for which the works of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas are exemplary, the communitarian critique of liberalism for which the works of Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre are representative, and the postmodern critique which, most clearly expressed in the works of Jean-Luc Nancy, ties the question of community back to the singular human being. In the present study, I add to these three approaches a viewpoint which challenges the limits of all of them. Focusing on the works of Sergej Horužij and Christos Yannaras, I demonstrate how these authors, while accepting the lesson of totalitarianism, seek foundations for their conceptualization of community and human subjectivity in the spiritual and intellectual tradition of Eastern Christianity. My aim is to re-think the political problematic of modernity from the East and beyond liberal, communitarian and postmodern political philosophy in order to extend the interpretative space of political modernity, to sharpen the problematic of community and the human subject after the experience of totalitarianism, and to single out those elements which are especially pertinent for a post-totalitarian philosophy of community: the quality of freedom, the role of practices, and the meaning of tradition.

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This is a text about community and about the uniqueness of the singular person.
In memory of Juan Diego Canelón (1978-2004).

Note on transliteration and translation

The present study adopts the International Organization for Standardization Code ISO 9 (1995) for the transliteration of Cyrillic into Latin script.

ISO 9 is a one-letter-to-one-letter transliteration. The letters *я* and *ю* are transliterated *â* and *û,* pronounced *ya* and *yu.* The letter *x* is transliterated *h* and pronounced as an aspirated *kh*.

In the case of authors who belong to the second generation of the Russian diaspora, the transliteration into Latin script can be considered as established. Their names are therefore not adapted to ISO 9-style:

> *ex.* V. Lossky, Meyendorff, Schmemann

The same applies to contemporary Russian authors who publish in German or English:

> *ex.* Agadjanian, Kharkhordin, Kostjuk.

In the body of the text, titles and special terms are used in the transliterated form in italics and are translated in brackets when they occur for the first time.

> ex. *Vehi (Signposts)*

Only English-language quotes are included in the body of the text. Full-text quotes from languages other than English are reproduced in the footnotes. Quotes in German and Italian are not translated, quotes in Russian are.

All translations from Russian are, unless otherwise indicated, done by myself.

The bibliography is divided into two parts, Latin-script and Cyrillic-script.

In the references and bibliography, Cyrillic is used for Russian books and articles. A transliteration of the author's name and a translation of the title is provided in the first citation of each text and in the bibliography.

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I. Introduction

> "Nous sommes plus jeunes que jamais, nous les Européens,
> puisqu'une certaine Europe n'existe pas encore".
>
> (Jacques Derrida, *L'autre Cap*)[1]

The conceptual challenges, which the present investigation in political philosophy and in history of ideas is concerned with, emerge from the post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation of Europe. The key concept under discussion is *community*, in particular the question how the freedom of the human subject and its being part of a community can be reconciled. This question becomes especially relevant at the present point in *time*, because the overcoming of the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century has not brought about the universalization of the Western individualist-liberalist paradigm, as some suggested;[2] the question of community, which in many ways lay at the heart of these totalitarian movements, is still with us as a philosophical issue. The interest in a variety of approaches to the concept of community becomes especially salient at the present point in *space*, because the end of the Cold War has recast the question of political and cultural borders in Europe. A new borderline has been invoked, running along the Russian-Baltic border, between Byelorussia and Poland, right through Ukraine and Romania and across the Balkans all the way to Greece, a borderline, it has been suggested, that delineates a different culture of community and the individual in the Orthodox East.[3] What this study attempts to do, is to discuss the concept of community in the post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation of Europe, to look at different understandings of community in philosophy of both Eastern Christian and Western background, to point out differences and commonalities, and to draw from this encounter elements of a political philosophy of community and of a European 'philosophical geography'[4] that can accommodate, beyond alleged borderlines, those different intellectual traditions which make up the richness and ambivalence of Europe's political, cultural and religious heritage.

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *L'autre Cap* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1991).
[2] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest* 16 (1989).
[3] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993).
[4] 'Philosophical geography' is a term used by Larry Wolff in order to describe how, during the Enlightenment, Eastern Europe, with the exception of Greece, was excluded from the European philosophical space and taken into account only as a receiver of philosophical insight and education, but not as a place where philosophical thought would itself originate. (Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).) The concept of a 'European philosophical geography' gains depth when we consider it also in the light of Massimo Cacciari's notion of 'geo-filosofia dell'Europa', with which he means, with reference to Europe and Asia, a philosophical language that recognizes the other as constitutive of the self. Massimo Cacciari, *Geo-filosofia dell'Europa* (Milano: Adelphi Edizioni, 1994), 25.

I.1. Totalitarianism and the question of community in political philosophy

Central to this study of the variety of ways in which the topic of community has been approached by philosophers in different European contexts, is the idea that any thinking of community at the present time proceeds in the light of the experience of totalitarianism. The totalitarian experience is common to Western and Eastern Europe: Fascism and Nazism in the West, Stalinism in the East. In both parts of Europe, the effect of totalitarianism raised the same political philosophical challenge: *How to conceptualize the relationship between the individual and community in the light of the simultaneous absolute communization of society and absolute atomization of individuals that totalitarianism has brought about?* Philosophers also felt the need to ask for the causes of totalitarianism: What had gone wrong in modern Europe so as to make totalitarianism possible? – These are the questions, which the philosophers treated in this study are struggling with, and they are also the questions that I seek to come to terms with in a cross-reading and systematic rendering of their answers.

The idea that totalitarianism did not signify the collapse of the modern political order, but realized, on the contrary, one of its intrinsic possibilities, was articulated by various scholars who found themselves, during their lifetime, confronted with totalitarian rule. Jacob Talmon, for example, in *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, first published in 1951, holds that totalitarian democracy is an integral part of the Western tradition. In his view, two types of democracy emerged simultaneously in the eighteenth century. He calls these 'empirical and liberal democracy' and 'totalitarian Messianic democracy'. For Talmon, totalitarianism is the logical consequence of a political attitude, which regards politics as a matter of establishing truth. While the liberal approach assumes politics to be a matter of trial and error, and regards political systems as pragmatic contrivances of human ingenuity and spontaneity, Talmon writes, the totalitarian democratic school is based upon the assumption of a sole and exclusive truth in politics.[5]

It is important to bear in mind that both schools of democratic thought affirmed the supreme value of liberty. Liberal democracy operated with a negative definition of liberty, liberty as absence of coercion, and totalitarian democracy operated with a positive definition of liberty, liberty in the pursuit of a collective purpose.[6] Talmon points out that "totalitarian

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[5] "It may be called political Messianism in the sense that it postulates a preordained, harmonious and perfect scheme of things, to which men are irresistibly driven, and at which they are bound to arrive." J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (Middlesex, New York et. al.: Penguin Books, 1986), 1-2.
[6] Ibid., 2. I will come back to the distinction between negative and positive liberty, especially with regard to the work of Isaiah Berlin, in section II.2.1.

democracy early evolved into a pattern of coercion and centralization not because it rejected the values of eighteenth-century liberal individualism, but because it had originally a too perfectionist attitude towards them."[7] Since man was made the absolute point of reference, nothing was left to stand between man and the State. This exclusive relationship between man and the State implied conformity. As a consequence, Talmon writes, "extreme individualism […] came full circle in a collectivist pattern of coercion before the eighteenth century was out."[8] What Talmon thus formulates very clearly is the peculiar interrelatedness of an absolute communization of society and the simultaneous atomization of individuals, which is characteristic of a totalitarian regime.[9]

Another scholar, who has forcefully put forward the argument that totalitarianism was an outgrowth of modernity, that is was the very sign of a crisis of the modern consciousness, is Hannah Arendt. Unlike the liberal thinker Talmon, whose analysis of the modern dimension of totalitarianism was designed to safeguard and strengthen liberalism, Arendt saw in totalitarianism the downfall of the modern political paradigm as such. Her writings, beginning with *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951, offer a critique of liberalism, retrieving elements of Aristotelian political thought for an alternative formulation of the political.[10] What is important to note about Arendt by way of introduction (I will come back to her in the second chapter), is that she undertakes a reformulation of the political, turning it from a question of power into the question how human beings relate to a common world and to each other. She thus sets the scene for postmodern political philosophy.

At the time when Talmon and Arendt were writing their reflections on the political regimes they were witnesses to, the consequences of the totalitarian logic were terribly evident. They were evident in the emergence of communities in conformity with ideological requirements, a *Volk*, a *kollektiv*.[11] They were evident in the possibility of the mass-murder of people who were declared to belong to specific categories, Jews, ethnic minorities, intellectuals, *kulaks*. And they were evident in the reality of the administrators and perpetrators of the these crimes who stood face to face with people they might very well

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[7] Ibid., 249-250.

[8] Ibid., 252.

[9] Talmon does not draw from this insight a critique of liberalism as such, his considerations are rather meant to strengthen and safeguard liberalism from the totalitarian threat. A similar point of view we find in the works of Karl Popper.

[10] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, ed., introd. Margaret Canovan, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, ed., introd. Samantha Power (New York: Schocken Books, 2004).

[11] The equivalent to the German *Volk* is the *Sovietskij narod*, a term which lacks any ethnic connotation. A *kollektiv* is a smaller and functional unit within the *narod*. On the special dynamics of the formation and functioning of the Soviet *kollektiv*, see: Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999). For an interesting study of the concepts of *nation*, *narod*, and their re-conceptualization in terms of Arendt's definition of *natality*, see also Oleg Kharkhordin, "Nation, Nature and Natality: New Dimensions of Political Action," *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 4 (2001).

have known as friends and family. For it needs to be emphasized that not only to become a victim, but also to become a perpetrator shows the terrible face of totalitarianism. At first sight, it is the notion of community that suffered most from its totalitarian abuse, not least because community had become both a motor and a mechanism of totalitarian domination. A motor, because it grew out of the messianic aspirations of clearly circumscribed groups (communities by ideology or by race), and a mechanism, because it dictated the logic of persecution of certain groups of people and of those who could not be assimilated to the mainstream. At second sight, however, it is also the notion of the individual which reveals, in the light of totalitarianism, its darkest side: it became clear that the dissolution of bonds between individuals could be so complete as to literally exclude singular human beings from human-kind, a process described convincingly by Giorgio Agamben in his book *Homo sacer*, where he speaks about the fateful politicization of bare life.[12] When I therefore speak about the simultaneous absolute communization of society and absolute atomization of individuals, I have in mind a dual logic which turns out to be among modernity's political possibilities, revealed in all its destructiveness by the totalitarian experience.

In contemporary political philosophy, the reflection upon this experience has taken two different directions: on the one hand, an unequivocal embrace and conceptual elaboration of liberalism for which the works of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas are exemplary, and on the other hand, a critique of liberalism which considers totalitarianism to be an intrinsically modern phenomenon and therefore calls for a scrutiny of the modern political paradigm as such. This second position has been elaborated in two distinct ways. The first perspective defies the problematic nature of the notion of community and looks for a positive definition of it. This is the communitarian approach, for which Charles Taylor and his work on Hegel are representative. The second perspective is taken by what is generally referred to as postmodern political philosophy, or a philosophy in the tradition of Friedrich Nietzsche. Such an approach ties the question of community back to the singular human being, because it recognizes, as the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy writes, that it is the understanding of man in classical political philosophy that has been the stumbling block to a thinking of community.[13] In the present study, I shall describe all three responses to the totalitarian challenge, the liberal, the communitarian, and the postmodern; and I will add to these three trends in political philosophy a viewpoint that challenges the limits of all of them. I will introduce the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition as yet one more response to the challenge of totalitarianism. It is a perspective on political modernity which challenges the

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[12] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (Torino: Einaudi, 1995).
[13] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 2-3.

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Western philosophical discourse in three ways: conceptually, because it reflects upon the experience of totalitarianism in the light of Orthodox religion; temporally, because it draws on a body of thought that flourished centuries before Enlightenment; and spatially, because it steps out of the traditional space of Western philosophy. Despite these challenges to the habitual parameters of the modern discourse, however, I will argue that this Orthodox tradition, other than considering it a pre-modern response to modernism, can in fact be interpreted within the modern condition.

At this point one might ask why such an analysis should proceed under the heading of 'community', a term which, for the reasons indicated, might seem too burdened with negative connotations as to be taken up easily. Many contemporary thinkers, seeking a conscious detachment from previous discourses of community, have preferred to speak about "the common"[14], "being-in-common"[15], "com-munitas"[16]. The reason why I nevertheless use the term 'community', is simple: It creates a common base for the different approaches I am describing, it is both a link between different understandings of community as well as a background, against which different interpretations of community are elaborated. The connotations, which make the term charged, are welcome in this respect, because they spell out the rich and challenging nature of the debate.

I.2. The Eastern Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition

Collectivism is often taken to be an intrinsic feature of Orthodox culture, a kind of national characteristic that becomes most visible during communism throughout Eastern and South-Eastern Europe but represents, in reality, the social, political and cultural legacy of the Orthodox religion.[17] The Soviet semiotician, Jurij Lotman, expressed the view that Russia and the West are bearers of two distinct religiously motivated cultural patterns, which, in the West, give rise to individuality and agency and a continuous cultural development from Renaissance to Reformation to Enlightenment, while the Orthodox East remains caught in collectivism and passivity, and in a medieval mind-set with outbursts of radical

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[14] Peter Wagner, "Freedom and the Common: Political Philosophy and Social Theory beyond the Impasse of Indiviualist Liberalism." Unpublished Essay, European University Institute Florence (2003). Published as: Peter Wagner, "Freiheit und das Gemeinsame," *WestEnd.* 2, no. 1 (2005).

[15] Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*.

[16] Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: Origine e destino della communità* (Torino: Einaudi, 1998).

[17] Talmon, for example, despite his insightful study of the modern dimension of totalitarianism, characterizes Russia as non-Western and as not possessing the category of the individual. He considers Russian communism a means to maintain the specificity of the Russian nation. See: J. L. Talmon, *Politischer Messianismus. Die Romantische Phase* (Köln, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), 469.

modernization.[18] Orthodoxy is said to have prevented the individualization, political emancipation and modernization of society.[19] – It is precisely this kind of generally held opinion about Orthodoxy, which the present study responds to with a more differentiated analysis of the confrontation between the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition and modernity.

I argue that the experience of communist totalitarianism represents a watershed for Orthodox thought, and that under the impact of these events, the Orthodox intellectual and spiritual tradition should be interpreted as distinctively *modern*. Orthodoxy has often been regarded, and has regarded itself, as pre- or anti-modern in confrontation with the West. From the point of view of modernity as a condition (see I.3.2.), however, such a definition needs to be revised. With this study I want to argue that, instead of documenting modern/pre-modern divides, the task of scholars of Orthodoxy should be to study how and with what consequences Orthodox thinkers today partake in the condition of modernity – a condition that has been rendered problematic and ambiguous through the experience of totalitarianism.

A clear example for the ambiguity and problematicality of political modernity was the state of mind of the Russian intelligentsia at the time of the Russian revolutions. The Russian intelligentsia in the early twentieth century was certainly inspired by the totalitarian democratic spirit, by the strive for the liberation of man according to a singular 'true' scheme.[20] What interests me here is to what degree Russian thinkers recognized and reacted to the destructiveness of this attitude. A remarkable collection of articles, published in 1909 as a reflection on the Russian revolution of 1905 under the title *Vehi* (*Signposts*) gives an early testimony for such a critical reflection. The authors of the book were themselves members of the intelligentsia, yet they had early on broken with radical revolutionary Marxism and with the atheist disposition that was almost imperative among progressive Russian intellectuals. Nikolaj Berdâev and Sergej Bulgakov, to name the two most prominent contributors, politically pursued a moderate socialist line and philosophically drew on the tradition of Russian religious philosophy. Already in 1902, they had committed themselves to liberal socialism, informed by religious idealism, and from this angle, their

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[18] Юрий М. Лотман and Борис А. Успенский, "Роль дуалных моделей в динамике русской культуры (до конца 18-ого века) (Jurij Lotman/Boris Uspenskij, The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture until the end of the 18th Century)," in *Труды по русской и славянской филологий XXVIII*, ed. В. И. Беззубов, 3-36. (Тарту: Учен. зап. Тартуского гос. ун-та, 1977).

[19] For a rephrasing of Lotman's argument in terms of Luhmann's theory of functional differentiation, see: Dirk Kretzschmar, *Identität statt Differenz: Zum Verhältnis von Kunsttheorie und Gesellschaftsstruktur in Russland im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2002).

[20] See Besançon's description of the history of political Messianism from the works of Rousseau and Robespierre to Carl Schmitt and Lenin: Alain Besançon, *The Intellectual Origins of Leninism*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).

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assessment of the state of intelligentsia in the aftermath of the first Russian revolution of 1905 was bleak: "Russia has experienced a revolution, and it did not bring the expected results," Bulgakov writes. He expresses the view, shared by the other *Vehi*-authors, that "[…] now, after all we have been through, neither the naive, rather starry-eyed Slavophile faith nor the pretty utopias of the old Westernism are still tenable. The revolution has brought into question the very viability of Russian state and civic life. Unless we take into account this historical experience, the historical lessons of the revolution, we can make no positive statement about Russia; nor can we fall back on the clichés of either the Slavophiles or the Westernizers."[21]

The historical lesson of the revolution, which Bulgakov is invoking here, is the recognition that the social, political, and, most importantly, intellectual and spiritual quest that dominated the Russian intelligentsia in the period leading up to the revolution, had led to disastrous results. The revolution of 1905 had failed to bring about a viable democratic government and it had not succeeded in reforming the Russian society. The accusation, and, to a certain degree, self-critique of the *Vehi*-authors was that the state of the Russian intelligentsia had, for too long, been dogmatic, sectarian, and spiritually and philosophically poor. Despite their utter detachment from the reality of the Russian people, the intellectuals had understood themselves as working towards their liberation and their happiness. Firm in their belief that they knew best how to reach that goal, they were determined to force this recognition also upon the unbelieving. Among this revolutionary fervour, the *Vehi*-authors dared to raise a warning voice: This was the wrong approach! Theirs was a clear denouncement of the totalitarian democratic spirit. If the intelligentsia continued in this vein, such was the warning issued by the *Vehi*-authors, even greater disasters could befall Russia; and in fact, the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 confirmed their fears.[22] What the essays in the

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[21] "Россия пережила революцию. Эта револуция не дала того, что от нее ожидали. [...] И во всяком случае, теперь, после всего пережитого, невозможны уже как наивная, несколько прекраснодушная славянофильская вера, так и розовые утопии старого западничества. Революция поставила под вопрос самую жизнеспособность русской гражданственности и государственности; не посчитавшись с этим историческим опытом, с историческими уроками революции, нельзя делать никакого утверждения о России, нельзя повторять задов ни славянофильских, не западнических." А. А. (Ред.) Яковлева, *Вехи. Из Глубины* (Москва: Правда, 1991), 31. Translation cited from: Marshall S. Shatz and Judith E. Zimmerman, eds., *Vekhi: Landmarks. A Collection of Articles about the Russian Intelligentsia* (Armonk NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 17.
[22] In 1918, roughly the same group of authors wrote a follow-up to the *Vehi*, a collection of essays with the title *Iz Glubiny/De Profundis (Out of the depths)*. They offered a negative assessment of the Bolshevik revolution and found their prognosis of 1908 confirmed. This is most clearly expressed in the foreword by Petr Struve: "Сборник 'Вехи', вышедший в 1909 г., был призывом и *предострежением*. Это предострежение, несмотря на всю вызванную им, подчас весьма яростую, реакцию и полемику, поровок России и *слабым* предчувствием той моральной и политической катастрофы, которая грозно обозначилась еще в 1905-1907 гг. и разразилась в 1917 г. Историк отметит, что русское образованное общество в своем большинстве не вняло обращенному к нему предостережению, не сознавая великой опасности, надвигавшейся на культуру и государство." (Яковлева, 209.) "The symposium *Signposts*, appearing in 1908, was an appeal and a *warning*. This warning, despite all the sometimes quite furious reactions and polemic it evoked, was in fact only a *timid* diagnosis of Russia's vices, and a weak presentiment of the moral and political catastrophe that appeared

Vehi do not yet fully spell out, but what they certainly announce, is a response to totalitarianism from within the spiritual and intellectual tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy.[23] With the experience of totalitarianism, Orthodox thinkers had to recognize that the collapse of community into a totalitarian collectivity and that the collaboration of the Church with a totalitarian regime were among Orthodoxy's potentialities. The conclusions which they drew from this, are the subject of this investigation.

Before moving on, however, some definitions need to be made: The spiritual and intellectual tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy is a body of thought that evolved from Byzantine theology and spirituality and developed into different discourses: institutional patterns and theological teachings in the Patriarchates and Orthodox Churches of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, spiritual practices in Orthodox monasteries, and philosophical accounts of culture, society and politics by lay intellectuals – this deliberately broad definition of the Eastern Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition is the starting point for this study. What unifies this tradition is the fact that its representatives have, by way of reference to Eastern Christianity, distanced themselves from Western Christianity and Western culture in a varying degree of intensity throughout different periods of history. It seems safe to state that the discourses of division and distinction prevailed in the self-definition of the Orthodox tradition and in its perception in the West. For this reason it is hardly possible to write about Eastern Orthodoxy without paying reference to its civilizational dimension. This study cannot escape this task either: it starts with a critical assessment of civilizational theories about the East and the West and discusses the Orthodox self-perception as distinct from the West, only to then suggest an alternative viewpoint to divisive approaches. What *unites* Eastern Orthodoxy and the West at the present point in time, I argue, is the post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation of Europe, and this constellation brings to the fore the similarity of modern problematics and the congruence of philosophical responses in the East and in the West.

I have made *Vehi* my starting point for historically tracing and philosophically contextualizing post-totalitarian Orthodox thought because this text stands for a critical engagement with the Orthodox tradition and its creative elaboration in confrontation with modern problematics. The political and intellectual thrust of *Vehi* challenges those views that

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menacingly as far back as 1905-1907, and that broke out in 1917. The historian will note that the majority of Russian educated society did not heed the warning it was given, not recognizing the great danger approaching the culture and the state." Translation cited from: William F. Woehrlin, ed., *Out of the Depths (De Profundis). A Collection of Articles on the Russian Revolution* (Irvine: Charles Schlacks Publ., 1986), xxxix.

[23] It is justified to anchor such an incipient response already in *Vehi,* even though the texts were written before the Bolshevik Revolution. The analysis in *Vehi* anticipates the arguments which recur, in a more disparate style and anxious tone, in *Iz Glubiny*.

have interpreted totalitarianism in Orthodox Eastern Europe exclusively from the angle of civilizational theories, for example as a consequence of a specific Orthodox collectivism, of the autocratic political legacy of Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great, or of the symphonic conception of state power and church authority. While it is certainly true that these historical and cultural factors need to be duly considered, it is almost paradoxical that, even though political thinkers in the West came to recognize that totalitarianism was a modern phenomenon, totalitarianism in Orthodox Eastern Europe continued to be viewed as something of a completely different kind. And while in the West a critical attitude towards liberalism came to be recognized as a basic feature of modern political thought, the anti-liberalism of Orthodox thinkers continued to be perceived as a non-modern phenomenon. *Vehi* is an early testimony for a more differentiated account. They show that a complex interplay of modern mind-set and of elements that belong to the Orthodox tradition is at play in the confrontation with and reflection on political modernity.

In describing comprehensively the features of such a specifically Orthodox response to the challenge of totalitarianism, this study is mostly concerned with the legacy of *Vehi,* with what could be called the 'philosophical' discourse within the Orthodox tradition. My focus is on discourses advanced by lay intellectuals. This 'philosophical dimension' of Eastern Orthodoxy becomes especially salient at the present point in time, when, after the end of the Cold War, Orthodoxy is taking stage again as a religious, cultural and partially even political element in Europe. The last decade and a half did not only bring about a revival of religiosity among the populations of the traditionally Orthodox countries, but these countries have also seen the resurgence of Orthodox Churches as important societal and political players.[24] Not always has this revival been perceived as positive, and observers are frequently puzzled at the uncertain role which the Churches play in state and civil society.[25] Comparatively less

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[24] A detailed analysis of Russia has been provided by a Finnish-Russian research-team which collected statistical data on the "the return to religion after atheism". The authors found out that in 1996, 88% of Russian respondents answered that their attitude towards Orthodoxy was "positive", even if they declared themselves atheists, while only 34% said they were "believers". The authors conclude that on the level of attitude, the end of communism did indeed bring about changes, with people moving from state-atheism to state-Orthodoxy, while on the level of personal religiosity, the impact appears to have been far less significant. Киммо Каариайнен and Дмитрий Е. Фурман, "Верующие, Атеисты и Прочие (Еволуция Российской Религиозности) (Kimmo Kaariainen/Dmitrij Furman, Believers, Atheists, and Others. The Evolution of Religiosity in the Russian Federation)," *Вопросы Философии* 6 (1997).
[25] See for example Laura Engelstein, "Holy Russia in Modern Times: An Essay on Orthodoxy and Cultural Change," *The Past and the Present Society* 173 (2001), Zoe Katrina Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism* (New York, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), Konstantin Kostjuk, *Der Begriff des Politischen in der Russisch-Orthodoxen Tradition* (Paderborn, München et.al.: Schöningh, 2005), Daniel Payne, "The Challenge of Western Globalization to Orthodox Christianity," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters, 2003), Kathy Rousselet, "L'église orthodoxe russe et le territoire," *Revue d'Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest* 35, no. 4 (2004), Киммо Каариайнен and Дмитрий Е. Фурман, "Люди на Таюущей Льдине: Ценностные Ориентации Религиозной Элиты России (Kimmo Kaariainen/Dmitrij Furman, People on Melting Ice. Value-Orientations of the Religious Elite in Russia)," *Вопросы Философии* 1 (1999), Николай Митрохин, *Русская Православная*

scholarly attention has been paid so far to the philosophical dimension of Orthodoxy today. While studies on the religious thinkers of the pre-revolutionary period abound, contemporary Orthodox thinkers have usually been neglected. This study seeks to fill this gap.

My focus will be on Russia and Greece. Russia can be considered a representative case insofar as Russian theology and religious philosophy have historically radiated to the other Orthodox countries, be it in the nineteenth century with the debate between Slavophiles and Westernizers, or in the twentieth century, when Russian émigré-scholars influenced theologians and philosophers in the West, and, as far as communist censorship allowed, in their home-country and in other Orthodox countries. A special case is Greece, being the only Orthodox country not under communist rule, where theologians and religious philosophers took up the impulses from of Russian diaspora at an early stage.[26] A study of the Orthodox intellectual tradition in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia and in Greece therefore promises to advance our understanding of Orthodoxy in Europe as a whole. Reviewing some works that have treated this issue, I want to indicate where my own approach makes a contribution to current research in the field.

One author, who has made the role of Orthodoxy in the aftermath of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Russia the focus of her research, is Jutta Scherrer.[27] Scherrer shows that Orthodoxy has become a major resource for cultural studies in Russia, where the discipline of *kul'turologiâ* has, since the 1990s, been taking over a key-function within the political discourse of post-Soviet Russia from such disciplines as Marxism-Leninism, dialectic materialism or scientific communism: namely to further reflection on Russian identity and history and to offer cultural-ideological orientation. As a result and in continuity with the Soviet ideological paradigm, culturologists have often adopted anti-Western attitudes present within Orthodoxy and have ignored the plurality of religions within Russia itself.[28] Scherrer shows that the impact of Orthodox ideas on the post-communist process of societal, cultural and political reorientation is highly problematic.

Another author, who has dealt with Orthodoxy under the aspect of theories of state and society, is Konstantin Kostjuk. His study of the concept of the political in the Russian-Orthodox tradition offers an insight into the complexity of views on the political within Orthodox thought and enlarges the picture that Scherrer has confined to the field of culturology. His historical approach brings to the fore the trajectories and potentials of

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Церковь: Современное Состояние и Актуальные Проблемы (Nikolaj Mitrohin, The Russian Orthodox Church: Its Current State and Problems) (Москва: Новое Литературное обозрение, 2004).

[26] A comparative research that would study Orthodox intellectual history in the twentieth century in all of Eastern and South Eastern Europe is highly desirable.

[27] Jutta Scherrer, *Kulturologie: Rußland auf der Suche nach einer zivilisatorischen Identität*, Essener Kulturwissenschaftliche Vorträge, vol. 13 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003).

[28] Ibid., 80.

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different schools of thought within Orthodoxy. However, not all of these are taken up again by the author in his discussion of the contemporary period, for which he concentrates on the social and political views of the current Moscow Patriarchy.

The sociologist Oleg Kharkhordin is, strictly speaking, not concerned with the philosophical dimension of Orthodoxy, but his approach to the question of the social and the political in the Orthodox tradition is interesting for a different reason. Against the dominant characterization of Russia as 'collective' and the West as 'individualist', Kharkhordin argues that the routes to individualization in Russia differed from those in the West. Orthodoxy provided particular formative patterns for the individual and the collective, Kharkhordin argues, but it did not prevent individualization. It merely made self-realization a community-oriented process.[29] Kharkhordin unsettles commonly held assumptions on subjectivity and community in the Orthodox tradition, extending his sociological insights also into the field of political theory.[30]

Taken together, these works open up the field of investigation – the philosophical dimension of Orthodoxy – within which the present study is situated. Scherrer's critical observations hold true for much of the intellectual revival of Orthodoxy since the 1980s, but they are not exhaustive. My aim is to complement her analysis with regard to authors who do not put Orthodox thought in the service of a national identity-search but, in the spirit of *Vehi*, engage it philosophically. Chapter III of the present study shares much ground with Kostjuk's historical analysis, but in my treatment of the post-Soviet period, I will not focus on the Russian Orthodox Church and instead concentrate on intellectual and lay expressions of Orthodoxy in Russia. The thrust of Kharkhordin's argument, namely to go beyond simplistic assertions of the kind 'collectivist Russia vs. individualist West', informs also my approach, but instead of taking the Orthodox tradition as a unitary formative element, I shall argue that a monolithic perception of Orthodoxy is inadequate and that we need to look instead, especially in the post-Soviet era, at different trends within Orthodoxy which offer a variety of visions on the place of Orthodoxy in the modern world. In Chapter III, I describe the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition in the twentieth century in its plurality, showing its variety from fundamentalist to conservative to modernizing trends. My focus lies on the latter, on the creative engagement of Orthodox thinkers with modern problematics. In chapter IV, I finally

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[29] Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual*.
[30] Oleg Kharkhordin, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (1998). Kharkhordin suggests that the Orthodox concept of community defies the reduction to one singular scope, i.e. politics, and that it is an alternative to rather than a basis for civil society. Evert van der Zweerde, on the other hand, argues that Orthodoxy may indeed become a 'source' for civil society, a precondition being modernizing steps within the Orthodox Church. See: Evert Van der Zweerde, "Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity in Russia: A Double-Test Case," *Religion, State & Society* 27, no. 1 (1999).

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pick out two Orthodox authors and their treatment of the question of the human subject and community in comparison with Western communitarian philosophies.

I do not claim that the authors I focus on in this study are representative for contemporary Orthodox thought in general. My aim is to reconstruct the trajectory of a specific mode of Orthodox reasoning which engages constructively with Western philosophy and modern problematics. In present-day research about Orthodox thought such a reasoning is frequently labelled 'liberal'[31], however, 'liberal', means something very different in the context of Russian Orthodoxy than it does in the West, and it acquires this characterization mostly due to its counter-distinction from the conservatism, nationalism and fundamentalism of large strata of Russian Orthodoxy. The Orthodox intellectual tradition which I describe here is 'liberal' insofar as it reflects critically on totalitarianism, nationalism, fundamentalism and anti-Westernism, it is 'liberal' inasmuch as it has made human freedom a central element of its reasoning, but it is at the same time profoundly critical of liberalism as a political philosophy and of Western modern culture inasmuch as it embodies this philosophy. Their work might be marginal in an Orthodox discourse that is predominantely anti-modern and anti-Western, but they are nonetheless important individual voices in a post-totalitarian philosophical discourse that becomes only the more complete when including also the Orthodox reflection on the totalitarian rupture.

I.3. The modernity of Europe

Europe made up of a Protestant North, a Catholic South and an Orthodox East, Europe divided into an enlightened and technically advanced West and a backward East – who would not be familiar with these kind of assertions? In the historical, social and political sciences of today, the use of concepts such as 'civilizations' or 'backwardness' has become problematic thanks to the critical thrust of the cultural turn, which forced upon scholars the recognition of their own limits of objectivity and of the restrictions of macro-analysis. However, the political changes and conflicts in Europe over the last two decades have made the reflection on cultural diversity pertinent again, and scholars are called upon to offer accounts that neither come to a halt at postmodern relativism nor repeat the mistakes of the old grand theories of culture and modernization, which often identify important questions but

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[31] At the Annual Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavonic Studies in Washington, D.C., on November 16th, 2006, a panel was dedicated to liberal Orthodoxy, organized by Alexander Agadjanian. It was dedicated to the legacy of the émigré-theologians and to figures such as Sergej Averincev and Alexander Men'.

at the same time bring the issues which they raise to a normative closure within a worldview apparently free of ambiguities. To offer an account which avoids both these mistakes and to draw attention to the vicinities across Europe's internal divisions, is precisely the aim which this study sets itself. To this end, I will first undertake a critical review of the most common theoretical approaches to Europe as a cultural entity. The key for my analysis is the notion of *modernity*. Looking at the way in which the usage of the term has changed in the social and historical sciences over the last decades, I will lay out the understanding of modernity which guides my own approach.

1.3.1. Modernization as a process

Comprehensive theories of the rise and decline of world-civilizations are a scholarly phenomenon of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Works like Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* or Arnold Toynbee's *The World and the West* are the clearest examples of this genre, which was unexpectedly revived by Samuel Huntington in 1993. A brief review of their works will bring to the fore that they share basic views on Orthodox Eastern Europe and on the Western experience of modernization.

'Semi-occidental', was Spengler's judgement about Russia in *The Decline of the West*, a work that has become exemplary for the cultural pessimism of the early twentieth century. Spengler was clearly fascinated by Russia and by the Orthodox religion, which he credited with the potential to reject the modern social paradigm.[32] This modern social paradigm, as expressed both in liberalism and socialism, implied a, in Spengler's view undesirable, reduction of human affairs to the level of the socio-economical. Spengler saw this "ultimate humiliation of the metaphysical through the social"[33] at work both in the Petrine reforms as well as the Bolshevik revolution, and he considers both of these important events in Russian history as two attempts – ultimately destined to fail – to incorporate Orthodox Russia into the Western civilization. Toynbee shared Spengler's assertion that Russia was not a full member of the Western civilization, but instead of its 'sibling' Byzantine civilization. This Byzantine legacy was not only responsible for Russian anti-Westernism, it also determined Russian political culture, which Toynbee described as totalitarian and autocratic.[34] In his view, the modernization of Russia was not a sign of societal change, but

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[32] Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, 15 ed. (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 2000), 792.
[33] Ibid., 793.
[34] Arnold Joseph Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial and the World and the West* (New York: New American Library, 1976), 159.

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merely a response to developments in the West, in itself motivated by the need to defend Russia from the West, an analysis that Toynbee extended to include the Soviet period.[35] Toynbee's view is shared by Huntington in his reflections on the world-order after the Cold War. According to Huntington, the Cold War ideological divide obscured an issue which was historically pertinent for Russia, namely the question of its belonging to the West or to a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilization. Huntington develops the image of a distinctively Orthodox civilization in Europe, which would be incompatible with Western values of liberty and democracy.[36]

What all these works have in common is the argument that Orthodox Eastern Europe, for which they consider Russia as exemplary, is essentially different from the West, and that attempts to become more like the West, to modernize, have produced ambiguous results. The Petrine and Catherinian reforms, they hold, like those of Alexander II and Mihail Gorbačev, did not penetrate Russian society. Communism led to an impressive industrialization and militarization of the country, but it did not bring about a new political culture. Whether the authors ultimately interpret the failure of Russia's attempts to westernize as a virtue, like Spengler, or as a vice, like Toynbee and Huntington, is, for my argument, secondary to the fact that they identify a cultural gap between the Orthodox East and the West and that they base their argument on an unambiguous concept of modernization and on an essentialist conception of culture which serve as benchmarks for societal and cultural development.

In contrast to the pessimistic civilization theories of the first half of the twentieth century, which conceptualized the West in conflict with and distinct from other parts of the world, an understanding of the West as exemplary and of modernization as universal gained ground in sociology and history after the Second World War. While early theorists of modernization, for example Max Weber in his critique of rationalization and bureaucratization, Karl Marx in his critique of industrialization and capitalism, and Emile Durkheim in his work on societal differentiation, had taken a critical stance on the passing of traditional societies, post-war modernization theories emphasised its positive effects. This was particularly the case in the North American social sciences where "the world was increasingly viewed in the perspective of progressive Americanization that would, in the end, lead to a homogeneous system of modern, industrial societies."[37]

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[35] Ibid., 239-242.
[36] Huntington. On the question whether there is a 'world of Orthodoxy', see: Evert Van der Zweerde, "All Europeans are equal... but aren't some less European than others? (Reflections on Europe and Orthodox Christianity)," *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 57, no. 3-4 (2005).
[37] Paul Nolte, "Modernization and Modernity in History," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, ed. J. Smelser Neil and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam, Paris et.al.: Elsevier, 2001), 9955.

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Sociological theories of modernization defined modernization as the transition from a religious, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Since traditional value systems were considered to hinder modernization, a strong emphasis was put on the role of economical development for the overcoming of traditional patterns and the changing of society and culture.[38] The dismissal of tradition included also religion. Secularization theory asserted that in modern society the social significance of religion would decline due to social differentiation, societalization, and rationalization.[39]

Classical modernization theory was primarily concerned with the study of Western societies, and in this function it largely dominated social and human sciences throughout the 1960s and 70s. Historians found it inspiring as a "historical 'plot structure' of social modernization, economic progress, and political democratization"[40], and the tradition-modernity dichotomy lent itself to structural-functional accounts of societal changes.[41] Despite its focus on the West, classical modernization theory also found application in the study of non-Western societies, for which the Western development was usually prescribed as exemplary. Where the civilization theorists Spengler and Toynbee acknowledged a cultural difference between the Orthodox East and the West, and considered it either a virtue or a threat, a modernization theorist would respond to the assessment of Russian culture as collectivist and passive with the recommendation to overcome the limits imposed by the Orthodox heritage through economic development, in order to foster individualization, societal differentiation, and political emancipation. From both theoretical angles, however, the components at stake – Western modernity, Orthodox traditionalism – are left intact as static concepts. It was exactly this static and normative nature of modernization and civilization theory, which came to be criticized both in the West and, as I will show later, in the Orthodox East.

1.3.2. Modernity as a condition

The above-mentioned semiotician Lotman eventually qualified his theory about cultural divergences between Eastern and Western Europe. Not static civilizational entities are characterized and contrasted by dual and ternary cultural patterns, he argued in a later

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[38] Ronald Inglehart, "Modernization, Sociological Theories of," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, ed. J. Smelser Neil and Paul B. Baltes (Amsterdam, Paris et.al.: Elsevier, 2001).
[39] Steve Bruce and Roy Wallis, "Secularization: The Orthodox Model," in *Religion and Modernization*, ed. Steve Bruce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
[40] Nolte, 9956.
[41] Niklas Luhmann, *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), Talcott Parsons, *Societies and Comparative Evolutionary Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

work, but these tendencies exist in all cultures. Cultures share the same elements but they actualize them in a dissimilar fashion.[42] A similar view was put forward by Julia Kristeva in her book *Crisis of the European Subject*, where she made an argument of complementary deficiency of the Western and Eastern tradition.[43] Lotman and Kristeva thereby indicated a way out of the impasse created by modernization and civilization theories: namely the recognition that the concepts at stake are themselves not static and a-historical, but often ambiguous, fragmented and historically contingent. This insight mirrors an epistemological and methodological shift, which took place in the social and human sciences from the 1970s onwards.

It is important to understand this epistemological and methodological shift in its socio-historical context. In the 1970s, the optimistic view about economic development as a key to individualization, political emancipation and societal differentiation was giving way to a critical reassessment of modernization. In other disciplines, such as literature or philosophy, such optimism had hardly been shared even previously, and the study of Europe's literary and cultural modernity at the beginning of the twentieth century brought to the fore even more forcefully the tensions within the modern project.[44] The first two decades of the twentieth century had brought about the collapse of established social, political and aesthetic orders, developments that had partly been met with anxiety and pessimism, but also with exaltation and confidence by the aesthetic and literary avant-gardes and by political revolutionaries. After the catastrophes of the First and Second World War and the subsequent re-establishment of lost orders, philosophers, historians and sociologists eventually directed their attention to this first crisis of modernity for an explanation of the fatal events of the two World Wars. As a consequence, they unearthed tensions within the modern programme of liberalism, individualism, capitalism and scientific positivism that made a reassessment of their own social, political and cultural present and their modes of accounting for it indispensable.[45] This reassessment, which has been variously referred to as 'cultural' or 'linguistic turn', as 'post-structuralism', 'constructivism', 'deconstruction', as 'reflective', 'radicalized' or 'post-' modernity,[46] took multiple forms, and not all of these need to be dealt

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[42] Jurij Lotman, "Zeiten der Wirren: Zur Typologie der Russischen Kulturgeschichte," *Lettre International* 30 (1995).
[43] Julia Kristeva, *Crisis of the European Subject* (New York: Other Press, 2000), 117.
[44] Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air. The experience of modernity* (London: Verso, 1983).
[45] For a comparison of the sense of crisis evoked by the restructuring of social orders in the early twentieth century and today, see: Peter Wagner, *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences* (London, Thousand Oakes, New Delhi: Sage, 2001), 73-87.
[46] Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonß, and Christoph Lau, "Theorie Reflexiver Modernisierung. Fragestellungen, Hypothesen, Forschungsprogramme," in *Die Modernisierung der Moderne*, ed. Ulrich Beck and Wolfgang Bonß (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2001), Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in association

with here. One aspect, however, is central to my argument and shall therefore be elaborated: the shift from modernization theory to a theory of modernity.

The recognition that a universal theory of modernization was untenable, prompted scholars to shift their attention from the study of modernization as progress to the study of modernity as a period and as a condition. Modernity as a period usually stands for the history of Western Europe and from some time onwards also of North America, the beginning of which has been subject to various interpretations. Modernity can be seen to begin as early as the mid fifteenth century with the Renaissance and the voyages of discovery. From a political perspective, modernity can be said to begin in the eighteenth century with the French and American revolutions, and from an economical perspective, with the onset of modern economics during the market and industrial revolution. Alternatively we can speak about modernity in the early twentieth century with modernism in the arts and in architecture. If we take a scientific-philosophical perspective, the range of modernity is even wider, it spans from Cartesian rationalism and the experimental method to the fin-de-siècle critique of science and metaphysics to the theory of relativity.[47] In any case, modernity is understood as a specific socio-political and scientific-philosophical reality that marks a rupture with the past.[48]

The notion of modernity as a condition refers to the experience of modernization and to a critical reflection upon this experience. Modernity in this sense stands for the present condition in which the self finds itself in and for the task of having to make sense of this condition. This assessment of one's own situation is best described with Michel Foucault's concept of a 'historical ontology of ourselves' ("une ontologie historique de nous-mêmes"[49]), a "historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying."[50] For Foucault, modernity as an attitude, as a mode of relating to contemporary reality poses in front of us a task, namely the task to elaborate ourselves within a historical and philosophical reality determined by the Enlightenment. Modern man is shaped by the Enlightenment, not only insofar as he has become autonomous in relation to preconceived foundations of a religious or traditional kind, but also to the extent that rationality itself has been recognized as not providing a foundation. The

with Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1990), Jean-François Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition," in *Modernity: Critical Concepts. Volume IV After Modernity*, ed. Malcolm Watters (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).
[47] Peter Wagner, *Theorizing Modernity: Inescapability and Attainability in Social Theory* (London et. al: Sage, 2001), 5-6.
[48] See also: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).
[49] Michel Foucault, *Qu'est-ce que les lumières?*, ed. Olivier Dekens (Rosny Cedex: Bréal, 2001).
[50] Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 45-46.

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Enlightenment philosophers may 'only' have substituted cosmic foundations with reason, but their inquisitive attitude eventually paved the way for questioning reason itself. This, Foucault is saying, left modern man in a condition of being able to (and having to) continuously elaborate himself.

The form of this criticism, Foucault writes, is genealogical, "it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think."[51] The main point for Foucault here is that of freedom, of the capacity of a person to go beyond the limits of that what he or she is. Once we recognize the contingency of a current state – and for this historical enquiry is a necessity – we see also the structures and power relations that determine this current state, and we can set out to test the limits. Foucault's genealogical project is one of emancipation and liberation. It represents the *ethos* that informs the condition of modernity. For Foucault, that ethos is incorporated in the genealogical mode of understanding history, and he thoroughly rejects tradition and Enlightenment rationalism because in his view these are claimants to universal validity. His philosophy, and with him the point of all of postmodern philosophy in the aftermath of Nietzsche, is radically anti-foundationalist. For our understanding of the condition of modernity, this means that being modern means being able to reflect on the experience of modernization and our own being-part of this process as contingent and open to interpretation.

In the social and human sciences, the genealogical mode of enquiry has led to a major shift in the way knowledge is understood. Jean-François Lyotard's essay *The Postmodern Condition*, published in 1979, is usually regarded as the starting point for the critical assessment of the modern condition along these lines. His criticism of the meta-narratives that determine our understanding of the world and of ourselves – history as progress, the knowability of the world through science, the possibility of absolute freedom – was a forceful blow to any theory of modernization, unmasking it as being such a meta-narrative itself.[52] A forceful challenge to established narratives of modernization also came from scholars who were working in or concerned with the non-Western parts of the world. The postcolonial critique could draw on the latest development in Western scholarship, and it was at the same time fuelling it, since it offered those *other* perspectives that Western scholars of modernity had recognized as necessary. The end of the grand narratives meant first and foremost the end of the legitimacy of Western auctorial modes of narrating, a critique of Western-centric scholarship. The most influential book in this respect was Eward

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[51] Ibid., 46.
[52] Lyotard.

Said's *Orientalism*, which analysed Western attitudes towards the Arab-Islamic world as determined by false assumptions and stereotypes.[53]

The notion of Orientalism has been adopted for the study of Orthodox Eastern Europe by several authors. Larry Wolff, for example, describes Eastern Europe as an intellectual construct, created by thinkers, writers and travellers in the period of the Enlightenment, who shaped the European perception of Eastern Europe as a place of remoteness, backwardness and un-civilization.[54] Elisabeth Promodrou and Iver Neumann similarly claim that, in the contemporary period, Western scholars 'create' a specific image of Eastern European Orthodoxy at a point in time where the end of the Cold War and the expansion of the European Union leave a void in the cultural and political order of Europe.[55] The Orientalist approach dismantles the modernization and civilization theories' arguments of a non-modern East and a modern West, since the former is seen as a projection of the latter. In this function, it can offer important qualifications to the scholar in the field. However, such a primarily self-reflective approach risks to downplay what is in fact at stake in the relation between Western and Eastern Europe. The fact that Eastern Europe is not *other* in the way the Enlightenment thinkers depicted it, does not mean that it is not at all different, and the fact that our common perception of such differences can be unmasked as stereotypical, does not relieve us from the study of these differences. For the study of Orthodox Eastern Europe, the postmodern critique of Western Eurocentrism is therefore not the last, but the first word: it is the indispensable attitude which assures a critical assessment of one's own perspective.

A post-linguistic-turn-variant of civilization theory, which seeks to distance itself both from the normative implications of earlier approaches and from the reflective deadlock created by the debate on Orientalism, is the framework of multiple modernities developed by S. N. Eisenstadt.[56] This theory holds that the world is becoming more modern without necessarily becoming more like the West, that we find in the world a multiplicity of continually evolving modernities, each of which realizes a particular institutional and ideological interpretation of the modern programme according to specific cultural prerequisites. Different cultural fundaments are said to shape the realization of the modern aspiration to autonomous human agency and to determine the reflexivity on structures of social and political authority in

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[53] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
[54] Wolff. See also: Evert Van der Zweerde, "Beyond Occidentism and Philosophic Geography: Reflections on Europe's Eastern Border," in *Europe's Border Identity*, ed. Kowalksa M. (Paris, Bialystock: forthcoming 2007).
[55] Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other. "The East" in European Identity Formation*, ed. David Campbell and Michael Shapiro, Borderlines, vol. 9 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), Elisabeth Prodromou, "Paradigms, Power, and Identity. Rediscovering Orthodoxy and Regionalizing Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* 30 (1996).
[56] Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000), Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Introduction: Paths to Early Modernities. A Comparative View," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998).

diverse ways, giving rise to phenomena such as Islamic or Soviet modernity.[57] The theory of multiple modernities has been taken up by several authors in order to explain the cultural variance of Orthodoxy in Europe, and what is positive about these studies is that they preserve the Orthodox tradition as an independent research object. Instead of turning the investigation of Orthodox culture into a reflection on the structures that shape our perception of it, like Wolff or Promodrou, these authors seek to study Orthodoxy in its own right.[58] At the same time, however, they run the opposite risk to the Orientalist approach, namely to overemphasize differences. Orthodox Eastern Europe is culturally, religiously, and politically interwoven with Western Europe to a great extent and not all of these interconnections are given due importance when attributed the status of a different modernity. Despite the undeniable achievements that Orientalism and the multiple modernities-approach represent for theorizing the relationship between the West and the Orthodox East, what is needed, I argue, is an approach which allows us to grasp the modernity of Orthodox Eastern Europe and of Western Europe from *within*, their respective being-in-the-condition-of-modernity.

In terms of theory, it is the notion of 'entangled modernities' that comes closest to such an analysis. Arnason defines entanglement as the existence of mutually formative links between multiple patterns of modernity.[59] According to such a view, Western and Eastern Europe are subject to multi-fold and interconnected modernizing processes and give rise to different formulations of the modern condition. Let me sharpen this last thought and suggest that from today's perspective, the utmost formative link between Europe's entangled modernities is the experience of totalitarianism. The totalitarian experience is common to Western and Eastern Europe. Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism signify a watershed for modern thought, which henceforth operates with an interpretation of the historical experience of totalitarianism as one of modernity's political possibilities. Modernity as a condition, to recall Foucault, is the situation that the self finds itself in, and it is the task of having to make sense of this situation. At the present time, I want to argue, the condition of modernity we find ourselves in is the post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation of Europe, and our task is to make sense of this constellation and of our place in it. Notions of the kind 'Orthodox traditionalism vs. Western modernity' or 'collectivist Russia vs. individualist West' have for a long time dominated the self-understanding of Orthodoxy and its reception in the West, but

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[57] Johann P. Arnason, *The Future that Failed. Origins and Destinies of the Soviet Model* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), Johann P. Arnason, "Communism and Modernity," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000), Nilüfer Göle, "Snapshots of Islamic Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000).

[58] Johann P. Arnason, "Approaching Byzantium: Identity, Predicament and Afterlife," *Thesis Eleven* 62 (2000), Andreas E. Buss, *The Russian Orthodox Tradition and Modernity* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford, *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 28-44.

[59] Johann P. Arnason, "Sociology, Critique and Modernity: Views across the European Divide," *Comparative Sociology* 2, no. 3 (2003).

these assertions cannot do justice to the considerably more complex situation of today. In the face of totalitarianism, the West has taken issue with its own philosophical trajectory, and also Orthodox thought has, under the impact of communism and emigration, re-examined its origins and its development.

I.4. Methodology

Starting with a definition of political modernity from the angle of its greatest trial, namely totalitarianism, this study pursues two questions: The first question is, how to conceptualize community after the experience of totalitarianism? The second question is, what can the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition contribute to this debate?

The first question will be pursued by way of analysis what the leading trends in twentieth century political philosophy – liberalism, communitarianism, and postmodernism – have to say about community. This is the task of Chapter II. The second question requires a slightly different approach, since it makes a presupposition that is not necessarily self-explanatory. We need to clarify in the first place what the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition actually is, before bringing it into one argumentative frame with the Western philosophical tradition. Chapter III is therefore concerned with the history of the Orthodox tradition in the twentieth century. Chapter IV will then bring the two intellectual traditions, the Western and the Eastern Orthodox, together in an attempt to read 'across them' and with the intention to offer a new perspective on post-totalitarian philosophy of community. This fourth chapter responds to the two questions I ask in the beginning, and what follows is therefore, in the place of a conclusion, an 'Epilogue', which adds some methodological reflections about political philosophy under conditions of modernity, about the place of religion in the political philosophical discourse, and about defining Europe by its shared problematics rather than by cultures and borders.

Let me specify at this point that I understand the 'contribution' of the Orthodox intellectual tradition neutrally. I am not advocating the Orthodox viewpoint, I simply want to introduce it into the debate because the Orthodox intellectual tradition constitutes an independent response to the totalitarian challenge. The Orthodox intellectual tradition is certainly not the only significant intellectual tradition in Eastern Europe, but it is an undeniably important and productive element in the panorama of philosophy in Eastern

Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century.[60] At a time when Europe is growing ever closer, its study seems highly appropriate.

The methodology of this study is comparative. The comparison proceeds on three levels: on the level of socio-historical theory (How do we define the modernity of Europe and how does Eastern Orthodoxy relate to modernity?), on the level of political philosophy (How are community and the human subject conceptualized in post-totalitarian political philosophy?), and on the level of a meta-theory of political philosophy (How to conceptualize the interpretative space of political modernity?).

The reader may wonder why I bring together a philosophical approach that draws on Orthodox religion and on trends in Western political philosophy that are not particularly religious, instead of comparing either religious or political philosophies in the East and the West. It is true, in fact, that I have chosen the two least similar poles in the post-totalitarian philosophical discourse. I compare these intellectual trends not on the basis of a similarity in genre, but on the basis of a shared problematic – the challenge which totalitarianism poses to a thinking of community. Had I directed my interest to either religious or political philosophies in the East and in the West, this study would have looked differently. Analyzing either a political-philosophical or a religious-philosophical corpus of texts and addressing either a politically or a theologically interested readership, I would, in one case, not have studied Orthodox thinkers at all, and, in the other, not have written a long chapter on the evolution of contemporary Orthodox thought, since I could have assumed this history to be known. The present study wants to be of interest to both groups: to political philosophers who are not acquainted with the history of the Orthodox intellectual tradition, it wants to offer a discussion of the role of community from the angle of Eastern Orthodoxy, and to scholars of Russian and Greek thought it wants to propose a consistently political philosophical reading of contemporary Orthodox thought.

I have chosen the least similar poles in the post-totalitarian philosophical discourse because they are related by the problematic they face. This choice has significant advantages. Proceeding in its comparison on the level of socio-historical theory, on the level of political philosophy and on the level of a meta-theory of political philosophy, this study promises to advance our understanding of the modernity of Europe, of community after totalitarianism, and of the implications of allowing a perspective based on religion and tradition into the interpretative space of political modernity.

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[60] See also: Evert Van der Zweerde, "What is Russian about Russian Philosophy?," in *Re-Ethnicizing the Minds? Cultural Revival in Contemporary Thought*, ed. Thorsten Botz-Bornstein and Jürgen Hengelbrock (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2006).

II. The interpretative space of political modernity

To speak about an interpretative space of political modernity[61] presumes that modernity is understood not in terms of a process of modernization, but in terms of a condition. Modernity as a condition, I argued above, refers to the experience of modernization and to a critical reflection upon this experience. For *political* modernity, this task can be described as the challenge to conceptualize the relationship between the freedom of the person and his or her being-bound in a common life-world. It emerges at a point in time when the traditional modes of accounting for this relationship are no longer perceived as valid. Modern man, the Enlightenment proclaims, is not determined by an overarching cosmic order, his task as a free and reason-endowed human being is to define his place in the world himself. This proclamation of individual autonomy and rational mastery became the dominant theme of political modernity, but, as I will show in II.1., its optimism also evoked critical responses.

In an interpretative space of political modernity, the modernism[62] of the Enlightenment stands alongside these critical responses. Peter Wagner has suggested that modernity is insufficiently characterized if we view it only in terms of its modernizing mainstream. Modernism, he writes, does indeed give modernity meaning and direction, but it cannot exhaust the actual variety of realizations of what it means to be modern. Instead, he wants to speak about "a space of reasoning about modernity, an interpretative space, of which the modernist position occupies only a part."[63] For the interpretation of the impact which the experience of totalitarianism had on political philosophy, this notion of a discursive space of reasoning about political modernity is particularly useful. The experience of totalitarianism confronted political thinkers with the fact that a simultaneous absolute communization of society and absolute atomization of individuals was among modernity's political possibilities. It is in this sense that the experience of totalitarianism sharpens the political problematic of modernity, the need to reconcile the modern promise of freedom and reason with a person's being-bound in a common life-world. In contemporary political philosophy, the reflection upon this problematic has taken various directions: liberal, communitarian, and postmodern political philosophy. In II.2., I treat these trends as token-positions in the philosophical discourse of political modernity, taking one or two authors as exemplary for each

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[61] Wagner, *Theorizing Modernity*, 5.
[62] The term 'modernism' is frequently used to describe a crisis of modernity. Taylor uses it this way when he writes in the *Sources of the Self*: "I have examined modernism in the context of the conflict in our culture over the disengaged and instrumental modes of thought and action which have steadily increased their hold on modern life." (Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 495.) This is not the sense in which Wagner uses the term and in which I will be applying it. In this study, modernism refers to the disengaged and instrumental modes of modern thought.
[63] Wagner, *Theorizing Modernity*, 5.

philosophical approach in order to highlight its most characteristic and distinguishing features. 'Mapping' the interpretative space of political modernity in this way, will allow me to identify, in a second step, the 'white spots' on the map, those points where the question of the relationship between community and the human subject remains problematic, contested, and to a certain extent unresolved.

II.1. The political problematic of modernity

II.1.1. Freedom and reason

Freedom and reason – these are the two concepts which, according to Immanuel Kant in his famous essay *Was ist Aufklärung?*, make up the essence of the Enlightenment: the escape of man from his self-caused immaturity through the use of his intelligence without the guidance of another.[64] The philosophers of the Enlightenment, from Descartes to Kant, framed these two objectives in terms of a subjectivist rationalism which prized the individual, its liberty and its rational capacity and which became the guiding paradigm for modern thought. It had a decisive impact on all spheres of human endeavour, be it modern science, philosophy, law or politics. In science, the objective of freedom and reason found expression in the experimental method, in philosophy it gave rise to empiricism and rationalism, in law it led to the predominance of natural law and utilitarianism, and in politics it inspired, framed as the question of self-determination, the French and American democratic revolutions. The base-line was that modern man is a rational and self-defining being.

This basic paradigm of the Enlightenment was scrutinized by Hegel. In Hegel's view, the Enlightenment's conception of reason, designed to break the power of religion, was running danger of amounting to an alternative religion itself. The subjectivist self-grounding of modernity in reason was destined to become abstract and authoritative.[65] Hegel shared the Enlightenment's understanding that modernity was to find the grounds for its stability in itself, but he rejected subjectivist rationalism as the right approach. He was, in the words of his interpreter Jürgen Habermas, convinced that "in the modern world emancipation became

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[64] Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?," in *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964).
[65] I am here following the Hegel-interpretation of Habermas in: Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwölf Vorlesungen*, 1 ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985). Cited after Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 23-28.

transformed into unfreedom because the unshackling power of reflection had become autonomous and now achieved unification only through violence of subjugating subjectivity."[66] Hegel, who consequently sought to overcome subject-centred reason with his concept of the *absolute spirit*, can be considered the founding father of any critical theorizing of modernity, because he broke with the Enlightenment optimism about emancipation from religion and use of individual reason. Hegel understood that freedom and reason were not the clear-cut paradigms envisaged by the Enlightenment philosophers, but that they were challenging predicaments, open to contestation. We could say that modernity had become a problem for him.

Hegel laid bare the tension within the Enlightenment paradigm of subjectivist rationalism and he thus opened up the question of freedom and reason once again for philosophy. For his philosophical heirs, however, the answer which Hegel had devised in response to the precarious self-reflexivity of the subject – the notion of 'absolute spirit' – was no longer a convincing option. Habermas describes the philosophical discourse of modernity after Hegel as a struggle with the Hegelian question without the Hegelian solution, as a permanent re-inscription of the critique of reason founded on subjectivity. This re-inscription took three directions, described by Habermas as Left-Hegelianism, Right-Hegelianism and the critique by Friedrich Nietzsche.[67] Of these, Left-Hegelians like Karl Marx directed their criticism against the rationalization of state and society in terms of the bourgeoisie. They projected the notion of freedom into the sphere of activity, devising labour as a means of self-realization.[68] Right-Hegelians, like Carl Schmitt, on the other hand, supported an overarching rationality of the state which would neutralize the inequality among its members.[69] Both parties were still moving within the framework set by Hegel, they adopted his concern with the self-reassurance of modernity and his critique of an excessively subject-centred reason. This was exactly the framework which Nietzsche set out to overcome, seeking to lead beyond a philosophy of the subject. The Nietzschean criticism of Western metaphysics and Enlightenment rationality has been described by Habermas as the real challenge to Enlightenment thought.[70]

Habermas thus presents us with a very clear model of the conflicting strands in post-Hegelian philosophy: Left-Hegelians who inspire socialism and communism, Right-Hegelians who inspire conservatism, and Nietzsche, who inspires postmodernism. He himself is critical of all of these, since he finds in the early works of Hegel a way out of the dead-lock which

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[66] Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse*, 32-33.
[67] Habermas, *Philosophischer Diskurs*, 70.
[68] Ibid., 84-86.
[69] Ibid., 87-94.
[70] Ibid., 93.

characterizes the later works and legacy, namely communicative reason (*kommunikative Vernunft*). Habermas' alternative to subjectivist rationalism, by which he sets out to 'rescue' the Enlightenment, is an *intersubjectivist* rationalism.[71] If we take Habermas' own position into account for a model of the philosophical discourse of modernity, we are left with three principled standpoints: the Habermasian adherence to the logic of the Enlightenment, adding communicative reason as a corrective, the Left- and Right-Hegelian critique of the consequences of Enlightenment rationality, and the Nietzschean break with the rational and subjective logic of the Enlightenment all together. From the perspective of Habermas, these strands are not of equal weight. That he has merely identified his adversaries in a struggle over an enlightened modernity, becomes clear when he writes in a critique of postmodernism: "I think that instead of giving up modernity and its project as a lost cause, we should learn from the mistakes of those extravagant programs which have tried to negate modernity."[72] Such a view is opposed to a theorizing of modernity in terms of an interpretative space. Just like Habermas, Wagner starts from the assumption that modernity is made up of an enlightened and modernizing mainstream and two principled critiques, but, unlike Habermas, he argues that only when taken together do the three positions "open and map the interpretative space in which the theorizing of modernity can take place."[73]

A theoretical perspective which allows us to talk about modernity in this way, namely to see it as a contestation rather than an evolution, has been put forward by Cornelius Castoriadis. He suggests the terms 'rational mastery' and 'autonomy' in order to talk about the modern use of reason and the exercise of freedom. Modern society is, like any society, a creation, it is the product of what Castoriadis calls 'the radical imaginary'. The radical imaginary stands for the idea that every society creates itself, it defines and develops an image of itself and of the universe in which it lives, seeking to establish a signifying whole.[74] "Society is always self-institution," Castoriadis writes, "but for almost the whole of human history this fact of the self-institution has been veiled by the very institutions of society itself."[75] In other words, societies tend to claim an absolute beginning for their history and absolute legitimacy for their way of being in the world, often referring this absoluteness to a transcendental point of reference. The significance of the onset of modernity lies in the fact

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[71] Ibid., 42, 94.
[72] Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity Versus Postmodernity (1981)," in *Modernity: Critical Concepts*, ed. Malcolm Watters (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 13.
[73] Wagner, *Theorizing Modernity*, 10.
[74] Cornelius Castoriadis, *Gesellschaft als imaginäre Institution. Entwurf einer politischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt a. Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), 449. For conditions and limitations of the imaginary signification, see: Cornelius Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *Rethinking Imgination: Culture and Creativity*, ed. Gillian Robinson and John Rundell (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 149-152.
[75] Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 149.

that it marks a break in this pattern.[76] Modern consciousness faces the self-institution of society, it recognizes, so to speak, the contingency of its beginnings, and understands itself as autonomous. What the Enlightenment did, however, and this is the main critique of Castoriadis, is that despite having recognized man's self-inflicted heteronomy, it immediately introduced another closure of meaning when it substituted the transcendental with the rational.[77] The point of Castoriadis in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* is that the Enlightenment has tried to downplay the destabilizing realization of the contingency of a given social and political order by proclaiming this order to be rational.

With respect to the second feature of modernity, the freedom of the self, Castoriadis describes the modern subject as autonomous. The autonomy he has in mind, however, does not refer to a state of absolute independence from postulated origins and traditional modes of life. This, he writes, is the classical view of autonomy: 'my own discourse negates the discourse of the other, I establish my own truth'.[78] Such a negation is, according to Castoriadis, impossible and above all a-historical. The human subject, born into the world, can never be autonomous in the sense of a pure origin. Rejecting the mystification of a pure origin, Castoriadis suggests that autonomy is to be understood not as a static condition, but as an active mode of being. This means that we can call autonomous a person who never stops being in motion, who continually picks up anew that what it has already acquired, who is able to recognize and not to be dominated by his own phantasms – in other words, a truly self-reflexive person.[79] This person is not the abstract moment of philosophical subjectivity, it is not an absolute self and not a monad, it is a real human being in history and in the world. Where the philosophy of the Enlightenment goes wrong, Castoriadis writes, is in forgetting this concrete historical structure of the subject and construing, instead, a purely rational, fictitious subject, alienated from the world.[80]

It is this rational subject, which has been at the centre of most critical responses to modernist thought. And also the Enlightenment's claim to reason has been questioned. The Enlightenment-imperative to use one's reason has usually led its proponents to claim that their philosophical quest alone was rational and to criticize philosophical adversaries of the Enlightenment as 'irrational'. However, such a view draws a rather tight circle around what is modern reasoning. I would like to suggest, with Castoriadis, that we can look at rational mastery and autonomy not as fixed entities, like Enlightenment philosophy did, but rather as

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[76] For Castoriadis, modernity represents a second such break in human history, the first break is marked by the constitution of the Greek *polis*.
[77] Castoriadis, *Gesellschaft als imaginäre Institution*, 607-608, Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," 152-153.
[78] Castoriadis, *Gesellschaft als imaginäre Institution*, 176.
[79] Ibid., 177.
[80] Ibid., 180.

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coordinative axes along which various interpretations of the meaning of freedom and reason can be situated. These interpretations present themselves to us as specific socio-political constellations in time and space and as the intellectual engagement with these constellations in the form of discourses. Partaking in the modern condition thus becomes the very taking of a standpoint along these coordinative axes of reason and freedom.

Such an understanding of modernity unfolds from what is commonly referred to as a 'postmodern' perspective. However, I prefer to call it, with reference to Agnes Heller, the self-reflective consciousness of modernity itself.[81] Against the widespread criticism of postmodernism as relativistic, Heller argues that the postmodern standpoint can and must assume responsibility, the responsibility of historical consciousness. Consciousness emerges in response to the questions "Where did we come from? What are we? Where are we going?", and it becomes historical when we are aware that "it consists of the geography and the narrative(s) of a people or of a culture."[82] Autonomy itself becomes, from this point of view, an act of responsibility towards the world, self-reflexivity and rational argument become yardsticks for what can be considered to pertain to modernity and what remains outside of the modern paradigm. The definition of modernity I employ formulates a threshold of what it means to be modern. This threshold may be 'lower' than it is conceptualized from an Enlightenment point of view, but it still acts as a barrier to relativism; the world towards which it opens up might be more ambiguous and tension-ridden than modernist social and political sciences would want us to believe, but it is the site of concrete socio-historical and intellectual constellations that can be described and explained. Such a definition of modernity also sharpens the concept of Foucault's 'historical ontology of ourselves', because only self-reflexivity and rational argument can advance our genealogical enquiry.

II.1.2. The situative dimension of the political

When talking about the link between the autonomous human being and life in common, between the 'one' and the 'many', between individual liberty and the communal bond, it is usually assumed that politics set in once other modes of explaining this link are exhausted, for example family or religious ties. In this view, the political expresses the modalities of human coexistence with regard to the establishment of a coherent and stable

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[81] Agnes Heller, *A Theory of Modernity* (Malden (MA): Blackwell, 1999), 4. This view is reflected also in contemporary sociology, for example in the work of Anthony Giddens, who speaks about 'radicalized modernity', see: Giddens.
[82] Heller, 2.

order and the proper allocation of power.[83] Another view – the one which informs the concept of the political used in this study – is put forward by Claude Lefort.

In the essay, *The Permanence of the Theologico-Political*, Lefort describes how, as a result of the collapse of the authority of the Catholic Church in early modern Europe, philosophers and political thinkers turned to the question of the foundations of civil order. What, if not the Christian doctrine, lies at the basis of civil order, was their question. According to Lefort, their answers can be divided into two strands; a universalising trend which is at one and the same time political, philosophical and religious, and a differentiating trend which separates the political from the religious and confines the latter to the private realm. This second, differentiating language prevails and becomes the marker of modernity. Lefort identifies this language with politics *(la politique)* – the establishment and administering of political institutions – and with political science – the quest for an objective knowledge of the workings of society. Political science rests on the differentiation of realms such as the political, the social, the economical, the juridical, the aesthetic and the religious. Its logic of enquiry presupposes that the knowing subject can stand outside of the object of study and that a description of the workings of society supplies sufficient guidelines for political order.

This understanding of the role of political sciences and sociology has been scrutinized by Peter Wagner, who explains that, with the experience of the democratic revolutions, the problematic aspect of the liberation of human beings came to the fore, namely a high degree of contingency and uncertainty as to what it actually is that holds people together. The idea of the social, he argues, represented by the social sciences, arose in order to hold the contingency which political liberation had invoked in check. At the same time, however, this sociological determinism jeopardized the freedom in political action and opened a hiatus in modern social and political thought: While cultural-linguistic or class-based definitions of society over-determined the social bond with coercive results, as the history of nationalism and communism shows, liberal definitions under-determined the social bond and made it unclear what it actually is that holds people together in a polity. The challenge, he concludes, lies precisely in re-thinking the relationship between the social and the political.[84]

This is the task which a thinking of the political in its 'situative dimension' sets itself. Lefort has called this the aim of political philosophy. Political philosophy, according to Lefort, is not concerned with the workings of society, it is concerned with the principles that shape society and human co-existence, with the political *(le politique)*. According to this view, the

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[83] Carlo Galli, "Politica," in *Enciclopedia del pensiero politico. Autori, Concetti, Dottrine*, ed. Roberto Esposito and Carlo Galli (Roma, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000), 540-541.
[84] Wagner, "Freiheit und Das Gemeinsame.", Peter Wagner, "Social Theory and Political Philosophy," in *Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory*, ed. Gerard Delanty (London, New York: Routledge, 2006).

philosopher is faced with different forms of society whose form or regime he is trying to understand. He is concerned with the shaping of society *(mise en forme)* which implies the giving meaning *(mise en sens)* to social relations and the staging of these relations *(mise en scène)*.[85] It should be noted that Lefort's understanding of the political is markedly different from yet another prominent discourse of the political, namely Neo-Marxist political theory. There the notion of the political serves to juxtapose liberal and deliberative politics with the reality of exclusionary decision-making and power, emphasizing the agonistic aspect of the political struggle.[86] This is a dimension of the political that I will not be dealing with in this study.[87] I am interested in the situative dimension of the political, in the political as 'a place of being together'[88], as 'the way in which a society institutes itself'[89], or as 'the principles that shape human coexistence'[90].

Religion is of relevance here, because it is one such vision of what shapes society, and the political philosopher therefore ought to concern himself with the political dimension of religion instead of isolating it in the realm of the private. Religion is not only an object of knowledge for the philosopher, because "when he thinks of the principles that generate society and names them 'the political', he automatically includes religious phenomena within his field of reference"[91]. When Lefort writes that both religion and philosophy govern access to the world, he means that they both make a claim about the mode in which human society is instituted.

I have introduced this distinction between politics and the situative political in order to designate clearly the reach of my argument. I am not writing about the politics of community, not investigating the different ways in which human beings have organised their living together, even though these are important questions. I am also not writing about the communities of the included and excluded in the agonistic political power-struggle. When I write about the *political* problematic of modernity, I am investigating the various modes in which modern thought has conceptualized the principles that shape human coexistence. The task of this study is to look at philosophies that are *political* in this situative sense of the term. These philosophies seek to clarify what it is that holds people together in a polity, to

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[85] Claude Lefort, "The Permanence of the Theologico-Political?," in *Democracy and Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1988), 216-219.

[86] Chantal Mouffe, *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism*, vol. 72 (Wien: Institut fur Höhere Studien, 2000), Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005).

[87] In the agonistic dimension of the political, religion plays a role in relation to issues of identity and power. Since identity-discourses are always directed against an 'other', religion, respectively non-religion, may become a means of demarcation. Power enters into the picture when political institutions are, consciously or unconsciously, invested with a religious legacy.

[88] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 88.

[89] Castoriadis, *Gesellschaft als imaginäre Institution*.

[90] Lefort.

[91] Ibid., 221.

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conceptualize the relationship between the freedom of the human being and its being part of a community. I am therein not excluding the topic of religion. In line with Lefort, for whom political philosophy involves a fundamental awareness of its own historicity and modern character, I propose that we ought to take into account theological paradigms as expressions of the social imaginary. Also these are an integral part of what has been called Lefort's 'self-reflective anthropology of European modernity',[92] and I suggest that political philosophy therefore includes a reflection on religion. The introduction of an Eastern Orthodox perspective into contemporary political debates which I undertake in Chapter III and IV is motivated by this observation.[93]

II.2. The experience of totalitarianism and its impact on rival interpretations of community in contemporary political philosophy

The totalitarian regimes of Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism signify a watershed for political philosophy. They raise questions that require us to scrutinize the very concepts we are inclined to draw on in our political reasoning. The totalitarian experience, common to Western and Eastern Europe, raised the same political philosophical challenge: How to conceptualize the relationship between the individual and community in the light of the simultaneous absolute communization of society and absolute atomization of individuals which totalitarianism had brought about? And how to proceed in our political reasoning after the acknowledgement that totalitarianism did not signify the collapse of modern political order, but realized, on the contrary, one of its intrinsic possibilities? Post-totalitarian thinking of the political operates with an interpretation of the historical experience of totalitarianism as one of modernity's political possibilities. The conclusions which political thinkers in the second half of the twentieth century draw from this insight differ. Liberal thinkers like John Rawls, Isaiah Berlin, and also Jürgen Habermas formulate the liberal doctrine in a less utilitarian and more legal fashion, retrieving its origins in social contract theory, thereby seeking to avoid an overly atomized picture of liberal society. Communitarian critics of liberalism like Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre hold that some substantive grounding

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[92] Natalie Doyle, "Democracy as Socio-Cultural Project of Individual and Collective Sovereignty. Claude Lefort, Marcel Gauchet and the French Debate on Modern Autonomy," *Thesis Eleven* 75 (2003): 78.
[93] My understanding of the nexus between religion and the political sets a slightly different emphasis than political theology in the sense of Lefort or Carl Schmitt (Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 7. ed. (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1996).). Both these authors have described as 'political theology' the religious legacy of political institutions, while my focus here is on the modes of conceptualizing the human subject and human relationships in theology and in political philosophy.

of politics is necessary and that it is possible to formulate such a grounding without amounting to a renewed risk of totalitarianism. A response to both liberalism and communitarianism emerges in continental European philosophy where, rather than community itself, it is the human subject that becomes central for theorizing the common. Taken together, these philosophies can be said to spell out a discursive space for the interpretation of the relationship between community and the human subject under conditions of modernity.

II.2.1. The liberal approach: theorizing the polity

Post-totalitarian liberal political theory is characterized by a limited conceptual elaboration of the human subject and by a focus on the polity as functional association. These two features were spelt out authoritatively by John Rawls, whose influential work, *A Theory of Justice*, revived the social contract tradition for liberal political theory and thereby changed the outlook of liberalism for the present. If Rawls can be considered the key-figure for the renewal of liberal political philosophy in the Anglo-American world, we can attribute to Jürgen Habermas a similar role for Europe. While Rawls reacted to the Anglo-American mainstream of utilitarianism, Habermas reacted to European anti-Enlightenment scepticism. Apart from these two important representatives of contemporary liberal thought, I shall also briefly deal with Isaiah Berlin's reflection on the ambiguities of the notion of liberty in the light of the collapse of democratic political systems into totalitarianism. Taken together, we find that these three authors spell out the basic principles of contemporary political liberalism.

In his famous essay *Two Concepts of Liberty,* written in 1958, Berlin distinguishes between two kinds of liberty, negative and positive. Negative liberty he defines as the absence of obstacles to someone's actions, positive liberty, on the other hand, refers to personal autonomy, opportunity and capacity to act. While Berlin grants that both concepts of liberty represent valid human ideals, he points out that historically, the positive concept of liberty has been more susceptible to political abuse. Along the line of the argument by Talmon, which I described in the introduction, he argues that the concept of positive liberty put forward by thinkers such as Rousseau, Kant and Hegel has frequently served to justify demands for collective control, leading to the paradoxical situation that under the name of freedom individuals and certain groups within a society were coerced for the good of society as a whole. Negative liberty, on the other hand, as it was elaborated by utilitarian thinkers like Bentham and J. S. Mill, regarded any kind of constraint or discipline as a danger to individual liberty and thus insisted strictly on liberty as non-interference. In Berlin's view,

negative liberty, the principle of non-interference, is superior to positive liberty in guaranteeing the freedom of individuals within a society.[94]

Berlin's prioritization of negative liberty over positive liberty determined the development of liberal political theory in the second half of the twentieth century. The political liberalism of Rawls and with him of a large spectrum of Anglo-American political philosophy is firmly rooted in the paradigm of liberty as non-interference. Post-totalitarian liberal political theory adopts the utilitarian concept of individual autonomy while at the same time criticizing utilitarianism from a deontological point of view.[95] It attempts to combine a utilitarian understanding of the self and a non-utilitarian, but rights-based conceptualization of human interaction. The situation is different in the case of Habermas, who positions himself in the Kantian tradition of positive liberty. *Two Concepts of Liberty* is a key text in liberal political philosophy because it spells out the two basic formulations of the liberal paradigm, the legal and the deliberative model.

Rawls' fundamental objective in *A Theory of Justice* was to shift liberal political theory from being about the 'good' in the sense of the utilitarian accumulation of pleasure and avoidance of pain to being about the 'right' in the sense of law. For this end, he retrieved an important element of liberal theory that had first been elaborated in the seventeenth century by Thomas Hobbes: the social contract. Hobbes had introduced a significant alteration into the idea of the social contract from its ancient and medieval predecessors, because unlike these earlier contractual theories which had thought of power as being transferred from one political subject to the other via a contract, Hobbes proposed that power and political subjects are themselves constituted through the contract. The social contract was conceptualized by Hobbes as a response to the state of nature, which he interpreted as a condition of unsociability and strife. This interpretation of human nature as unsocial and conflictual was not shared by all social contract theorists: Locke, Rousseau, and Kant, to name the three most important ones, held human nature to be reasonable and sociable, but the basic idea – the constitution of power and the political subject via the act of agreement – became the cornerstone of classical social contract theory.[96] This understanding of political order found an institutional expression in the American Revolution and in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, but we also see the liberal interpretation of the modern paradigm of

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[94] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969; reprint 1991).
[95] Rawls made prominent the distinction that most contemporary liberal theory is 'deontological', that is, gives priority to the right over the good, whereas its utilitarian predecessors were 'teleological', that is, gave priority to the good over the right. See: Will Kymlicka, "Rawls on Teleology and Deontology," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 17, no. 3 (1988).
[96] Costanza Margiotta, "Contratto/Contrattualismo," in *Enciclopedia del pensiero politico. Autori, Concetti, Dottrine*, ed. Roberto Esposito and Carlo Galli (Roma, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000).

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autonomy and self-institution at play in the French Revolution. In the nineteenth century, however, classical social contract theory experienced a temporary demise in the wake of the rise of utilitarianism in Anglo-American political philosophy. Trying to come to terms with the workings of society, the political form of which was considered as largely established, utilitarian thinkers sought to formulate principles which would render the study of human interaction an exact science. Its primary advocates, Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill, held that the only principle which guides human action is the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. From this principle were derived the guidelines for political liberalism – the autonomy of right-endowed individuals, the non-interference of the state – and, spelled out by Adam Smith, for capitalism – the predictability and stability of the outcome of human passions and strivings. By the time Rawls wrote his seminal book, liberal political theory was not only regarded as basically synonymous with utilitarianism, it had also been recognized that utilitarian liberal theory had failed in giving a strong response to the fatal totalitarianisms of the first half of the twentieth century. In the light of this history, Rawls' criticism of utilitarianism should to be read as an attempt to strengthen liberalism. His intention was to put liberalism on foundations more durable than the principle of pleasure and pain – namely on the principles of justice.

Rawls introduced an important change into the classical notion of the social contract. He substituted the Hobbesian state of nature, conceptualized as a war of all against all, with the idea of an "original position" which he defined as "a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice."[97] The characteristics of the original position are that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength and the like. The parties do not even know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological predispositions. The principles of justice, Rawls writes, are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. Since this initial situation is *fair*, the principles that are agreed to in this situation are called "justice as fairness". Rawls defines the principles of justice as "the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association."[98] These principles are not themselves already the structures of association or the modes of institution of government, they are the principles which regulate the further agreement on the kinds of social cooperation or the forms of government that can be established. The main point of Rawls' argument in *A Theory of Justice* is that under

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[97] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 12.
[98] Ibid., 11.

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conditions of the original position it is unlikely that utility would be chosen as a principle of justice.[99] The thrust of the book is thus the criticism of utilitarianism.

The concept of the social contract lies also at the heart of Habermas' theory of communicative action, but unlike Rawls, whose scope is limited to the formulation of an alternative to utilitarianism within the liberal tradition, Habermas responds to the sceptics of rational humanism in general. In Habermas' reading, the social contract can be seen as the outcome of an ideal discourse situation in which every participant has expressed his or her views, has listened to and understood the point of every other participant, and the individuals together have deliberated and reached a consensus on the organization of society.[100] The most important difference between the design of the Rawlsian original position and the Habermasian ideal discourse situation is that while Rawls takes all personal positions *out* of his notion of the original position and thereby eliminates pluralism, Habermas takes them all *in* and wants to endorse pluralism. For Rawls, impartiality is exclusive, guaranteed by the veil of ignorance, for Habermas it is inclusive. In Habermas, the discourse has the function of a conversion. In a direct exchange with Rawls, in which he puts forward his objections with the intention to strengthen a shared argument, he describes the differences between his own approach and Rawls in the following way: "Rawls imposes a common perspective on the parties in the original position through informational constraints and thereby neutralizes the multiplicity of particular interpretative perspectives from the outset. Discourse ethics, by contrast, views the moral point of view as embodied in an intersubjective practice of argumentation which enjoins those involved to an idealizing *enlargement* of their interpretive perspectives."[101] This idea of a widening of one's own horizon in order to be enabled in a better fashion to participate in deliberation is an element of that positive liberty which Berlin and Rawls have ruled out in their conception of liberalism.

A second point of divergence between the liberalism of Rawls and of Habermas is the scope of their argument. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls emphasises that the political doctrine is a freestanding view, it is not derived from comprehensive doctrines. His political liberalism relies entirely upon the domain of the political and on nothing outside of it.[102] Rawls thus does not reject Enlightenment philosophy, but neither does he anchor himself in it. The Kantian understanding of autonomy and individuality as moral values is not relevant for his kind of liberalism: "The central idea is that political liberalism moves within the category of the

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[99] Ibid., 14.
[100] Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, 1 ed., 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).
[101] Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls' *Political Liberalism*," *Journal of Philosophy* 92 (1995): 117.
[102] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 374.

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political and leaves philosophy as it is. It leaves untouched all kinds of doctrines – religious, metaphysical, and moral – with their long tradition of development and interpretation."[103] Rawls has to admit, however, that it is important that the concepts which political liberalism arrives at are in some sense related or can be derived from some comprehensive doctrines, because the overlapping consensus depends on this 'recognition-effect'. Habermas, on the other hand, identifies the Rawlsian reliance on *reasonableness* as that very same Enlightenment tradition which Rawls thinks he can neglect, and he asks why one should not claim the truth of that tradition.[104] Here again we find Habermas open to a positive argument – a truth-claim with regard to the just working of society – where Rawls tries to avoid any such claim.

Political liberalism looks for a political conception of justice that can gain the support of an overlapping consensus of reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines in a society. This is the starting point of contemporary political liberalism, which thereby departs from utilitarian liberalism with its reference to the individual good. It is no longer the individual which is in the focus of political theory, but the polity. In the political liberalism of Rawls, the human subject is of relevance only as a neutralized reasonable decision-maker which contributes to the establishment and workings of a polity. This does not make contemporary liberal theory holist, it remains an atomist account of political association, but the nature of the atoms is irrelevant. Methodologically, Rawls is not in need of a metaphysical concept of the human subject, and not of an external justification, since justice derives from an overlapping consensus, an agreement defined as a situation in which "citizens themselves, with the exercise of their liberty of thought and conscience, and looking to their comprehensive doctrines, view the political conceptions as derived from, or congruent with, or at least not in conflict with, their other values."[105] Those involved in the overlapping consensus are defined in functional terms: "The term 'person' is to be constructed variously depending on the circumstances. On some occasions it will mean human individuals, but in others it may refer to nations, provinces, business firms, churches, teams, and so on. The principles of justice apply in all these instances, although there is a certain logical priority to the case of human individuals."[106]

Rawls' theory of justice as fairness can do without a particular metaphysical doctrine about the nature of the human person. Rawls admits, however, that "if metaphysical

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[103] Ibid., 375.
[104] Habermas, "Reconciliation," 122.
[105] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 11.
[106] John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness (1958)," in *Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1999), 49. See also: John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

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presuppositions are involved, perhaps they are so general that they would not distinguish between the metaphysical views – Cartesian, Leibnizean, or Kantian; realist, idealist, or materialist – with which philosophy has traditionally been concerned,"[107] and thus clearly locates himself in the tradition of Western individualist metaphysics. Rawls has been criticized for not being more explicit about his belonging to this tradition of rational humanism. Michael Sandel has noted that Rawls tries to develop a Kantian conception of justice without Kantian transcendental idealism.[108] Habermas is more explicit and more emphatic about the tradition in which he stands. He does not adopt Kantian idealism, but he does not hesitate to locate himself in the tradition of Kantian positive liberty either. His subject is not the Kantian transcendental self and not the Rawlsian unencumbered self, but the communicative subject partaking in the ideal speech situation.

From this definition (or lack of definition) of the human subject follows the precariousness of a concept of community in liberalism. Rawls does not have a concept of community, but one of the polity as a system of cooperation. This cooperation is limited to the realm of politics, it can be institutionalized, it must be fair and rational. Citizens have to abstract from their personal or religious views when they are concerned with the realm of politics: "In their political thought, and in the discussion of political questions, citizens do not view the social order as fixed natural order, or as an institutional hierarchy justified by religious or aristocratic values."[109] A well-ordered polity is not a community but the product of the overlapping consensus on political issues related to the comprehensive doctrines. It is on this question that Habermas finally does not differ much from the Rawlsian doctrine of political liberalism, he just reaches the conclusion in a different fashion. The main difference between the two is that Habermas, having worked out a comprehensive theory of communicative interaction, can claim to reach beyond the political realm and to account for the workings of society as such whereas Rawls limits his theory to the realm of the polity.

From the point of view of Rawlsian liberalism,[110] the definition of the political which I have proposed in the beginning of this section, is faulty. Liberalism rests on the paradigm of

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[107] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 29. Footnote 31.
[108] Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36-37.
[109] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 15.
[110] The liberalism which the communitarian and postmodern authors cited in this study criticize and which I characterize as largely oblivious to the problematic of community and the human subject, is a Rawlsian Anglo-American liberalism. Habermas is certainly much aware of the problematic of community and, especially in his later works, also of its religious dimension. In the framework of this chapter, the aim of which is to set up token-positions in the modern philosophical discourse, I cannot do justice to the entirety of Habermas' political theory, but I am aware of the importance and potential benefits of a more differentiated discussion of his liberal theory.

separation of the political from the moral, the social, the economic, the philosophical.[111] It has made the modern call for autonomy the founding principle of its conception of the human subject, and it has made the modern requirement of rationalizing the self-institution of society its programme. It is the modernist political theory *par excellence*. It might therefore be held against my interpretation of liberalism that I am criticizing it as a political philosophy while it is really not putting forward anything else than a theory of politics. In reply to such contestation I would like to emphasise that liberalism can – and should – be read as one approach among other political philosophies, all of which are trying to come to terms with the reality of individual freedom and life in common. The fact that the contingency of liberalism has been lost from our consciousness, that the liberal paradigm has become a 'social imaginary' so powerful as to amount to truth,[112] does not mean that one cannot try to take a step back and measure liberalism alongside the critiques which have accompanied it since its inception.

II.2.2. The communitarian approach: theorizing community

What distinguishes the modern understanding of the human subject and community from the pre-modern understanding are, as has been pointed out by Castoriadis, the recognition of the autonomy of the individual, and the recognition of the contingency of the institutionalization of the common. Modern political thinkers have reacted to the abandonment of religion and tradition as legitimizing factors for self- and communal organization with different alternative proposals to establish a well-ordered life in common. In the preceding section, I have introduced one of these responses, the liberal approach, which advocates the abandonment of substantial formulations of what people have in common and its substitution with legal ties. Liberalism has been criticized for this abandonment. Wagner, for example, writes that individualist liberalism is insufficient both in theoretical and in political terms, because "it lacks criteria for determining that which members of the polity have in common." Given that in the liberal account the polity is about the protection of negative liberty, any determination of what members of a polity have in common is bracketed. "The dedication to private affairs, which it in turn encourages," Wagner continues, "is not problematic in itself, but under conditions of extended market relations it may be steadily transforming the world, thus increasing the worldlessness that further undermines action in common."[113] The threat of liberal worldlessness and loss of the common have been

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[111] Michael Walzer, "Liberalism and the Art of Separation," *Political Theory* 12 (1984).
[112] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2004).
[113] Peter Wagner, "The Political Form of Europe, Europe as a Political Form," *Thesis Eleven* 80 (2005): 70.

addressed in various ways in contemporary political philosophy, and I will now turn to one such alternative response which developed alongside and in a critical angle to liberalism, insisting on the relevance of the common for the stability of society, namely communitarianism.

Communitarianism developed predominantly in Anglo-American philosophy in response to the success of Rawlsian liberalism in the 1970s. The main protagonists of communitarianism are Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer, Amitai Etzioni, and Alasdair MacIntyre. With the exception of MacIntyre, these authors are often referred to as 'liberal communitarians' because, rather than effecting a wholesale criticism of the liberal paradigm, they try to offer a modification to liberal theory.[114]

The communitarian endeavour is best understood in the light of the experience of totalitarianism. In the face of the two totalitarian systems which had marked the twentieth century, the non-liberal political theories of the nineteenth century were frequently interpreted as the culprits of the deterioration of the political into fascism and communism. Hegel's philosophy was considered to have given rise both to the criticism of rational humanism and liberalism from the right, culminating in the theory of the state by Carl Schmitt, and from the left, engendering Marxism and Leninism. Romanticism, marked by Herder's discovery of the culturally and linguistically defined *Volk,* was identified as the root of nationalism.[115] In the light of this apparent breakdown of non-liberal political philosophy, Taylor's reading of Hegel was perceived as an affront by many liberal thinkers, who cried out that "the communitarian critics want us to live in Salem, but not to believe in witches."[116] Taylor, in his seminal work *Sources of the Self,* replied to this alarmism: "The [liberal] prudent strategy (ignoring goods) makes sense on the assumption that the dilemma is inescapable, that the highest spiritual aspirations must lead to mutilation or destruction. But if I may make one last unsupported assertion, I want to say that I don't accept this as our inevitable lot. The dilemma of mutilation

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[114] Gerard Delanty, *Community* (London: Routledge, 2003), 74.

[115] This point is backed up by Honneth, who distinguishes between the Kantian tradition of reason, which finds its continuation today in Rawls and Habermas, and the Hegelian tradition of critique of individualism, which finds today an only partial continuity in the works of Taylor. The reasons for the neglect of Hegel in today's political philosophy are, according to Honneth, that, firstly, his work is being considered anti-democratic because individual freedoms are subordinated to the ethical authority of the state, and that, secondly, it is methodologically no longer acceptable due to the logical place of the 'spirit'. Axel Honneth, *Leiden an Unbestimmtheit: Eine Reaktualisierung der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001), 11-12. On the cultural and linguistic definition of the polity, see: Wagner, *Theorizing Modernity*, 45.

[116] Amy Gutman, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1985): 319.

is in a sense our greatest spiritual challenge, not an iron fate."[117] Let me therefore turn to the various ways in which communitarians have faced this challenge.[118]

The communitarian response to liberalism is at its onset less of a political but rather a moral criticism. The confrontation is taking place on the level of moral philosophy, not on the level of political philosophy, its starting point being the utilitarian notion of negative freedom. Taylor argues against the liberal preference for negative freedom, suggesting that it offers an impoverished vision of the human capacity for self-realization. He distinguishes between negative freedom as an opportunity-concept – being free is a matter of what we can do – and positive freedom as an exercise-concept – one is free only to the extent that one has effectively determined oneself and the shape of one's life – accusing liberals of wilfully ignoring the significance of positive freedom. In a reaction to the totalitarian menace, he writes, contemporary political thinkers fear to stray from the line of non-interference, from the philosophy engendered by Hobbes and Bentham. Taylor thinks that this approach is untenable in the long run, because the liberal concept of the independent and opportunity-seizing subject does not hold empirically. Subjects are always also determined by their context.[119]

We find this idea clearly spelled out in Taylor's *Sources of the Self*, which he describes as an "essay in retrieval."[120] The starting point for the book is that Taylor considers modern identity as it is represented in liberal philosophy as impoverished. His striking claim: "Modernity urgently needs to be saved from its most unconditional supporters."[121] These supporters are, in Taylor's view, the thinkers of the Enlightenment, who established a materialist, rationalist and natural-scientific outlook on the world, and their contemporary liberal heirs, who take the modern destruction of overarching frames of reference, like religion, tradition, or the family, so far as to invalidate any claim for orientation in ordinary life other than utilitarianism or law.[122] Against this mainstream, Taylor wants to retrieve the sources for moral orientation that have been lost out of sight, and he turns to Hegel, Romanticism, and nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* literary and artistic modernism for inspiration. It is especially the tradition of Hegel in which he situates himself.[123] The main

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[117] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 521.
[118] Honneth suggests that for North American philosophers it might have been easier to develop a post-totalitarian communitarian political philosophy than it was for European philosophers, who were still fighting off the legacy of pre-fascist 'Kulturkritik'; see: Axel Honneth, "Individualisierung und Gemeinschaft," in *Kommunitarismus in der Diskussion*, ed. Christel Zahlmann (Berlin: Rotbuchverlag, 1992), 16-17.
[119] Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?," in *The Idea of Freedom. Essays in Honor of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
[120] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 10.
[121] Ibid., xi.
[122] Ibid., 23-24.
[123] Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

point of *Sources of the Self* is the critique of the liberal anthropological paradigm, and the motivation of this critique is political. In Taylor's view, a society built on utilitarian, instrumental and individualist-atomist paradigms will function neither politically, nor socially, nor ecologically. This is his diagnosis. As for a remedy, we find that towards the end of the book, Christianity emerges as a possible framework for moral orientation in the world. But far from being conclusive at that point, it is really this search for alternatives which Taylor and with him other communitarian thinkers have continued to pursue in various subsequent works.

Taylor's critique in *Sources of the Self* is shared by Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre, however, goes a step further than Taylor, because for him, the moral philosophy of the Enlightenment is not only insufficient, it is an inevitably unsuccessful project that cannot be remedied but only overcome. "The conclusion which I reached and which is embodied in this book", he writes in *After Virtue*, "is that Marxism's moral defects and failures arise from the extent to which it, like liberal individualism, embodies the *ethos* of the distinctively modern and modernising world, and that nothing less than a rejection of a large part of that ethos will provide us with a rationality and morally defensible standpoint from which to judge and to act – and in terms of which to evaluate various rival and heterogeneous moral schemes which compete for our allegiance."[124] The methodology with which MacIntyre undertakes this scrutiny of the modern ethos is historical investigation into the formation of the modern moral paradigms. He credits Nietzsche with having been the first to understand that the rational and rationally justified autonomous moral subject of the eighteenth century was a fiction. But Nietzsche, in MacIntyre's view, illegitimately generalized from his account of morality of his day to the nature of morality as such.[125] Instead of giving up on morality all together, like Nietzsche, MacIntyre prefers to turn to Aristotelianism, which he considers the philosophically most powerful of pre-modern modes of moral thought: "What […] the conjunction of philosophical and historical argument reveals," he writes, "is that either one must follow through the aspirations and the collapse of the different versions of the Enlightenment project until there remains only the Nietzschean diagnosis and the Nietzschean problematic or one must hold that the Enlightenment project was not only mistaken, but should never have been commenced in the first place."[126] There is no alternative, according to MacIntyre, and in particular there is, in his view, no alternative provided by thinkers at the heart of modernist moral philosophy, Hume, Kant and Mill. MacIntyre decides the question 'Nietzsche vs. Aristotle' in favour of Aristotle, and traces the

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[124] Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), viii.
[125] Ibid., 107.
[126] Ibid., 111.

concept of virtue in Aristotle and further. Eventually he subscribes to a Thomist-Aristotelian vision of morality, and in the works that followed *After Virtue*, especially *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and *Three rival modes of moral enquiry,* MacIntyre leaves the ground of mainstream communitarian critique of liberalism. In chapter IV, I will come back to MacIntyre and look in more detail at his 'radicalization' of communitarianism.

Since the early works of Taylor and MacIntyre, the communitarian search for alternatives to the liberal paradigm has mostly taken a pragmatic stand on the task of criticising liberalism. Instead of accepting the genealogical critique as a starting point, like MacIntyre does, liberal communitarianism tends to argue with the help of sociology. This is the tenor of much of Taylor's later writings and we also find it in the works of Walzer, Sandel and Etzioni. What is of special interest to us here is the way in which these authors deal with the question of the human subject.

Among communitarian writings, Sandel's *Liberalism and the limits of justice* can be considered an exemplary critique of Rawls. Sandel challenges Rawls on the grounds that his theory of the original position presupposes an "unencumbered self", a self understood as prior to and independent of purposes and ends, an assumption that is, in his view, sociologically not tenable. Human beings are embedded, 'encumbered' in contexts, institutions, histories, and Rawls' attempt to construct a Kantian pure subject without recourse to Kant's transcendentalism is therefore implausible.[127] Sandel also criticizes Rawls' difference principle, the idea that assets of individuals are to benefit society, on the grounds that it presupposes a notion of commonality which is not theoretically accounted for. The liberal vision is, in Sandel's words, "parasitic on a notion of community it officially rejects."[128] We find that these two themes – the understanding of the self and the constitution of community – which Sandel has identified as problematic in liberal theory, are at the centre of the communitarian critique of liberalism.

Sandel's notion of the encumbered self is also the topic of Etzioni. And just like Sandel, for whom the self is constituted by history and personal relations, also Etzioni points out that the individual is always embedded in a social context. The alleged fault-line between liberalism and communitarianism runs along the concept of freedom, Etzioni writes. Those who prioritize individual freedom leave out the sociological need for affective, non-rational bonds, those who prioritize community leave insufficient basis for individual freedom and individual rights. Etzioni wants to overcome this distinction by proposing a new vision of the

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[127] Sandel, 14.
[128] Michael J. Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," *Political Theory* 12, no. 1 (1984): 91.

human subject that is modelled after the dialogical concept proposed by Martin Buber. Etzioni uses Buber rather freely here, replacing his notion of the 'I&Thou' with 'I&We' without much further ado: "The 'I' stands for the individual member of the community. The 'We' signifies social, cultural, political, and hence historical and institutional forces that shape the collective factor – the community."[129] The social context is, in this view, perceived as a legitimate and integral part of one's existence, as a 'We' rather than a 'They'.

What Etzioni does is to basically split the human subject into two halves which stand in a – in his view healthy – tension with each other: an uncommunitized and a communitized half. "The uncommunitized personhood is a source of creativity and change for the community and fulfillment for the person," he writes, and "the communitized part of the person is a source of service for shared needs and a source of stability and support for social virtues of the community."[130] According to Etzioni, an equilibrium can and has to be found within every specific historical situation. What Etzioni does not do, and with him none of the communitarian writers, is to argue ontologically for this dual make-up of the human subject. When Etzioni writes "there is a strong accumulation of evidence that people have a deep-seated need for social bonds (or attachments) and that they have a compelling need for normative (or moral) guidance," he draws from this the conclusion that "the communitarian self […] is a rather empirically well-grounded concept," but he falls short of having disproved liberal theory on philosophical grounds. He has not confronted the atomist ontologies of the subject which Taylor in *Sources of the Self* criticized as insufficient – Descartes' disembodied soul, the self-making subject of Locke, or the Kantian purely rational being.[131] He has merely opposed them with a holist ontology.

Taylor himself pursues a similar strategy. In his reflections on Heidegger and Wittgenstein, he values the two thinkers for having helped philosophy to emerge from the grip of modern rationalism. By this he means that the dominant concept of the thinking agent, which both Heidegger and Wittgenstein sought to overcome, was shaped by a kind of ontologization of rational procedure. "That is, what were seen as the proper procedures of rational thought were read into the very constitution of the mind, made part of its very structure."[132] Taylor presents the ontologization of reason as a historical-philosophical event, something that happened with the modern mind after Descartes. The peculiarity of Western modernity, Taylor points out, lies in the fact that this ontologization came to be perceived as universal: "The disengaged perspective, which might better have been conceived as a rare

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[129] Amitai Etzioni, "A Moderate Communitarian Proposal," *Political Theory* 24, no. 2 (1996): 157.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 515.
[132] Charles Taylor, "Lichtung or Lebensform: Parallels between Heidegger and Wittgenstein," in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 61.

and regional achievement of a knowing agent, whose normal stance was engaged, was read into the very nature of the mind."[133]

Taylor opposes the rational thinking agent with the concept of engaged agency, which he conceives historically-contextually, as "an agency whose experience is only made intelligible by being placed in the context of the kind of agency it is."[134] He finds a backing up for this view in the works of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, whom he reads as effecting parallel attacks on the disengaged picture of the mind. They both put forward an account of engaged agency, Heidegger when he speaks of the 'finitude' of human being, Wittgenstein when he places the meanings of our words in the context of our form of life (*Lebensform*). Taylor follows Wittgenstein in his interpretation of the crucial role of the background and practices which people share in their daily lives. "Bringing in the background allows us to articulate the ways in which our form of agency is nonmonological, in which the seat of certain practices and understandings is precisely *not* the individual but one of the common spaces between."[135] Whereas Taylor reads Wittgenstein as opening a way towards a new kind of humanism, he detects in Heidegger a anti-humanist stance and a general attack on subjectivity which he rejects. He also quite clearly distances himself from Derrida and the 'French interpreters' of Heidegger. I will come back to this rejection, which is characteristic for the communitarian approach, at the end of this section.

The consequence of the communitarian restriction to a sociological and linguistic argument for the embeddedness of the human subject can be seen clearly in the later works of Taylor and in the writings of Walzer. Here the distinction between communitarian and liberal theory is no longer discussed as an issue of ontology, but as a question of advocacy. In "Cross-Purposes", Taylor recapitulates the liberal-communitarian debate with regard to ontology- and advocacy-issues. The ontological question, he points out, has traditionally been discussed along the terms of atomism and holism. Advocacy issues, on the other hand, concern the moral stand or policy one adopts, they are decided with regard to the priority that is given to individual freedoms and rights or to community life. The ontologically stand one takes, Taylor argues, does not necessarily have to have a bearing on what one advocates: "Taking an ontological position doesn't have to amount to advocating something; but at the same time, the ontological does help to define the options it is meaningful to support by advocacy."[136] Taylor holds that either stand on the atomism-holism debate can be combined with either stand on the individualist-collectivist question. Seeing himself as advocating a

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[133] Ibid., 66. See also: Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*.
[134] Taylor, "Lichtung oder Lebensform," 68.
[135] Ibid., 77.
[136] Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 183.

holist individualist modern liberalism, Taylor understands his own position as a contribution to the liberal debate insofar as he recovers republican virtues of positive freedom that the liberal emphasis on negative liberty overlooks.

A similar view is held by Walzer, who considers the communitarian position a feature of liberalism, a recurrent critique of the dominant liberal project without prospect to win the upper hand. In his view, communitarian views can never hope to supersede liberalism but they can hope to offer additions or be partly incorporated. Walzer considers liberal theory "a self-subverting doctrine in need of periodic communitarian corrections."[137] He points out that liberalism is a doctrine which continually risks to undercut itself, to disdain its own traditions, and to produce in each generation renewed hopes for a more absolute freedom from history and society alike. Much of liberal theory, from Locke to Rawls, is in his view an effort to fix and stabilize the doctrine in order to 'end the endlessness of liberal liberation'. Communitarianism may play a similar role. Given this state of affairs, Walzer makes a pragmatic argument. He says that since modern liberal society is a reality, communitarianism has to come to terms with it and be content in offering little corrections: "American communitarians have to recognize that there is no one out there but separated rights-bearing, voluntarily associating, freely speaking, liberal selves. It would be a good thing, though, if we could teach those selves to know themselves as social beings, the historical products of, and in part the embodiment of, liberal values."[138] In a later essay, Walzer partly corrects this atomist account of the nature of American society. In *Politics and Passion*, he argues that people are always already related in one way or the other, be it through family, through religion, culture or shared moral values, and that these 'involuntary associations' are an important source for the liberal polity, which in turn guarantees for its members the possibility to dissociate from the involuntary associations they find themselves in.[139] By calling for a 'more realistic sociology' for liberal theory, Walzer brackets an important ontological question: the constitution of the self. He argues that neither liberalism nor communitarianism needs a precise view of the self: "The central issue for political theory is not the constitution of the self but the connection of constituted selves, the pattern of social relations."[140]

What we understand from this last statement is that the constitution of the human subject and the issue of community are, even for the communitarian thinkers, two separate topics. Walzer and Taylor suggest that we can theorize community without a prior theorizing

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[137] Michael Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18, no. 1 (1990): 14.
[138] Ibid., 15.
[139] Michael Walzer, *Politics and Passion. Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism,* New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2004, 1-3.
[140] Ibid., 21.

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of the subject. Their approach – or better: their ontology – is holist. Taylor poses the right question in *Sources of the Self* when he wonders why there is such an "immense influence of the anti-metaphysical, materialist, natural-science-oriented temper of thought in our civilization" and why this compels us to perceive ourselves as being torn between free individuality and boundedness in community. But he eventually avoids facing the problem full-scale when he limits himself to showing empirically-sociologically that human beings are not the way liberal theory depicts them to be.

The state of the communitarian critique of liberalism, which follows from the account I have provided here, is thus the following: the liberal communitarians embrace a holist ontology and motivate their concept of community with the help of empirical-sociological attributes of the human subject. They acknowledge that liberty is a central feature of the human subject, while at the same time accepting that this liberty is almost inevitably jeaopardized by each individual's particular circumstances. For liberal communitarians, the task of liberal democratic societies is to safeguard the liberty and 'exit option' from an 'involuntary association' for each person. This liberal communitarian position has been challenged on historical-philosophical grounds by MacIntyre, whose radicalization of the communitarian critique I will analyze in more depth in chapter IV. It has also been challenged on ontological grounds by that other philosophical response to liberalism which liberal communitarians generally reject, namely the postmodern paradigm. 'French interpreters' of Heidegger, like Jean-Luc Nancy, are concerned with the link between the human subject and community precisely because they think that we cannot solve the question of individual freedom and community with a holist ontology.

II.3.3. The postmodern approach: theorizing the human subject

In this section, my intention is to establish postmodern political thought as a viable third approach in political philosophy, besides liberalism and communitarianism. Postmodern political philosophy singles out that crucial element of the political which the other two theories with their focus on the polity and on community respectively neglect, namely the human subject. I want to argue that taking into account the postmodern approach is indispensable for a proper understanding of the political problematic of modernity because it seeks to transcend a discourse that oscillates between liberal atomism and communitarian holism.

Postmodern political philosophy has been described as 'un-political' (*impolitico*) by the Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito.[141] What he means by that is that postmodern political thinking is *un-political* in the sense that it undoes the separation between politics and the political, it is *political-philosophical* by way of Lefort's definition, concerned with the principles that shape life in common. Esposito identifies the roots of this way of thinking in Nietzsche and Heidegger, and he finds a concrete elaboration of it in the works of Hannah Arendt, George Bataille, Maurice Blanchot and Jan Patočka. The list could be prolonged to include Esposito himself, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy, Alain Badiou, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and many others. These thinkers inaugurate a way of thinking about the political that is characterized by a radical questioning of the modern political vocabulary and by a scrutiny of the origins of the modern understanding of the political. What they share is the intuition that the event of totalitarianism was not a negation of the foundational principles of political modernity, but a possible outcome of these. The postmodern political philosophers understand their task as bringing to light the tensions between the singularity of the individual and its boundedness in a common world, inherent in the modern political project, and to maintain this tension in an ongoing critical reflection.[142]

From this self-understanding it follows that postmodern political thinkers are first and foremost concerned with ontology. This "return of ontology into political theory"[143] stands in the tradition of Nietzsche and of Heidegger.[144] Both Nietzsche and Heidegger have been regarded as problematic figures for political thought. In the case of Nietzsche, the use of his ideas to back up the national-socialist and anti-Semitic ideology in Germany was indirect, in the case of Heidegger it amounted to a, however temporary, compliance to Hitler's regime. Critics of postmodern political thought have frequently highlighted this aspect in order to discredit postmodernism at its roots.[145] Postmodern thinkers have held against this criticism that, despite Heidegger's failure to judge correctly the political situation of his time, we cannot overlook the importance of his *Fundamentalontologie* for contemporary political philosophy. Heidegger's 'first philosophy' ran aground on a totalitarian ideology, but this does not mean that the attempt itself was mistaken. For an author like Jean-Luc Nancy it is rather this very

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[141] Roberto Esposito, "Impolitico," in *Enciclopedia del pensiero politico. Autori, Concetti, Dottrine*, ed. Roberto Esposito and Carlo Galli (Roma, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000).
[142] Ibid.
[143] Stephen K. White, "Weak Ontology and Liberal Political Reflection," *Political Theory* 25, no. 4 (1997): 503.
[144] See: Roberto Esposito, "Nichilismo," in *Enciclopedia del pensiero politico. Autori, Concetti, Dottrine*, ed. Roberto Esposito and Carlo Galli (Roma, Bari: Editori Laterza, 2000), Gianni Vattimo, "Dialettica, Differenza, Pensiero Debole," in *Il Pensiero Debole*, ed. Gianni Vattimo and P.A. Rovatti (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1983). Simon Critchley, "Post-Deconstructive Subjectivity?," in *Ethics-Politics-Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas and Contemporary French Thought* (London, New York: Verso, 1999), 52.
[145] Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason. The Intellectual Romance with Fascism: From Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

point which "indicates to us that place from which first philosophy must recommence."[146] Nancy has turned the failure of Heidegger into the most important lesson for his own thinking of community, namely the radical deconstruction of any holist ontology without renouncing the task to offer an alternative to essentialist and atomist metaphysics.

One of the entities most thrown into question by the return of ontology has been the human subject. At stake is, White writes, "the assertive, disengaged self who generates distance from its background (tradition, embodiment) and foreground (external nature, other subjects) in the name of an accelerating mastery over them."[147] Modern consciousness is becoming increasingly uncertain about the validity and optimism of this concept of subjectivity and the growing recourse to ontological reflection is a symptom of this waning of self-confidence. At the core of the ontological problematic, the *impolitical* thinkers unearth the problematic of the subject. They identify, with Heidegger, the classical metaphysical subject as the culprit of the dead-lock in modern philosophical thought. "Following the Heideggerian account of the history of philosophy," Critchley writes, "what is particular to modern metaphysics, and this means philosophy after Descartes, is that this metaphysical foundation is no longer claimed to reside in a form, substance, or deity outside of the human intellect but is, rather, found in the human being understood as subject."[148] When Heidegger writes, 'Man has become the *subjectum* (*Der Mensch ist das* subiectum *geworden*),' he means that the *human* subject – the self, ego, or conscious, thinking thing – has becomes the ultimate foundation for Western thought. At the same time, however, the thinking of the human subject in Western philosophy has remained within that closure of metaphysics which is characterized by the forgottenness or oblivion of Being.

The task of thinking the human subject and its relation to Being *anew* requires first and foremost an overcoming of classical metaphysics. For this reason, postmodern thought has frequently been accused of stopping at a deconstruction of the subject. The postmodern emphasis on multiplicity and difference has been interpreted by its critics as the deconstruction of the self without putting anything else into its place. This, however, is in my view too hasty a judgment. Rather than contenting itself with deconstruction, postmodern political thought has made the lack, the empty space of the deconstructed subject, sovereign, or society, meaningful itself. The clearest testimony of this determination to think the subject after its displacement is a collection of essays with the title *Who comes after the Subject?*[149] When Nancy poses this question to his fellow French philosophers, he is more than simply

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[146] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 26.
[147] White, 503.
[148] Critchley, 53.
[149] Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, eds., *Who Comes after the Subject?* (New York, London: Routledge, 1991).

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asking a question. He is implicitly making a statement. The subject, as it was understood in modern thought from Descartes to Hegel, has been put on trial by philosophy in the twentieth century. The break with metaphysics, and the philosophical gesture of deconstruction that characterizes the works of thinkers like Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, have not only changed our way of thinking about certain categories in philosophy – they have put on trial Western philosophy as such. This is what the *after* stands for in Nancy's question – it is the being *after* certainties, the being in a state of nihilism, if we want to put it like that. But Nancy does not stop with the *after*. With his question, he is also making a claim. The deconstruction of subjectivity has not obliterated its object. Someone, a *who*, is coming after it. "Everything seems," Nancy writes, "to point to the necessity, not of a 'return to the subject' […] but on the contrary, a move forward toward someone – *some one* – else in its place."[150] In other words, the 'death of the subject' does not release us from the task to think that very subject in new ways. It is this thinking of the human subject at a point where the ontological critique of modernism has opened up a clearance for new approaches, it is the thinking of a post-deconstructive subjectivity[151], which amounts to a 'radicalization' in postmodern political philosophy. The clearest example of such a post-deconstructive political philosophy can, in fact, be found in the work of Nancy, to be analyzed in more depth in chapter IV.

What makes postmodern political philosophy *political* rather than a mere ontology of the self, is the fact that postmodern authors discuss the question of the human subject as an issue of community, and vice versa. The two poles – the human subject and community, the 'one' and the 'many' – cannot, in the postmodern view, be divorced from each other. Talking about the human subject and community *after* the critique of classical metaphysics implies that none of the two is allowed to acquire the status of an unquestionable starting point, of a substance or essence in itself. Their approach is therefore different from the atomism of the liberals, who start with the neutralized individual to arrive at an idea of the polity, and it is also different from the holism of the communitarians, who start from the community in order to say something about the political bond. Postmodern philosophers discuss the human subject in community and community in the human subject, making recourse to figures of thought and speech that go beyond conventional political philosophy and beyond the language of classical metaphysics.

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[150] Ibid., 5.
[151] Critchley follows in his pursuit of a post-deconstructivist subjectivity the guidance of Levinas: "Levinas, I believe, presents us with the possibility for beginning to think a post-Heideggerian conception of the subject that will hopefully not be metaphysically or naively pre-Heideggerian, a conception that I shall eventually describe as 'post-deconstructive'." Critchley, 62.

Postmodern political thought, we can conclude, represents a specific approach to the situative dimension of the political. Taking up the challenge of a post-totalitarian thinking of community, it rejects liberalism and it considers as insufficient the communitarian response. Communitarianism is insufficient for a thinker like Nancy insofar as it stops at a holist ontology, does not confront the issue of a human subject's being-in-relation. Where communitarians take it for granted that an otherwise autonomous individual has a communal dimension, postmodern thinkers try to think the communal and the individual as mutually constitutive. In order to do this, they need to break with the metaphysics of the Western Enlightenment which they criticize as 'essentialist'. This break and attempts to think beyond it are, in my opinion, the extremely valuable and interesting contribution of postmodern political thought to the philosophical discourse of political modernity. What makes postmodern thought 'modern' in the proper sense, is the fact that it constitutes a response to the mainstream of modern thought.

At the same time, however, postmodern thinking has remained very difficult to assess. How should we imagine a non-essentialist community? Nancy explicitly retreats from the task to answer such questions: "I shall not venture into the possible forms of such a politics, of this politics that one might call the politics of the political, if the political can be taken as the *moment*, the *point*, or the *event* of being-in-common. This would be beyond my competence. But I do enter into the bond (not only the 'social bond,' as one says today, all too readily, but the properly political bond) that binds the political, or in which the political is bound up."[152] This retreat, which holds true not only for Nancy but also for other authors,[153] constitutes a shortcoming of postmodern political philosophy. It is certainly due to the immense difficulty of thinking the human subject and community after its deconstruction, and still, if we take the postmodern gesture serious, this task remains salient. In the fourth chapter, I will come back to this point, and I will interpret Nancy's *singular plural* ontology as an attempt to respond to the shortcomings of postmodern deconstruction.

Before moving on to the next section, a brief excursus into a variant of the postmodern critique of essentialism is necessary. This is a variant which, given my focus on community, I will not pursue in any more detail at this point but which potentially offers more concrete connecting points to the contemporary political discourse than the postmodern ontological critique because it responds directly to issues that are high on the political agenda, such as bio-engineering and euthanasia – the critique of *biopolitics*. An important

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[152] Nancy, *Inoperative Community*, xl.
[153] For example Esposito, who retrieves as the root of a thinking of community the *munus* (gift), reciprocity, but then does not elaborate further what this could, concretely, imply. Esposito, *Communitas*.

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advocate of this critique was Hannah Arendt. Arendt concerned herself with the question about the origins of totalitarianism, and this issue determined her vision of the political not only in the book bearing that title[154] but also in her later works. Her central claim in *The Human Condition* is that modern politics have abolished any clear distinction between natural and political life. While, according to the Aristotelian political paradigm, the biological life was to be excluded from the political domain, under conditions of modernity it was turned into the place of the political proper.[155] It becomes, in a term explained by Esposito, *biopolitica*.[156] This seems paradoxical, Esposito admits, given that the modern state is founded on the distinction of private and public, but considering the Hobbesian understanding of sovereignty at the core of the modern political paradigm, it becomes apparent that the sovereign power is a power over natural life. From this it follows that natural life which is not rendered part of the political body may be deemed superfluous and liable to extinction, this is Arendt's interpretation of the concentration camps, it may be considered worthless life, a conclusion drawn by Agamben, or it may be subjected to a power that has become power over life and death, in the interpretation of Foucault.[157] The critique of *biopolitics* is probably the strongest possible to be brought forward against the modernist paradigm of individual autonomy and rational mastery.

II.3. The limits of the interpretative space of political modernity

To conceptualize our existence in common without making it contradict the freedom of the human subject, is the task of *all* contemporary political philosophy, whether liberal, communitarian, or postmodern. For liberalism, community is a non-subject, what interests liberal thinkers is the polity. For communitarians, community is the basis which makes the polity work, and they therefore choose to explicate it sociologically. For post-modern thinkers, community is that what takes place between subjects, and they are therefore concerned with the make-up of the human subject. All of these responses are facets of a thinking of community under conditions of modernity. They cannot be synthesized into one theory of community, they instead spell out a tension-ridden picture within which we may orient ourselves, situate and re-situate ourselves, and thereby partake in what I have above called

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[154] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*.
[155] Arendt, *Human Condition*.
[156] Roberto Esposito, *Bíos. Biopolitica e Filosofia* (Torino: Einaudi, 2004).
[157] Agamben; Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

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our condition of modernity: our awareness of the situation in which we find ourselves in, and our task of having to make sense of this situation.

The philosophical standpoints of liberalism, communitarianism, and postmodernism delineate the contours of the interpretative space of political modernity. These contours are conceptual – the notions of freedom and reason are central; temporal – it is a discourse triggered by the historical onset of the Enlightenment and brought into sharper focus by the experience of totalitarianism; and spatial – it largely takes place in the Western philosophical space. Within these contours, the three standpoints define the interpretative space of political modernity. Of these three, the post-modern standpoint is certainly the one that has gone furthest in testing the limits of this interpretative space. The prefix *post-* indicates the intention of going beyond modernism, but it is a beyond that operates with the recurrent address to that what it claims to be leaving behind, the *modern.* In this sense, post-modernity is a part of the interpretative space of modernity. On the 'map' of the contemporary philosophical discourse of political modernity, liberalism, communitarianism and postmodern political philosophy emerge as the three defining features. Taken together, they seem to cover the entire scale of possible conceptualizations of community and subjectivity under conditions of modernity.

I write 'seem to cover' because in fact they do not. They do not because Europe today is not only determined by its post-totalitarian, but also by its post-Cold War constellation. In other words, exclusively Western answers are unlikely to exhaust the interpretative space of the post-totalitarian political modernity of Europe – there is also the East. One such Eastern response can be found in Orthodox thought. The Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition challenges the contours of the interpretative space of political modernity – conceptually, because it re-visits the meaning of freedom and reason in the light of Orthodox religion; temporarily, because it draws on a body of thought that flourished centuries before the Enlightenment; and spatially, because it thereby steps out of the traditional space of Western philosophy. What I want to show in the next chapter is that such an approach may qualify as modern, inasmuch as its protagonists recognize themselves as partaking in the condition of modernity.[158]

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[158] It is possible to think about different authors and philosophical approaches as testing the limits of the interpretative space of political modernity. One such case is republicanism. In the work of historians like Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock, the republican theory of politics is traced historically as the alternative to individualist liberalism, and in works of political philosophers such as Philip Pettit and Robert Bellah, it is transposed into contemporary debates about citizenship and democracy. The reason why I am not discussing republicanism in this context, despite its considerable appeal as a political theory, is that contemporary republicanism lacks the disciplinary coherence of communitarianism or postmodernism. I would find it difficult to distil from the various formulations of republican ideas a clearly 'republican' understanding of the human subject and of community. Nonetheless, a discussion of the republican response to liberalism in comparison with the responses treated in this thesis would be interesting and, at this point, I leave this task aside for future work.

III. Tradition under conditions of modernity: Eastern Orthodoxy

In this chapter, I analyze the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition in the light of Europe's post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation. How has Orthodoxy reacted to the experience of totalitarianism? What impact has the shared experience of totalitarianism had on the Orthodox self-understanding, on its attitude towards modernity and on its relationship with the West? In the introduction I have pointed out the shortcomings of most of the available conceptualizations of the relationship between Eastern Orthodoxy and the modern West, shortcomings that are either due to a focus on modernity as a process of modernization or to a simplified understanding of the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition. This chapter takes a different approach. It looks not at the relationship between Orthodoxy and modernity, but it seeks to analyze the Orthodox tradition *as* modern, as partaking in the condition of modernity – a condition that has been accentuated by the experience of totalitarianism.

My focus is on the philosophical dimension of Orthodoxy, on thinkers who have drawn on the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition in their philosophical reflections on the problematics of the modern world. These thinkers do not stand for contemporary Orthodoxy as such – my point here is precisely not to simplify the Orthodox tradition, but to show its inner tensions and ambiguities. However, my approach and the focus on the philosophical dimension of Orthodoxy seem justified given that an analysis of contemporary Orthodoxy from this perspective is a novel undertaking. It is complementary to existing studies of the Orthodox Churches and of Russian religious thought, but it also provides new perspectives on some important issues, such as the habitual distinction between liberal and conservative Orthodoxy, the contemporary relevance of the established canons of Russian religious philosophy, and Orthodoxy's history with totalitarianism. This study of Orthodoxy *as* modern is not only relevant for our understanding of Eastern Christianity. It can also be read as an analysis of how a spiritual and intellectual tradition fares under conditions of modernity, as a paradigmatic case for the interplay of modernity, tradition, and religion.

III.1. Setting up the past: From Byzantine theology to Russian religious philosophy

An exploration of contemporary Orthodox thought has to take into account the history that preceded it. For this reason I begin with an overview over the development of Orthodox thinking until its crucial breaking point, the Bolshevik revolution. It is this long period of theological and philosophical development which Orthodox thinkers draw on in their confrontation with the challenges of the post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation of

Europe. In my rendering of these almost two thousand years of development, I point out instances of re-activation of the past effected by twentieth-century Orthodox theologians and philosophers, namely by Georgij Florovskij, Vladimir Lossky, John Meyendorff, Sergej Horužij and Christos Yannaras. While I will treat these thinkers, whose emphasis on the importance of history for Orthodox theology has earned them the label 'Neo-Patristic theologians', in context later on, my aim in the beginning of this chapter is to point out where, in the course of Byzantine and Russian history, they find their main anchor-points. A reading of the Byzantine and early Russian history from the perspective of these thinkers is an encounter with a history that is 'set up' in order to explain and motivate the theological and philosophical developments in the twentieth century.

III.1.1. Patristic terminology

For more than 1000 years of European history, the Western part of Christianity and the Eastern part developed with and along-side each other, evolving as two "sibling cultures" from the same matrix of the Christianized Roman Empire and its classical civilizations.[159] This constellation, which lasted from the fourth to the fifteenth century, was marked by an increasing alienation between Byzantium and Rome in cultural, religious, and political terms. The political background to the conflict between Rome and Constantinople was the latter's rejection of the primacy of the pope, an issue which touched also on the dogmatic question of the character of the Church. This and the disagreement about the nature of the Trinity, the issue of *filioque*, led to a split between the two Churches. Despite the dogmatic weight of the mutual excommunication in 1054, the division was not complete until the ultimate decline of Byzantium in the course of the crusades and the Ottoman conquest in 1453.[160]

The Orthodox refer to the period of late antiquity as the 'age of the Church Fathers', in which theologians like Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389), Gregory of Nyssa (335-394), John Chrysostomos (ca. 347-407), Maximus Confessor (580-662), and John of Damascus (ca. 675-ca. 749) spelled out the canon of Orthodox theology. The most important element of this theology was the conceptualization of the Divine as the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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[159] Deno John Geanakoplos, *Interaction of the "Sibling" Byzantine and Western Cultures in the Middle Ages and Italian Renaissance (330-1600)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).
[160] Axel Bayer, *Spaltung der Christenheit: Das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2002), Ernst Benz, *Geist und Leben der Ostkirche*, 3., durchgesehene und verbesserte Aufl. (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1988), 150-157, Karl Christian Felmy, "Orthodoxe Kirchen," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Walter Kasper (Freiburg, Basel, u.a.: Herder, 1998), John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrines* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 91-102, John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church: Its Past and Its Role in the World Today*, 4., revised ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 1-54.

The challenge lay in the task to express at once divine unity and diversity. Lossky has described this process as the elaboration of a 'Trinitarian terminology'.[161] In order to express the reality common to three, the divine unity, the Fathers chose the term *ousia*, which in Aristotelian philosophy meant 'essence'. The singularity and diversity of the three was expressed with the term *hypostasis*; the three hypostases as the three modes of the Divine. In dogmatic terms, this Trinitarian theology became the breaking point for Eastern and Western Christendom. On the question how to conceptualize the relationship between the three divine hypostases, Latin theologians affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Father *and* Son (*filioque*) whereas Byzantine theologians saw the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father. The reason why the Byzantines opposed the *filioque* was, according to Lossky, that making the Father *and* the Son the common source of the Spirit overshadowed their hypostatic diversity. Of all the twentieth century theologians, it is first of all Lossky who insists on this point of fundamental disagreement between the East and the West, on the implications of the difference between essence and manifestations of essence: the West prioritized essence, the East prioritized the manifestations of essence, the hypostatic diversity. The argument itself was a rather well-rehearsed theme from Slavophile discourses and the religious philosophy of the Silver Age, but Lossky took it onto a new level of theological and philosophical reflection. The legacy of the 'civilizational dimension' he gave to Trinitarian terminology can be felt very strongly in the works of Christos Yannaras.

Ousia and *hypostasis* were just two terms which the Fathers adapted from Greek philosophy, others were *physis* and *energeia.* How to evaluate this clear terminological linkage between ancient Greek and Christian thought? In the twentieth century, the theologian George Florovskij speaks about 'Christian Hellenism', yet he does so not in order to emphasize the continuity between ancient Greece and Byzantium, but to stress the difference between Byzantine theology and Western medieval thought. Orthodox theologians continuously underline the break between ancient Greek and Christian thought, which were clearly incompatible on a great number of issues. Florovskij's student Meyendorff writes that the use of Greek concepts and terminology in Patristic theology was an unavoidable means of communication and a necessary step in making the Christian Gospel relevant to the world of late antiquity. However, the terms acquire an entirely new meaning when used out of the context of the Platonic and Aristotelian systems in which they were born. It is true, he writes, that the Trinitarian and Christological theology of the Fathers would have dealt with a different set of problems and would have resulted in different concepts if their background and the audience to which they addressed themselves had not been Greek. Greek patristic

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[161] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clark, 1957), 50-66, Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), 40-42.

thought thus remained open to Greek philosophical problematics. What the Neo-Patristic thinkers in the twentieth century never get tired to stress, however, is that the Church Fathers avoided being imprisoned in Hellenic philosophical *systems*. As a matter of fact, Neo-Patristic representatives of the Orthodox tradition are convinced that heresies are due to the uncritical absorption of pagan Greek philosophy into Christian thought and they base their criticism of Latin theology, especially of the turn it took with scholasticism, on this fact.[162]

A late addition to patristic theology was made in the fourteenth century by Gregorios Palamas (ca. 1296-1359), monk on Mount Athos and later Archbishop of Thessalonica, with the theology of *Hesychasm*.[163] Palamas developed a theological substantiation of a practice applied widely among monks on Athos, namely a specific kind of prayer, characterized by the repeated invocation of the name of Jesus Christ and a particular posture and breathing-rhythm.[164] Its practitioners held that the Jesus-prayer led to a direct experience of the Divine. The hesychasts were criticized by theologians who, influenced by the spirit of medieval scholasticism, held that a vision of God could only be symbolic.[165] In his *Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts*, Palamas defended the Jesus-prayer by making a distinction between the essence and the energies of the Divine, stating that the Divine was inaccessible in essence but could be experienced by way of divine energies, an example of which was the light contemplated in higher stages of the prayer process. This light, Palamas held, was not symbolic but real, it was identical to the Light of Thabor experienced by the apostles in the event of the transfiguration of Christ. Palamas thereby sought to reconcile two seemingly irreconcilable assertions, namely that revelation means that man has a vision of God 'face to face' and that God is by nature unknowable. In a framework of an essentialist philosophy, these two truths could not be reconciled, but in Palamas' theology of distinction between essence and energy, this became possible. What was mystical about Palamas' theology was the denial of rationalistic thought, the affirmation that God can be unattainable and revealed at the same time, and what was ascetic in his teaching was that he described a specific set of practices that would lead to a vision of the Divine. "The originality of the Palamite response

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[162] Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 24-25.

[163] Andrew Louth, "Byzantine Theology, 6th-16th Centuries," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), John McGuckin, "Greek Theology, 4th-6th Centuries," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Antonio Rigo, *L'amore della quiete. L'esicasmo Bizantino tra il XIII e il XV secolo* (Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 1993), Robert E. Sinkewicz, "Gregory Palamas," in *La Théologie Byzantine et sa tradition, Vol. II*, ed. Carmelo G. Conticello and Vassa Conticello (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2002).

[164] There is a debate in the literature whether this "psycho-physical method of prayer" was an Islamic influence on Orthodoxy (John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), 77-78.), or whether it was an Orthodox influence on Islamic (Sufi) mysticism (Сергей С. Хоружий, *К Феноменологии Аскезы (Sergej Horužij, On the Phenomenology of Asceticism)* (Москва: Издательство Гуманитарной Литературы, 1998), 29-30.).

[165] Meyendorff, *Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 82-92.

to the essentialist concept of God," the Neo-Patristic theologian John Meyendorff, who has contributed significantly to the renaissance of Palamism in the twentieth century, writes "does not consist in adding another element – the energies – to the Divine Being, but in thinking of God Himself in existential terms, while holding to His absolute transcendence."[166] In the second half of the twentieth century, Sergej Horužij has, under the influence of Meyendorff, focused in his studies on Palamism and on the topic of spiritual practices.

Meyendoff has described the conflict between Palamas and his adversaries as a confrontation between Byzantine Orthodoxy and the spirit of the Italian Renaissance. In his reading, Palamas defended Orthodox spirituality against the influence of Thomism and classical philosophy.[167] Along the same lines, Georgi Kapriev has spoken about two contrasting models of philosophy, Thomist transcendentalism and Orthodox teaching of energies. While Thomist theology focused on God as the causal principle of Being, as 'first principle' (*ens in quantum est ens*),[168] Palamism emphasized the reality of Divine energies. While from a Thomist standpoint participation in the Divine meant participation in essence, from a Palamist standpoint it meant participation in Divine wisdom, goodness, strength etc. And while for a Thomist recognition of the Divine was based on drawing analogies, a rational operation, for a Palamist theologian it was based on experience.[169] As a consequence of these differences, theology in the West presupposed the faculty of independent reasoning on the part of the individual and thus made a distinction between theology and philosophy, whereas theology in the East did not account for such a discursive division.[170]

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[166] Ibid., 123.

[167] Ibid., 102-114. The confrontation with Thomism in the works of Palamas was not direct. Kapriev has pointed out that Palamas was not directly aware of Thomas of Aquinas' work, nor was his adversary Barlaam a student of Thomas. The debate was a conflict between two intellectual traditions more generally. Aquinas' texts were beginning to be translated only in 1354. See: Georgi Kapriev, "Systemelemente des philosophisch-theologischen Denkens in Byzanz. Zum Dialog 'Theophanes' des Gregorios Palamas," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 62, no. 2 (1997): 264.

[168] Georgi Kapriev, "Transzendentalien und Energien. Zwei Modelle mittelalterlicher Philosophie (Thomas von Aquin und Kallistos Angelikudes)," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia 30*, ed. M. Pickavé (Berlin, New York: 2003), 434.

[169] A good summary of the difference between Thomism and Palamism: "Thomas von Aquin und Kallistos Angelikudes [a representative of Palamist theology] legen zwei an sich ganzheitliche christliche Positionen vor, die für das europäische Spätmittelalter repräsentativ sind, wobei sie untereinander erhebliche Unterschiede aufweisen. Thomas begreift Gott restlos in den Begriffen der Kausalität. Gott wird als die kausale Ursache schlechthin betrachtet. Die Bestimmung seiner Einfachheit setzt voraus, daß Gott *actus purus* ist, in dem Wesenheit, Existenz, Gutheit, Intellekt, Wille usw. identisch sind. Gott verursacht daher *per essentiam*. Seine Wesenheit bleibt allerdings unerkennbar. Erst die Heiligen im Jenseits werden sie kennen; darin besteht die Glückseligkeit. In diesem Leben wird Gott lediglich aus seinen Wirkungen (*effectus*) erkannt. Kallistos zufolge ist die Wesenheit Gottes sowohl in diesem als auch im jenseitigen Leben keiner Erkenntnis und Teilhabe zugänglich. Die Einfachheit der Wesenheit schließt das Dasein ihrer naturhaften Kraft und Energie nicht aus, die als mit der Wesenheit nicht zusammenfallend zu denken ist. Sie sind keine separaten Substanzen und auch keine Akzidentien, sondern die existentielle Äußerung der Wesenheit *ad extra*. Sie sind erkennbar und einer Teilhabe zugänglich." Ibid., 451.

[170] "Die Transzendentalienlehre setzt die Selbständigkeit des philosophischen Denkens voraus." The difference with Palamism: "Die wahre Gotteserkenntnis gründet auf der existentiellen Erfahrung der göttlichen Energien. Diese Erfahrung ist das Fundament der Theologie der Gotteschau, die ihrerseits die Grundlage für die diskursive Theologie und die Philosophie bildet. Es geht um eine Theologie, die nie den Status einer Wissenschaftsdisziplin

What is important to keep in mind is that this is a reading of the encounter between Palamism and scholasticism from the point of view of twentieth century students of Palamas. Meyendorff and Lossky especially saw a direct confrontation between Latin scholasticism and Orthodox mysticism where in reality the borderlines at the time were much less clear.[171] A good example for the tendency to over-emphasize difference is the Neo-Patristic interpretation of cataphatic and apophatic theology. Cataphatic or affirmative theology holds that God is revealed in his creation, in the scriptures and in Jesus Christ, and that one can make positive statements about the nature of the divine on their basis. Apophatic or negative theology, on the contrary, denotes the fact that the transcendent God is not knowable in his essence, he is beyond the limits of what humans can understand. From this perspective, God does not exist at the level of human knowledge, the object of which are 'beings' and created existence, because God is not himself created. Man should therefore not seek God by means of intellectual understanding but through a direct experience of the love of God, as provided in prayer and Eucharist.[172] The apophatic element is strong in Orthodox theology and it accounts for much of the ascetic and profoundly mystical character of Orthodox spirituality.[173] It is less significant in Western theology, where arguments by analogy were accepted to explain the attributes of God. However, both methods existed in the East as well as in the West. Lossky's judgement that mysticism was hardly relevant for Western theology,[174] while correct for large parts of modern Catholic theology and certainly for Protestant theology, fails to do justice to the long tradition of medieval Catholic mysticism.

III.1.2. Russian Orthodoxy and religious philosophy

If the history of Byzantium is one important aspect for understanding contemporary Orthodox thought, the history of Russian Orthodoxy is the other.[175] After the fall of Constantinople, the emerging Muscovite empire sought to become its spiritual heir; "Moscow – the third Rome" became a powerful image of religious and political justification.[176] The

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gehabt hat. Es geht ferner um eine Philosophie, die ihre übernatürliche Inspiration und Grundlegung nicht verneint, weshalb sie auch keine Ansprüche auf fachliche Selbständigkeit erhebt." Ibid., 452.

[171] Meyendorff gives a slightly more differentiated account in: Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 54-65.

[172] Ibid., 12-14.

[173] Expressed already in the title of Lossky's influential work: Lossky, *Mystical Theology*.

[174] Ibid., 7-22.

[175] For a comprehensive overview, see: Rowan Williams, "Russian Christian Thought," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[176] Peter J. S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Holy Revolution, Communism and After* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 10-12. See also: Wil Van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe: East and West in the Religious Ideology of Russia*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1999).

imperial rhetoric, however, was not approved of by all members of the Church. In the early sixteenth century, the Russian Orthodox Church witnessed a struggle between two competing visions of the religious future of Russia. One party, led by the abbot Iosif of Volokolamsk (1439-1515), was dedicated to the idea of a new Christian Muscovite empire; they envisioned a close alliance between the Church and the state in the Byzantine manner and demanded in return that the state would secure the property and wealth of the churches and monasteries. The opposing party, under the leadership of the monk Nil of Sora (d. 1508), called for independence of the Church from the state and preached monastic poverty in the tradition of late Byzantine Hesychasm, which Nil had become acquainted with during his youth on Mount Athos. The party of Iosif prevailed, leading to a strong linkage of the Russian Orthodox Church to the rulers of the Muscovite empire.[177]

The apparent gain in political and material power did not, however, benefit the Church, which became overtly dependent on the Russian Tsars. In the seventeenth century, liturgical reforms by Patriarch Nikon were put through with the help of the Tsarist army, leading to a violent schism within the Russian Orthodox Church. The conflict between Nikon and the Old Believers became symptomatic for resistance to church-authority that went hand in hand with rebellion against the state. "The schism thus opened a fateful split in Russian society," the historian Geoffrey Hosking writes, "large numbers of conservative and patriotic Russians became alienated from the imperial state and the Orthodox Church and took the decision to conduct their spiritual and community life as far as possible outside the framework they offered."[178] During the rule of Peter I. and Catherine II., this division was sharpened even more in the course of a wide-ranging programme of modernization and Westernization that affected all of Russian society.[179] Inspired by the example of the Church of England, Peter I. decided to increase his control over Church affairs by replacing the Patriarchate of Moscow with a Holy Synod in 1721. In an attempt to modernize the Russian Church, theologians educated in the West introduced a spiritual vocabulary compatible with Enlightenment principles and a protestant-style organisation of priesthood. "The cumulative

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[177] Benz, 81-85, Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: A History* (London, Cambridge (MA): Allen Lane/The Penguin Press; Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 104-105, Meyendorff, *Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, 147-154, Williams. In his book *The Collective and the Individual in Russia*, Oleg Kharkhordin interprets this episode as the point where monastic discipline turned from a matter of internal analysis and training of the soul to a matter of external discipline and group formation. He reads the monastic statute of Iosif of Volokolamsk as a forerunner of the regulations for the Soviet *kollektif*. What Kharkhordin is not aware of is that the monastic tradition of Nil of Sora found a reception and revival in the late nineteenth and twentieth century by modern students of Hesychasm and Neo-Palamist theologians. While Kharkhordin is interpreting the monastic discipline imposed by Iosif of Volokolamsk with the help of Foucault's concept of 'practices of the self', Sergej Horužij also uses Foucault's concept, but this time to interpret the very opposing practice, namely Hesychasm. See: Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual*, 117-122.
[178] Hosking, 165-174.
[179] For an overview over the Petrine and Catherinian reforms, see: Ibid., 175-231.

effect of these changes was," as Hosking concludes, "enormously damaging to the church and its relations with the state, with the elites of society and with the mass of the people."[180]

By the nineteenth century, however, this situation started to change.[181] The authority of the Church and the state were put into question no longer by schismatic groups or rebellious peasants, but by the rising bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. Comparable to developments in the West, the Russian Tsars found themselves confronted with a liberally inspired people, whose revolutionary mood they sought to contain by autocratic rule. Educated Russians, disappointed by Enlightenment rationalism, turned to German romanticism and idealism. Philosophers and writers who repudiated the predominance of Enlightenment philosophy looked for alternatives both in the West as well as in their native context. It is noteworthy that the Russian Orthodox Church played only a minor role in this strive for certainties. It had lost credibility to such an extent that the Russian intelligentsia of the nineteenth century could see Orthodox faith no longer with the Church but, if at all, with the Russian people, the peasants. When Slavophiles like Ivan Kireevskij (1806-56) and Aleksej Homâkov (1804-60) called for a philosophy issuing from Christian faith, they therefore did not turn to the Church, but to the religiosity of the people and of the monasteries.[182]

One important concept coined in this period was the notion of *sobornost'*, expressing community among people in a spiritual and practical sense. It was first elaborated by Homâkov. From the start, the concept was characterized by a tension between its interpretation in socio-political terms and its theological meaning. It has been shown that Homâkov himself worked through both aspects of the concept, from his Slavophile period to his theological and philosophical reflections during the last decades of his life, while his immediate followers and interpreters largely failed to appreciate the theological novelty of the notion and took instead at face value a reduced socio-political interpretation of it.[183] *Sobornost'* became a catchword in the Slavophile polemics against the West, expressing a certain religious mystification and personalization of Russia, of the Russian people and the 'Russian soul'. Those who used it propagated the organic unity and moral integrity of the Russian people and frequently sought to discredit the West as individualistic and nihilistic.[184]

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[180] Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1997), 231.

[181] For an overview over this period, see: Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, 259-279.

[182] Frederick C. Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy. Selected Aspects* (Notre Dame: Search Press, 1988), 8-10.

[183] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Алексей Хомяков и его дело (Sergej Horužij, Aleksej Homâkov and his Cause)," in *Опыты из Русской Духовной Традиции (Essays in the Russian Spiritual Tradition)*, ed. Сергей С. Хоружий (Москва: Изд. Парад, 2005).

[184] In the late- and post-Soviet period, the concept of *sobornost'* is frequently being revived in this sense in order to culturally underpin nationalistic and anti-Western politics. See the critical study: Н. И. Бирюков and В. М.

The religious intellectuals of the nineteenth century, their anti-Western bias notwithstanding, made significant contributions to Orthodox theology. The revival of the tradition of spiritual elders, the *starcy*, for example, needs to be understood in the light of the monastic tradition that had been subdued three centuries earlier in the course of the conflict between Iosif of Volokolamsk and Nil of Sora. Nil's attempt to strengthen Hesychasm in the Church of the Muscovite empire had failed, but in the nineteenth century this theology, elaborated by Palamas and cultivated on Mount Athos throughout the centuries, was revived by Russian theologians and intellectuals. Starting point for its reception in Russia was the monk Paisij Veličkovskij (1722-1794), who edited and translated ascetic texts and introduced his compatriots to the practice of Hesychasm which he had got to know during a long stay on Mount Athos. In the nineteenth century, his work found a continuation in the monastery of Optyna Pustyn', which became an important spiritual centre for intellectuals like Homâkov and Dostoevskij.[185] In Fëdor Dostoevskij's (1821-1881) novel *The Brothers Karamasov*, we find an ideal of religious community and spiritual leadership depicted in the scene where Father Zosima speaks to the peasants. Dostoevskij modelled the figure of Zosima after a famous monk of his days, *starec* Amvrosij, who represented a spiritual revival within Orthodoxy that stood in opposition to the Holy Synod.[186]

The nineteenth century thus brought about the revival of practices that went back to the origins of Byzantine theology, it saw the elaboration of new theological and cultural-philosophical concepts, and it prepared the ground for an intense period of philosophical, literary and aesthetic production in pre-revolutionary Russia. During the 'Silver Age', which lasted from roughly 1890 until the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian writers, poets, painters and composers formulated a Russian variant of the cultural and literary modernism that flourished in European capital cities like Berlin, London, Paris or Vienna. Russian philosophy of this period bore the fruits of the critical intellectual engagement with the Church and the state that had set in half a century earlier. Religious and socialist themes flourished, aimed at a renewal of the Russian Church and the Tsarist state.

A philosopher who combined both of these issues and whose work became a cornerstone for the religious thinking of the Silver Age, was Vladimir Solov'ëv (1853-1900). Solov'ëv's aim was the formulation of a philosophy issuing from Christianity. He wanted to reconcile rationality and faith, social and religious questions, philosophy, theology and

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Сергеев, "'Соборность' как Парадигма Политического Сознания (N. Birûkov/V. Sergeev, 'Sobornost'' as a Paradigm of Political Consciousness)," *Полис* 3, no. 39 (1997).

[185] Hosking, *Russia*, 239-242.

[186] Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, 304.

science. He criticized the Church's silence on political and social issues.[187] Solov'ëv influenced the Russian intelligentsia both as a social philosopher and as a mystical thinker. Critical Marxists who turned to religion during the first decade of the twentieth century, like Sergej Bulgakov, Nikolaj Berdâev, Pëtr Struve and Semën Frank, found Solov'ëv concept of 'Christian politics' attractive from a social point of view, and symbolists like Zinaida Gippius, Dmitrij Merežkovskij, Vasilij Rozanov, Vâčeslav Ivanov and Alexander Blok appreciated his mysticism. Many, in particular Bulgakov and Pavel Florenskij drew inspiration from both aspects of the rich work of Solov'ëv.[188]

Of those who turned from Marxism to religion, the most famous at their time and later on key-figures of the Russian emigration were Sergej Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Nikolaj Berdâev (1874-1948). The two belonged to a group of Marxists who were critical of the revolutionary aspirations of the émigré-Marxists like Lenin and Plechanov. In a collection of essays entitled *Vehi* (Signposts) (1909), they issued a harsh criticism of the revolutionary fervour and dogmatism of the Russian intelligentsia.[189] Bulgakov started his career as an economist, but soon came to reject the Marxist economical theory. Consequently he sought to translate that what he found valuable in Marxism – the social ideal – into the language of a Christian liberalism, for which the philosophy of Solov'ëv became his point of reference. Bulgakov himself referred to this change of world-view as a move 'from Marxism to idealism'.[190] Berdâev underwent a similar development, but whereas Bulgakov was increasingly drawn to Orthodoxy and took priestly vows in 1918, Berdâev's idealism retained a more individualist and broadly ethical-religious orientation.[191]

Bulgakov's interest in philosophy, theology and mysticism drew him closer to another famous philosopher in the spirit of Solov'ëv, Pavel Florenskij (1882-1937), who was the chief elaborator of the Solov'ëvian philosophical and religious cosmology – *sofiologia*.[192] The philosophical views of the priest and scientist Florenskij were distinctly anti-rationalist and

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[187] Copleston, 10-16. For selected aspects of Solov'ëv's work, see in particular: Manon De Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation: A Reassessment of Vladimir Solov'ëv's Views on History and His Social Commitment* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), Jonathan Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov: Towards a Reassessment* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology. Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov. Orthodox Theology in a new Key* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), Wil Van den Bercken, Manon De Courten, and Evert Van der Zweerde, eds., *Vladimir Solov'ëv: Reconciler and Polemicist. Selected Papers of the International Vladimir Solov'ëv Conference*, Eastern Christian Studies, vol. 2 (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), Ludwig Wenzler, *Die Freiheit und das Böse nach Vladimir Solov'ev* (Freiburg: Alber, 1978).
[188] The activities of the Russian religious intelligentsia before the Bolshevik revolution have been authoritatively studied by: Jutta Scherrer, *Die Petersburger Religiös-Philosophischen Vereinigungen*, Historische Veröffentlichungen des Osteuropa-Instituts an der Freien Universität Berlin vol. 19 (Berlin, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973).
[189] Ibid., 62-68.
[190] See the collection of essays by Bulgakov, Berdâev and others: Randall A. Poole, ed., *Problems of Idealism: Essays in Russian Social Philosophy* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2003).
[191] Scherrer, *Religiös-Philosophische Vereinigungen*, 78-83.
[192] Ibid., 213-215.

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driven by the wish to synthesise all human spheres of knowledge (philosophical and theological, scientific and ordinary). He was profoundly critical of rationalism and positivism, which he attributed exclusively to the Western mind.[193] The fact that both Florenskij and Bulgakov became priests does not mean that they were not profoundly critical of the Orthodox Church of their time, or, for that matter, that the Orthodox hierarchies were not deeply suspicious about the religious philosophizing which was taking place in the intelligentsia-circles. Taken together, the works of Berdâev, Bulgakov and Florenskij spell out the range of orientations that characterized the pre-revolutionary Russian religious philosophy and were to be developed after the Bolshevik revolution, and they also foreshadow the fault-lines along which a split within the Orthodox intellectual tradition would occur.

Besides the influence of religiously inspired socialism and mysticism, the religious atmosphere of the time was also fed by a violent conflict which erupted within the Orthodox Church around the phenomenon of *imâslavie* (transl. *glory of the name*), a variant of Hesychasm.[194] The disagreement erupted over the publication of a text by the monk Ilarion (ca. 1845-1916), *On the Caucasian Mountains* (*Na gorah Kavkaza*) in 1907, in which he reports on conversations with a hermit and practitioner of the Jesus-prayer who had retired to the Caucasus from Mount Athos. The theological base-line of the text – "The name of God is God" – sparked a debate among monks, theologians and lay intellectuals that grew into a major political affair. The fault-line of the conflict ran between Russian monks practicing and advocating the Jesus-prayer on Mount Athos and theologians who found the idea that the Divine should be accessible in its name untenable and accused its followers, whom they called *imâslavcy*, of heresy. Soon however, and especially under the impact of the rigorous action taken by the Holy Synod and the Russian emperor, which in 1913 forcefully removed several hundred monks from Mount Athos, the clerical defenders of *imâslavie* were joined by intellectuals like Bulgakov, Berdâev, and Florenskij, who supported their cause. They criticized the injustice of the Tsarist intervention from a political and ethical point of view and recognized that the theology of divine names was intrinsically related to their own religious philosophy.[195]

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[193] For the "re-discovery" of Florenskij by contemporary scholarship and selected aspects of Florenskij's work, see in particular: Norbert Franz, Michael Hagemeister, and Frank Haney, eds., *Pavel Florenskij - Tradition und Moderne. Beiträge zum Internationalen Symposium an der Universität Potsdam, April 2000* (Frankfurt (M.): Lang, 2001), Michael Hagemeister, "P. A. Florenskijs 'Wiederkehr'." *Ostkirchliche Studien* 39, no. 2/3 (1990), Holger Kuße, *Metadiskursive Argumentation. Linguistische Untersuchungen zum Russischen Philosophischen Diskurs von Lomonosov bis Lotman* (München: Otto Sagner, 2004).

[194] A complete account of the events is given by: Ilarion Alfeev, *La gloria del nome* (Magnano: Edizioni Qiqajon, 2002).

[195] Ibid., 77-85.

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The theologian Ilarion Alfeev has credibly demonstrated that the conflict around *imâslavie* was first and foremost a testimony of the deep rupture in social and religious life in Russia before the revolution, of the virtually unbridgeable gap between scholarly theology and spiritual life in the Russian Orthodox Church and society. The historical and political context of the conflict was clearly linked to the fourteenth century debates between Palamas and his adversaries, and the sixteenth century struggle between Nil of Sora and Iosif of Volokolamsk. Together with the socialist and mystical element of the religious debate in the late nineteenth century, the *imâslavie*-affair established an atmosphere of religious crisis and transformation which was by no means settled by the time when the Bolshevik revolution swept through Russian society. Russian émigré-theology and religious thought in the Soviet Union continued to be profoundly determined by it.

III.1.3. The breaking-point of 1917

The revolution of 1917 and the coming to power of the Bolsheviks was a breaking-point in Russian religious and intellectual life, the impact of which cannot be overestimated. For the Russian Orthodox Church, the political upheaval momentarily promised new life to the Church which had suffered from political domination and degradation for two centuries – the episode of the monk Rasputin taking influence on the Tsarist family testifies for the poor spiritual and intellectual state of the Church at the time. The new start was exemplified by the re-installation of the Patriarch of Moscow, who had been replaced by the Holy Synod under Peter I. A council was summoned in 1917 which took some far-reaching decision on the status of the Russian Orthodox Church. It claimed a privileged position as the Church of the Russian nation but declared a principled division of Church and state.[196] Formally, the Russian Orthodox Church thus finally gained independence from the state. This relative freedom lasted only for a few months, however, because in 1918 the council was dissolved by the Bolsheviks and a period of particularly harsh persecution began which only eased with the onset of the Second World War and Stalin's realization of the relative usefulness of the Church for war-purposes. During this period, a large number of priests, monks and nuns were killed, the vast majority of churches were destroyed, church-property was confiscated and the institutional structure of the Church was severely curtailed. The fate of the institution of the Moscow Patriarchy is exemplary here: The newly elected Patriarch of Moscow, Tihon, was arrested and, after his death in 1925, no permission was granted to elect a new

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[196] Kostjuk, 108-109.

Patriarch. In 1927, Tihon's indirect successor, Metropolitan Sergej, issued a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet state in an attempt to assure the Church's survival. The success was limited, and in 1929 the authorities passed a law on religious associations, which made registration of religious societies compulsory and severely curtailed the possibilities for religious gatherings. [197]

In emigration, the rejection of the attempts to accommodate the Soviet regime by Tihon and Sergej and rivalries among émigré-clerics led to the establishment of three alternative Churches in confrontation with the Moscow Patriarchate. The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (the *Karlovackij Synod*) assumed responsibility over the religious life of the Orthodox emigrants in 1921, but soon political disagreements led to further subdivisions within the Orthodox diaspora. In 1922, the Patriarch of Moscow, probably under pressure from the Soviet authorities, denied canonical status to the Karlovackij Synod Church, which supported the White Army's position in the Russian civil war and had a political vision of religious monarchy. In response, the Synod Church declared itself the true heir of Russian Orthodoxy. In its place, Tihon recognized Metropolitan Evlogij in Paris as the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Western Europe. When, in 1930, Metropolitan Sergej demanded a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet state from the Paris clergy, Metropolitan Evlogij broke bonds with Moscow and entered into the canonical jurisdiction of Constantinople. As a result of this, a further split took place which brought into existence a third section of the Russian Orthodox Church in the diaspora, remaining under the jurisdiction of the Moscow patriarchate. A spokesperson of this latter group was, notably, the theologian Vladimir Lossky, while Sergej Bulgakov supported Evlogij. Consequently, three church-entities rivalled against each other for the canonical authority over the Orthodox diaspora. Nicolas Zernov has described their positions in the following way: The Synod Church was decidedly conservative, it remained faithful to the ideal of Orthodox tsardom and hoped for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia; a position it has maintained up to today. The Russian Orthodox Church of Western Europe under the jurisdiction of Constantinople stood for the division of church and state and was strongly ecumenically minded. The Russian Orthodox Church of Western Europe under the jurisdiction of Moscow, on the other hand, advocated the cooperation of church and state, and understood their adherence to the Moscow Patriarchate as an act of solidarity with the suppressed Russian Church.[198] We will

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[197] Works dealing with this period are numerous, see for example: Knox, 43-47, Jean-Marie Mayeur, ed., *Guerres Mondiales et Totalitarismes (1914-1958)*, ed. Jean-Marie Mayeur et al., Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours, vol. 12 (Paris: Desclée-Fayard, 1990), 756-763, Robert Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1997), 90, 134-136, 203-205.
[198] Nicolas Zernov, "The Significance of the Russian Orthodox Diaspora and Its Effect on the Christian West," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976). See also: Daniela Kalkandzhieva, *Ecclesio-Political Aspects of the International Activities of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1917-1948*,

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see below how these three positions played a role in the theological debates of the time and how they also influence the fate of Russian Orthodoxy after the fall of communism.[199] What is important to note for now is the fact that Russian Orthodoxy found an institutional continuity both inside and outside of the Soviet Union, and that this continuity was marked by ideological, political, and theological tensions which need to be borne in mind when trying to understand the dynamics of Orthodox thought today.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 did not cause an immediate disruption of intellectual and religious-philosophical life in Russia. Berdâev, for example, continued to teach at the university of Moscow, and Bulgakov was ordained priest in 1918. In the same year, these two, together with other *Vehi*-authors and with Vâ. Ivanov and Struve, assembled a collection of critical reflections on the revolution under the title *Iz Glubiny* (*De Profundis*). In 1922, however, many writers and scholars who were not in accordance with the new regime were expelled from the Soviet Union, among them Bulgakov, Berdâev, Semën Frank (1877-1950), Lev Karsavin (1882-1952), Nikolaj Losskij (1870-1965) and his son Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958). This group of religious thinkers established itself in Western Europe where they continued their work, while many of those who remained in, like Florenskij, or later returned to the Soviet Union, like Karsavin, perished in the Stalinist purges during the 1930s and 40s. The emigration of large parts of the intellectual and cultural elite from the Soviet Union during the first decade after the revolution left a void, which the emerging Soviet society with its elites of engineers, technicians, and bureaucrats could fill only in parts. The situation became even more grave when, during the 1930s and 40s, many remaining intellectuals, artists, writers, academics and professionals perished in the Stalinist camps.

Phd-Thesis (Budapest: CEU, Budapest College 2003), Mayeur, ed., 776-777, Michael A. Meerson, "The Political Philosophy of the Russian Orthodox Episcopate in the Soviet Period," in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (London: Macmillan, 1991).

[199] At the time of writing this chapter, the Russian Orthodox Church of Western Europe under the jurisdiction of Moscow with its seat in the United Kingdom (ROC-UK) was undergoing a power-struggle that presents us with a striking example for the ecclesiastical and theological fault-lines between the Russian Patriarchy and the former diaspora-churches. In February 2006, the Bishop of the ROC-UK, Basil (then 'of Sergievo'), sought release from the Patriarchate of Moscow in order to move under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (following the example of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris in the 1930s). The reason for this step was that the independent and liberal-minded ROC-UK with vibrant parish-life, active charity-work and a predominantly English-language liturgical practice found itself increasingly under pressure from Russian-speaking immigrants who demanded a more conservative and 'Russian-only' line (for example liturgy in Russian and Church-Slavonic). The way the issue was settled, Basil was released from office and replaced by an interim faithful to Moscow, is evidence for the fact that Moscow's policy of stricter control and conservatism is bound to conflict with the liberal spirit that developed in the Orthodox Churches in Western emigration. In what amounts to a inner-Orthodox power-struggle, the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople accepted Bishop Basil against the opinion of the Moscow Patriarch, resulting in a split of ROC-UK into the now 'more Russian' ROC-UK and the Episcopal Vicariate of Great Britain and Ireland under the Exarchate of the Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe with Basil (now 'of Amphipolis') as its Bishop. (http://www.dioceseinfo.org/ last accessed 16 May 2006 and http://www.exarchate-uk.org/index.html last accessed 24 January 2007)

I will come back to the development of Russian Orthodoxy and religious philosophy inside the Soviet Union later. At this point, I concentrate on the development of Russian philosophy and theology in emigration, since it is this history which represents the central axis for all of Orthodox thought in the twentieth century. The long-term development of philosophy and theology was very different, since theology institutionalized quickly and developed into distinct schools of thought, whereas the émigré-philosophy remained largely bound to its individual representatives. For the larger part of the twentieth century, it is therefore justified to focus on Orthodox theology, on the progress made in that field, and on its subsequent impact on philosophy. In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, however, the two expressions of Orthodox thought kept reflecting each other just as had been the case in the decades before 1917.

The most prominent example for the intrinsic interrelatedness of theology and philosophy and the most widely known representative of the Russian émigré-philosophy is certainly Nikolaj Berdâev, who found recognition among Western philosophical circles as a Christian existentialist thinker.[200] He was the central figure for Russian émigré-philosophy, furthering its development with the establishment of the Religious-Philosophical Academy in Berlin and Prague and of the journal *Put'*. To evaluate Berdâev's work and legacy as a philosopher would go beyond the scope of this study, but what is certainly important to bear in mind is that Berdâev was for a long time the most widely read and known Russian philosopher in the West. In this role he shaped the Western perception of Russian philosophy and religiosity. Berdâev was a philosopher, not a theologian, and many of the issues that vexed Orthodox theologians were not of his concern. He took inspiration there, but developed his philosophy independently and in a dialogue with Western philosophy. Berdâev's main philosophical concerns were the concept of the person, freedom, and creativity. He was profoundly critical of the philosophical, non-religious humanism of the Enlightenment, of individualism, political liberalism and capitalism. Nikolaj Losskij has described Berdâev's philosophy as "Russian humanism".[201] As a philosopher, Berdâev was part of the personalist and existentialist period in Western philosophy, and we might say that once this period ended, his fame declined too.

After his emigration from the Soviet Union, Berdâev wrote a series of culturological works which found a large echo during his lifetime, for example *The end of our time* (*Novoe*

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[200] Berdâev was well acquainted with the French personalists Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mournier. He also influenced Albert Camus in his views of Russian communism. See: Samantha Novello, "Du nihilisme aux théocraties totalitaires: les sources et le sens du communisme russe de Berdiaev dans les carnets de Camus.," *La Revue des Lettres Modernes* 20 (2004).
[201] Николай О. Лосский, *История Русской Философии (Nikolaj Losskij, The History of Russian Philosophy, Orig. Publ. New York 1951)* (Москва: Сварог и К, 2000), 275-296.

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srednevekov'e, literally trans. *The new Middle Ages*), where he put forward the thesis that modernity is waning and that a new epoch, comparable to the Middle Ages, is about to set in. He comes back to this argument in *The Origins of Russian Communism*, where he described an ideal of society "in which man will strive after wholeness and unity as opposed to the individualism of modern history, and in which the significance of the religious principle will increase."[202] Berdâev supported a philosophical personalism that was critical both of individualism and of communist-style collectivism, but not always did this differentiation become clear when he interpreted Russia and the Russian people as potential bearers of a social Christian ideal. In *The Origin of Russian Communism* he provides an explanation of the spiritual dynamics of the Russian revolution and interprets communism as a potential reawakening of the social spirit of Christianity. What is characteristic of these works of Berdâev and of much of Russian émigré-philosophy in general is the mystification and personalization of Russia, of the Russian people and the 'Russian soul'. Semën Frank, to give another example, writes in an essay entitled "The Russian worldview" that the Russian mode of thinking is anti-rationalistic, spiritually collectivist, and religious.[203] This mystical and eschatological tone was successful at the time, but proved an obstacle to reception of Russian philosophy on the long run. To Western readers, it seemed unsystematic and irrational, and to many Russian readers, it turned out to be far-fetched and dated.

Sergej Horužij, for example, in a reflection on the reception of pre-revolutionary religious philosophy in the Perestroika- and post-Soviet period, writes that in public consciousness the forbidden religious philosophy of the Silver Age and emigration acquired the status of a place where all answers to current problems – Russia's future, its place in Europe, its destiny – were to be found if only one could get there. Once the literature was made accessible, however, it became apparent that there were neither ready-made answers, nor could these texts serve as an immediate inspiration for new creative solutions. They turned out to be too utopian, too optimistic and too far-fetched, according to Horužij's judgement. Only what was sufficiently "easy" and graspable found an immediate echo in the political and social sphere: nationalism, fundamentalism, Eurasian ideologies.[204] This view is shared by Vladimir Bibihin, who, under the provocative title *The Revolution has taught little* writes that the re-appropriation of the forbidden literature since the 1980s is repeating old mistakes. In particular he criticizes a maze of empty phrases – *kosmism, sofiologia,*

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[202] Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Origin of Russian Communism* (Michigan: Ann Arbor Paperback, University of Michigan Press, 1960), 179.
[203] Simon Frank, "Die Russische Weltanschauung," in *Philosophische Vorträge*, ed. Paul Menzer and Arthur Liebert (Charlottenburg: Pan-Verlag Rolf Meise, 1926).
[204] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Путем Зерна: Русская Религиозная Философия Сегодня (Sergej Horužij, The Pathway of the Seed. Russian Religious Philosophy Today)," *Вопросы Философий* 9 (1999).

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sobornost' – which serve only as general indicators of a rejection of Western rationalism and Catholicism.[205] It is this critical attitude which makes thinkers like Horužij and Bibihin to intellectual heirs of the *Vehi*-authors, despite the fact that they have been profoundly critical of their works and legacy. Another philosopher whose work and personal history testify in an exemplary manner for the interrelatedness of Orthodox theology and religious philosophy during the early period of emigration, is Lev Karsavin. Karsavin has usually been regarded – and dismissed – in the light of his involvement in the Eurasian-movement, but recently scholars have also begun to study his philosophical work.[206] Especially Horužij has engaged profoundly with the Christian metaphysics of Karsavin, which he compares with the Heideggerian attempt to formulate a fundamental ontology.[207] In the years after the revolution, Karsavin's teaching of medieval studies and Christian thought at the university of Petrograd had a decisive impact on the young Vladimir Lossky, who was later to become a leading theologian of the Russian diaspora.

The Eurasian episode in the Russian emigration, for which Karsavin's involvement is exemplary, gives a good insight into the dynamic interplay of philosophy and theology at the time and it also testifies for the great difficulty to separate ideology and politics from philosophy and theology:[208] The Eurasian movement was founded in 1921 by a group of young Russian emigrants who sought to formulate an alternative both to the restoration of the old regime, as was the programme of the White Guards during the Russian civil war, and to the social, political, economical and cultural programme of the West. The cornerstone of their theory was the idea that Russia, defined by its Orthodox heritage, ought to take a leading role in the formation of a new geopolitical space called Eurasia, inaugurating a new epoch in world history which would end the domination of the West.[209] The authors of the first Eurasian manifesto were N. S. Trubeckoj, P. N. Savickij, P. P. Suvčinskij, and the later leading theologian of the emigration, G. V. Florovskij. What is remarkable about this early period of the Eurasian ideology is, as has been pointed out by Horužij, its double allegiance to a culturology of the Spenglerian type and to the tradition of Slavophilism. The idea of a spiritual substance common to Orthodox Russia and Asia and the derived claim of ethical

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[205] Владимир В. Бибихин, "Револуция Мало Чему Научила (Vladimir Bibihin, The Revolution has taught little)," in *Другое Начало (A new beginning)* (Санкт Петербург: Наука, 2003).
[206] Lubomir Zak, "*Philosophia Crucis.* La Kenosi nel pensiero di L.P. Karsavin e la sua attualità per il dialogo interreligioso," in *Dilegesthai. Rivista telematica di filosofia* (2002), Юлия Б. Мелих, *Персонализм Л. В. Карсавина и Европейская Философия (Iuliâ Melih, L. Karsavin's Personalism and European Philosophy)* (Москва: Прогресс-Традиция, 2003).
[207] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Жизнь и Учение Льва Карсавина (Sergej Horužij, The Life and Work of Lev Karsavin)," in *После Перерыва. Пути Русской Философии (After the Break. The Ways of Russian Philosophy)* (Санкт-Петервург: Алетейя, 1994), 172.
[208] For a comprehensive study of the idea of Eurasia in Russian culture, see: Aldo Ferrari, *La Foresta e la Steppa. Il mito dell'Eurasia nella cultura russa* (Milano: Libri Scheiwiller, 2003). See especially pp. 197-205 on the Eurasian movement in emigration.
[209] Хоружий, "Жизнь и Учение Льва Карсавина," 160.

superiority of Eurasia over the West testifies for the influence of the latter, whereas the geopolitical approach and the thinking in life-cycles of cultures alludes to the former. This double-allegiance soon turned out to be the weak point in the theory, and in 1923 Georgij Florovskij (1893-1979) renounced his membership in the movement due to a disagreement on the evaluation of Orthodoxy. Florovskij repudiated the Eurasian treatment of Orthodoxy as a mere cultural factor. In an article entitled *Evrazijskij soblazn* (*The Eurasian temptation),* he spoke out against the simplification and politicization of Orthodoxy and the all-too worldly approach to its spiritual meaning and potential.[210] In 1925, Florovskij and Karsavin, who had joined the Eurasian movement in 1923, became competitors for a chair in patristic theology at the St. Serge Theological Institute. The decision was made in favour of Florovskij, and Karsavin became the leading theorist and philosopher of the Eurasians. He pursued the political and ideological line criticized by Florovskij and ultimately brought the Eurasians closer to Bolshevism. This move was received controversially by other Eurasians, and in 1929 also Karsavin renounced his adherence to the movement and returned to philosophy.

I have found it necessary to mention the Eurasian movement and Florovskij's and Karsavin's temporary involvement, because these incidents testify the intense interconnectedness of theology, philosophy and political ideology during the first decade of emigration. Above, I briefly outlined also a fourth layer which has to be added to this problematic, the church-politics in the diaspora. This interconnectedness of philosophy, religion, ideology and church-politics has not necessarily been beneficial to the output of Russian émigré-philosophy. The more easily accessible parts of it, for example Berdâev's and Karsavin's works in cultural theory and philosophy of history, appear dated, if not outright ideological, to the contemporary reader. Their substantial philosophical work is, except for the case of Berdâev, not widely known. Scholars in the West have frequently focused on the religious philosophy of the Silver Age and the first generation of emigrants without following up the developments for the second half of the twentieth century, and it has therefore not always become clear what the legacy of Russian religious philosophy for today's philosophical discourse actually is.[211] This legacy and the way the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition has fared in a confrontation with modernity that meant not only a reflection on totalitarianism but also on its own trajectory in the modern world, will be the topic of the next section.

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[210] Ferrari, 205, Хоружий, "Жизнь и Учение Льва Карсавина," 162.
[211] See Copleston's question "Is Russian religious philosophy dead or alive?"

III.2. Confronting Modernity: The Orthodox Intellectual Tradition in the twentieth century

Contemporary Orthodox thinkers have worked towards a re-reading of the history I have just described, in particular of the religious philosophy of the Silver Age. This re-reading, however, is already guided by a different schooling, namely that of theology. Émigré-theology emerges from the amalgamate of theology, philosophy, ideology and church-politics in a different manner than émigré-philosophy. The theological debates of the 1930s constitute a struggle for independence and orientation in a period where philosophy, theology and ideology were becoming enmeshed to an ever greater extent. The theologians at St. Serge refused a direct involvement in ideological contestations and an instrumentalization of Orthodoxy in the ideological struggle. The theology they developed marks not only an emancipation from the religious-philosophical discourse of their time, it also proved able to reinvigorate the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition in the second half of the twentieth century.

III.2.1. The theological debates in emigration

The theologians who left the Soviet Union continued their work in Western Europe and in the United States. In 1925, the Institut de Théologie Orthodoxe Saint-Serge was established in Paris, and in 1938 the Saint-Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary was founded in New York. The dynamics at the Saint-Serge Theological Institute during the first two decades of its existence were characterized by the rivalry of two theological schools, which Paul Valliere has described as Russian School theology and Neo-Patristic theology.[212] Valliere's point is that these two schools pursued two different approaches to the challenge of defining Orthodoxy's place in the modern world and in the situation of Western emigration. The Russian School, he writes, held a world-affirmative stance which sought to open Orthodoxy to the requirements and conditions of modern life, while the Neo-Patristic theologians supported a more restrained and contemplative approach, calling for the study of the Patristic texts in order to purge Orthodoxy of what were perceived to have been harmful modernist influences over the past centuries. Of these two approaches, the latter, the Neo-Patristic School, prevailed in the course of the theological debates of the 1930s. In Valliere's view, it thereby incapacitated Orthodox theology to develop a guiding position on modern

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[212] Paul Valliere, "Russian Religious Thought and the Future of Orthodox Theology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2001).

issues; he therefore sets himself the task to rehabilitate the Russian School, in which he finds a promising theological approach that could take Orthodoxy into the twenty-first century.[213] I will show that the liberal-conservative distinction, with which Valliere operates in his dichotomization of the two theological schools, does not quite grasp what was at stake in the debate between Russian School and Neo-Patristic theology, but this critical point notwithstanding, his study offers a good introduction into the development of Orthodox theology in the 1930s and it provides an important background for mapping the Orthodox relationship with the modernity.

The term 'Russian School' was first used by Alexander Schmemann, a Russian émigré-theologian of the second generation, who describes its theological task in the following way: "Orthodox theology must keep its patristic foundations, but it must also go 'beyond' the Fathers if it is to respond to a new situation created by centuries of philosophical development […] An attempt is thus made to 'transpose' theology into a new 'key', and this transposition is considered as the specific task and vocation of Russian theology."[214] The new situation Schmemann referred to was, in Valliere's word, a modern society "consisting of relatively autonomous, unharmonized spheres of activity operating outside the tutelage of church or state."[215] The main thinkers to whom Valliere attributes this way of understanding the task of Orthodox theology are Aleksandr Buharev (Archimandrite Feodor) (1842-1871), Vladimir Solov'ëv, Pavel Florenskij, and Sergej Bulgakov. It is in Bulgakov's work and lifetime that one find's the clearest confrontation with the other available theological approach to modernity – Neo-Patristics.

After his expulsion from the Soviet Union, Bulgakov became the founding dean and professor for dogmatic theology at the St. Serge Theological Institute. It is important to bear in mind that Bulgakov's outlook on theology and his understanding of the role of religion and philosophy in society had been shaped profoundly by the experience of the lively debates between intelligentsia and clerics in the decade preceding the Bolshevik revolution, and by the optimism and drive for a 'new religious consciousness' that informed much of these encounters. This was the spirit of a progressive traditionalism, that later came to be called Russian School theology.

Of special interest in this regard are two texts written from 1932 to 1934, in which Bulgakov came back to his pre-revolutionary reflections on socialism and laid out his ideas

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[213] The same view is expressed by Rowan Williams.
[214] Alexander Schmemann, "Russian Theology: 1920-1972. An Introductory Survey," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 16 (1972): 178.
[215] Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 2.

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on the social teaching of Orthodox theology.[216] Rowan Williams suggests that Bulgakov's reflections on this topic were triggered by the question what action the Orthodox Church could take to ease the lot of many Russian emigrants living in poverty. The remarkable figure of Mat' Mariâ (Elisaveta Skobtsova), a Russian nun devoted to the support of Russian refugees who pursued her work outside of the habitual environment of an Orthodox convent, was a case in point.[217] In these texts, Bulgakov criticizes the ascetic neglect of the world by the early Christian Church and the Byzantine Church Fathers, who had been convinced that the end of the world was near and therefore did not concern themselves much with question of social and economic life. This ascetic and conservative attitude of the Church continued also once the idea of an end of the world had become more remote and determined the social teaching of the Orthodox Church. Bulgakov even talks about 'social nihilism' with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church. In response to this state of affairs, Bulgakov suggests that the task of the Church is the development of a 'Christian socialism' which would emphasise the creative and active dimension of faith, the transfiguration of the world in order to counteract the general secularization of life. Secular socialism, the communism of his life-time, amounts to a heresy for Bulgakov. This vision of the social world organised according to Christian principles found its expression in Bulgakov's teaching of sophiology which should be read as an attempt to theologically justify Christian activity in the world.[218]

From 1905/06 onwards, Bulgakov's interest had, as has been documented by Jutta Scherrer, shifted from religious-social to philosophical-mystical and eventually, under the influence of Solov'ëv and Florenskij, to theological-mystical questions. Bulgakov adopted and elaborated their concepts of all-unity (*vseedinstvo*) and sophiology (*sofia*). While in 1912, in his doctoral thesis *Philosophy of Economics*, Bulgakov had reflected on the concept of Sophia with regard to human agency and labour, he took the notion even further in his post-revolutionary work. There Bulgakov sought to develop an entire theology of engagement with and involvement in the secular world based on the notion of Sophia.[219] In these works, Bulgakov drew on early Byzantine theology, making a distinction between divine essence and divine energy. Sophia was conceived by him to express this double nature of the divine, and also the double nature of humanity. In an essay from 1933, *The Lamb of God*, he writes: "The *totality* that exists in the divine world and the created world, divine Sophia and created Sophia, is identical in *content*, though not at all so in actual existence. *It is the one Sophia*

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[216] Sergii Bulgakov, *Towards a Russian Political Theology*, ed. Rowan Williams (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 237-267, 73-86.
[217] Ibid., 230. In occupied France, Mariâ continued her activities to help Russian and Jewish refugees. She was arrested and executed by the German troops in 1945.
[218] Ibid., 235.
[219] Scherrer, *Religiös-Philosophische Vereinigungen*, 213-214.

that reveals itself both in God and in creation."[220] Sophia stands for the world both divine and human, a unity realized in Christ, the becoming man of God. With this rendering of sophiology, Bulgakov added an unconventional feature to the Trinitarian teaching, and soon found himself faced with fierce opposition.

In 1935, Bulgakov's sophiology was attacked as heretical. The speculative nature of his theology was criticized, and the concept of Sophia was accused of being alien to Orthodoxy. The conflict which has entered Orthodox history as the 'Sophia-Controversy' was primarily a theological debate, but the political aspects of it were strikingly clear even at the time. What was happening?[221] The figures behind the critique were Georgij Florovskij and Vladimir Lossky who disagreed with Bulgakov's teaching on Sophia and, in this regard, with his interpretation of Palamas. In his study *Ways of Russian Theology*, Florovsky had criticized Russian religious philosophy for containing too many elements of Western philosophy and speculative thought, and he was especially critical of the work of Bulgakov.[222] Lossky also delivered harsh criticism. He spoke out against philosophical and speculative additions to Orthodox theology, whose integrity should be preserved at all costs. He was particularly critical of anything that stemmed from the Slavophile period in Russian thought, to the extent that Williams even speaks about "Lossky's intellectual allergy to the language of *sobornost.*"[223] The concept of Sophia, with its clear symbolistic legacy, was just one such speculative element for Lossky. He held that, theologically, there was no need for the unifying metaphor of Sophia, all could be expressed in Palamitian theology purely and simply.

Apart from these theological objections to Bulgakov, the political dimension of the dispute should also be considered. It has already been mentioned that in 1930, the Orthodox Church in Paris under Metropolitan Evlogij broke with the Patriarchate of Moscow over the issue of loyalty to the Soviet regime. Evlogij, supported by Bulgakov, sought canonical jurisdiction from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, whereas a group of Orthodox believers with its centre in the Brotherhood of Saint Photius in Paris adhered to Moscow. Lossky was part of this latter group, and his critical assessment of Bulgakov was written for Metropolitan Sergij in Moscow, who consequently condemned Bulgakov's teachings. That a power-struggle between Sergij and Evlogij was at play here, is quite

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[220] Bulgakov, 191. (emphasis in the original)
[221] The conflict is described in all studies dealing with this period, see for example: Ibid., 172-181, Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 279-289, Сергей С. Хоружий, "Шаг Вперед, Сделанный в Рассеянии (Sergej Horužij, A Step Ahead, Taken in Dispersal)," in *Опыты из Русской Духовной Традиции (Essays in the Russian Spiritual Tradition)*, ed. Сергей С. Хоружий (Москва: Изд. Парад, 2005), 344-430.
[222] See especially chapters eight "On the Eve" and nine "Breaks and Links" in: Georgij Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology. The Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, Vols. 5-6* (Belmont, MA; Vaduz: Nordland Publishing Company; Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1987).
[223] See the introduction by Rowan Williams to: Bulgakov, 176.

evident. In addition, some of the promoters of the condemnation by Moscow were, as Scherrer has pointed, identical with Bulgakov's pre-revolutionary critics.[224]

Florovskij and Lossky were the leading figures of that other branch in émigré-theology which Valliere has called the Neo-Patristic School. Their main demand was that Orthodox theology should refrain from philosophical speculation and should seek a thorough reappraisal of the Patristic literature. Florovskij was not only critical of Bulgakov, whom he considered too philosophical, he equally found fault with the seminar-theology of the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox Church, which he considered held in a 'Western captivity' due to the prevalence of Catholic and Protestant theological models. Only a re-appropriation of the tradition, he was convinced, could help to establish Orthodoxy's place in the modern world.

The conflict between the two schools has been described as a debate between modernists and traditionalists[225], liberals and conservatives[226] or as an opposition between wanting to lead Orthodox theology "back to the fathers" or "beyond the fathers".[227] A closer look at the Neo-Patristic position shows, however, that none of these designations quite exhausts what was at stake. The theological dispute between the two schools did not arise around the question whether the Orthodox Church needed a renewal after centuries-long stagnation and Western influence – on this there was consensus – and not even on the issue whether the Church should be engaged in the world – also this was a shared view – but on the question on which basis such a renewal and engagement with the world could take place. For Bulgakov, the two issues were quite clearly linked. The renewal of the Church would take place on the basis of an active social engagement in the world. Florovskij on the other hand thought that the Church needed first and foremost to re-appropriate its dogmatic foundations, to achieve a spiritual renewal, and from this a true engagement with the world would follow. Florovskij considered the Russian School's attitude as pretentious: "One must ascend to the catholic level, outgrow one's subjective narrowness, and depart from one's private, secluded nook", he writes, something which is achieved by a rendering of oneself to tradition and revelation.[228] Yet this implies the study of tradition and of the Church Fathers, in other words, history. In Florovskij's view, the Russian School theologians lacked insight into the value of history, which amounted to a lack of faith: "Modernist theology," he writes, "is a

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[224] Scherrer, *Religiös-Philosophische Vereinigungen*, 214.
[225] Robert Bird, "The Tragedy of Russian Religious Philosophy: Sergei Bulgakov and the Future of Orthodox Theology," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters, 2003).
[226] Schmemann: 178.
[227] Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology*, 376.
[228] Florovsky, 295.

form of historical lack of faith, or lack of faith in history – the offshoot of historical positivism and humanism."[229]

What Florovskij had in mind was first and foremost an emancipation from Western ways of thinking about religion and the world. "It is not enough to merely repeat answers previously formulated in the West – the western questions must be discerned and relived," he writes in a passage which is worth quoting at full length:

"Russian theology must confidently penetrate the entire complex problematics of western religious thought and spiritually trace and examine the difficult and bewildering path of the West from the time of the Great Schism. Access to the inner creative life comes only through its problematics, and one must therefore sympathize with that life and experience it precisely in its full problematicality, searching and anxiety. Orthodox theology can recover its independence from western influence only through a spiritual return to its patristic sources and foundations. Returning to the fathers, however, does not mean abandoning the present age, escaping from history, or quitting the field of battle. Patristic experience must not only be preserved, but it must be discovered and brought into life. Independence from the non-Orthodox West need not become estrangement from it. A break with the West would provide no real liberation. Orthodox thought must perceive and suffer the western trials and temptations, and, for its own sake, it cannot afford to avoid and keep silent over them."[230]

Several things are noteworthy about this passage. Firstly, Florovskij talks about an emancipation from the *ways of thinking about problematics* in the West, but not from the *problematics themselves*. Talking about "compassionate co-experience", Florovskij departs radically from any simple anti-Westernism in the Orthodox Church, which has usually held the view that the West is doomed by its own fault and the Orthodox East does not share its problems, concluding that if only the Orthodox East stays away from the West, it will be fine. Anti-Western and conservative attitudes were and are of course a reality in Orthodoxy, the point here is, however, that the Neo-Patristics were not conservatives of that kind. Their attitude towards the preservation of tradition was different from a merely conservative stance.

This leads to the second noteworthy point about the passage above, Florovskij's definition of tradition as 'creative'. A recovery of the Patristic style would signify a theological Renaissance, not in the sense of a restoration of something past, but of a moving forward in the faithfulness to the spirit of the past. One can follow the path of the Fathers only through creativity, not through imitation, Florovskij writes with a metaphor typical of his polemical style: "One must be steeped in the inspiration of the patristic flame and not simply be a

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[229] Ibid., 296.
[230] Ibid., 301.

gardener pottering around amongst the ancient texts."[231] Thirdly, Florovskij's passage breaths an anxiety with the world and with one's own condition which he shares with many contemporaries in the West. "We are summoned to theology precisely because we are already in this apocalyptic struggle,"[232] he writes. He is certainly more pessimistic than Bulgakov, of whose view that the Church should go into the world he is critical because both the Church and the world have become precarious: "The social question itself is above all a spiritual question, a question of conscience and wisdom,"[233] Florovskij writes, and he adds: "Pastoral routine and teaching cannot resolve the newly arisen task of constructing the human soul and conscience."[234] If we see Bulgakov's task, as described by Robert Bird,[235] to teach modernity speak a religious language rather than making Orthodoxy speak in terms of modernity, Florovskij would probably still have held against it that Orthodoxy needed to find its own language first.

The second important Neo-Patristic theologian was Lossky. He published his main theological work in 1944 under the title *Essai sur la Theologie Mystique de l'Église d'Orient* in Paris. Two things seem most remarkable about this book. Firstly, it was a philosophical and theological treatise about the human subject, the world, and the Divine, a carefully studied exposition of Orthodox theology, written not in Russian but in French, with learned reference to Western literature.[236] Not surprising, therefore, that it found a large readership. It played a crucial role in the reception of Palamism in Greece, and also in the West it was widely read and discussed. The second noteworthy point about the book is that Lossky, despite his rejection of the philosophical and theological language that determined much of the Slavophile and Eurasian antagonizing against the West, was himself frequently accentuating the difference between the East and the West on doctrinal grounds.[237] Lossky seems to have been careful not to derive political or cultural claims from this distinction, but some of his disciples, for example Christos Yannars, did in fact fall into bold statements of cultural and political nature. Lossky's work contains all elements that have made the reception of contemporary Orthodoxy in the East and in the West both fruitful and problematic, that have allowed for the interpretation that there is something new under-way in Orthodox thought, and for the dismissive opinion that it is all a well-rehearsed repetition of Orthodox exceptionalism and Slavophile thought.

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[231] Ibid., 294.
[232] Ibid., 206.
[233] Ibid., 305.
[234] Ibid., 307.
[235] Bird, 214.
[236] Lossky, *Mystical Theology*.
[237] Ibid., 21-22.

Stöckl, Kristina (2007), Community after Totalitarianism. The Eastern Orthodox Intellectual Tradition and the Philosophical Discourse of Political Modernity
European University Institute

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DOI: 10.2870/11273

The third leading Orthodox theologian in the Neo-Patristic school was John Meyendorff (1926-1992). Born into a family of Russian emigrants, Meyendorff studied theology at the Saint-Serge Theological Institute before moving to the Saint-Vladimir Theological Institute in New York in 1959, following Florovskij. He was a prolific theologian, and his works on Palamas had a decisive impact on Orthodox thought. In his books about Palamas, Meyendorff explores the tradition of Hesychasm in the history of Orthodoxy and highlights the importance of Palamas as the theologian who gave Hesychasm a proper theological and philosophical grounding. Meyendorff describes Hesychasm as that element of Orthodox thought which saved Orthodoxy repeatedly from becoming absorbed into sociological or political struggles. He also interprets Hesychasm as the main distinguishing mark of the Orthodoxy from the West, sometimes overemphasizing differences in favour of his Neo-Palamist reading of Orthodox history.[238] For Horužij, studying Meyendorff's works in the Soviet Union of the 1960s, turned out to be a crucial input that confirmed his critical attitude towards the Russian philosophers of the Silver Age, and spurred his independent study of Hesychasm that led to the foundation of a research institute for Hesychast studies in Moscow in 1993.[239]

Florovskij and Lossky on the one side, and Bulgakov on the other side, these were the chief protagonists of the debates among the émigré-theologians in Paris. This conflict was a political issue about loyalties to Moscow or to Constantinople, it was an ideological issue about the social orientation of the Orthodox Church in the modern world, and it was a theological and philosophical issue about the human subject and its relation to the world and the divine. At the first look, it appears like a conflict with a clear outcome: Schmemann writes that Bulgakov left behind no organised disciples as such,[240] and Robert Bird quite frankly states that Bulgakov's sophiology is a closed matter for theology.[241] Historical circumstances favoured the prevalence of the Neo-Patristic School. The aim of the Russian school had been to respond to the every-day problems of Orthodox believers. With the onset of communism in all countries of Orthodox Europe except Greece and given the émigré-situation of the Orthodox scholars, such a theological project could only be of limited scope and interest. The group of Orthodox believers in the West was small, and the Orthodox communities that theologians might have referred to persisted only in an unclear fashion under communist repression. Neo-Patristic theology, on the other hand, promised solid

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[238] See also section III.1.1.
[239] The Institute for Synergetic Anthropology, www.synergia-isa.ru
[240] Schmemann: 179-180. Despite this judgement we can attribute to Schmemann himself and also to number of other theologians, for example Lev Zander, Nicolas Zernov, and Alexander Men', a continuation of the ideas of the Russian School.
[241] Bird, 222.

foundations, a correction of the theological shortcomings of the last centuries, and it opened an access to a Western theological scholarship receptive to what the Orthodox theologians had to offer.[242] In the ecumenical dialogue, Florovskij's concept of the Neo-Patristic synthesis, the dialogue of all Christian Churches on the basis of the Patristic scriptures, finds a positive response until today.

Robert Bird suggests that we should view Bulgakov's theology and the entire project of Russian religious philosophy as a *tragedy*, as an instance which opened up a cathartic space for Orthodox theology "where Orthodox theologians can gather in order to begin again, in the light of tradition and in the shadow of a breach in tradition."[243] This view, however, suggests that we are talking about a linear development in Orthodox theology, a progression spurred by counter-reactions to forceful deviations (the 'Western captivity', the modernist interlude of Russian religious philosophy) which turn out to have been 'healing' instances insofar as they served to make Orthodoxy more aware of its roots. I would like to argue against Bird here, because I think he is trying to come to a synthesis too early. It rather seems to me that the tension expressed in the conflict between the Russian School and the Neo-Patristic School is a basic tension when taking a stand on modernity, and it is therefore likely to remain an issue for Orthodox thought.

I suggest to view the Russian School and Neo-Patristics as two ways in which twentieth-century Orthodox thought has responded to the challenges of the modern world. The word 'response' is important here, because it means that both these schools took issue with modernity and sought to come to terms with it in very different ways. The Russian School was inspired by the Marxist critique of Western capitalism and by romanticism, its ideal was an engaged Church that would assume an active role in the life of modern society. The Neo-Patristic thinkers sought their response to the modern condition on an entirely different basis. Neo-Patristic theology took a perspective outside of the modern world, namely in the Patristic tradition, from where it wanted to draw the conceptual tools for an engagement with the modern world. Neo-Patristic theology thereby offered the basis for a more general philosophical-ontological critique of modernism, the full potential of which was realized first and foremost by its Neo-Palamist philosophical strand.[244] Both Russian School theology and Neo-Patristics are ways or responding to the challenges of the modern world,

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[242] Valliere, "Russian Religious Thought," 231.

[243] Bird, "The Tragedy of Russian Religious Philosophy", 228.

[244] Before moving on, a terminological issue has to be resolved. I have until now, following Valliere, spoken about Neo-Patristic theology. This is correct to the extent that Florovskij himself speaks about a Neo-Patristic synthesis and given the general reappraisal of Patristic literature. However, in order to give a more precise definition of this Patristic revival in the twentieth century, a second term should be introduced. I shall therefore speak about Neo-Palamism with reference to those trends in twentieth-century Orthodox thought that explicitly make Palamas their starting point for theological and philosophical reflection. Within the scope of this study, this qualification will apply first and foremost to Meyendorff and Horužij.

of partaking in the condition of modernity. It would be wrong, however, to claim that these two approaches account for the entire range of Orthodox responses to modernity, they did not in the 1930s and they do not today. A large spectrum of Orthodoxy today seems not to engage with modernity at all, it simply turns away from it, condemns it or tries to reconstruct itself outside of it. Below, I will analyze this variety of expressions of contemporary Orthodoxy.

III.2.2. Orthodox thought in the Soviet period and in post-communist Russia

In the Soviet Union, the heritage of the pre-revolutionary religious philosophers was largely silenced by the regime. Today's philosophers who seek to connect to the tradition of religious philosophy in Russia, like Sergej Horužij (born 1941) and Vladimir Bibihin (1938-2004), speak about 'a period of silence' or even about a 'break'.[245] However, despite the hostility of the Soviet regime towards religion, religious thought in the Soviet Union continued to develop. Sources for this development were on the one hand the living memory of the philosophy of the Silver Age and the religious commitment of members of the intelligentsia, and on the other hand impulses that came from outside the Soviet Union through *tamizdat*-books and the study of contemporary Western authors. The intellectual careers of Horužij and Bibihin are exemplary for the thought-process that resulted from this interplay, and my analysis of contemporary Orthodox thought in Russia will therefore be largely guided by their perspective.

III.2.2.a. Continuity from within: Aleksej Losev and Sergej Averincev

The most prominent figures in the religious intelligentsia from the 1960s to the 1990s were certainly Aleksej Losev (1893-1988) and Sergej Averincev (1935-2004), who can be considered to have provided an intellectual bridge between the pre-revolutionary religious philosophy and the late-Soviet period when this philosophy was officially re-appropriated. They managed to introduce their students to the thought of Solov'ëv, Florenskij, Bulgakov etc. and to teach them the fundamentals of Orthodox theology in the guise of lectures on

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[245] Владимир В. Бибихин, "После Перерыва (Vladimir Bibihin, After the Break)," in *Другое Начало (A new beginning)* (Санкт Петербург: Наука, 2003), Сергей С. Хоружий, *После Перерыва. Пути Русской Философии (Sergej Horužij, After the break. The Ways of Russian Philosophy)* (Санкт-Петербург: Алетейя, 1994).

Byzantine literature and classical philosophy, inspiring those very people that are taking the stage of Orthodox thought in Russia today. No complete study of the role of these two scholars is yet available, but it is indicative of their shared importance for the permanence of religious philosophy during the Soviet period that Bibihin, who was Losev's trusted student and secretary and Averincev's close friend, brings them together in a publication of notes taken during conversations with them over the course of several decades.[246] In the introduction to the otherwise unrevised notes he writes that, having just finished the writing-up of his conversations with Losev since 1964 and of the notes he took with reference to him after his death, the news of Averincev's unexpected passing away in 2004 induced him to bring them together in a single volume. "Talking about the one without remembering the other", he writes, "is impossible."[247] Bibihin's notes are an interesting document about the dynamics among the religious intellectuals during the 1970s and 80s. Their intellectual commitment and philosophical orientation, but also their professional ambitions and the personal animosities emerge quite clearly from them, and they help us understand the development of religious thought in Russia once communism ended.

Losev was a philosopher and a teacher of classical philosophy and aesthetics at the Moscow Pedagogical University. As a young man he had been acquainted with Pavel Florenskij. Florenskij and the writings of the Russian religious philosophers, mostly Solov'ëv, had a profound impact on Losev's own work like *The Dialectic of Myth* or *The Philosophy of Names*, his philosophical elaboration of the concept of *imâslavie.* He also wrote the first biography on Solov'ëv to be published in the early Perestrojka-period.[248] In his later years, Losev recalled his encounters with Florenskij as the last glimpse of a religious culture whose disappearance he had to witness. From these memories, recorded by Bibihin, Losev emerges as the surviving representative of religious philosophy on Russian soil who strove to keep its legacy alive in private lectures given to selected students and indirectly in his works on classical literature and aesthetics.[249] At the same time, however, Losev cannot be considered a religious dissident, despite attempts by some of his current followers to turn him

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[246] Владимир В. Бибихин, *Алексей Федорович Лосев. Сергей Сергеевич Аверинцев (Vladimir Bibihin, Aleksej Fedorovič Losev. Sergej Sergeevič Averincev)* (Москва: Институт философии, теологии и истории св. Фомы, 2004).

[247] Ibid., 305. Sadly, Bibihin himself died in December 2004, shortly after the publication of this book. It seems plausible to suppose that his declining health was the reason for publishing these texts somewhat hastily and without a proper commentary.

[248] *Диалектика мифа* (1930), *Философия имени* (1932), *Владимир Соловъев и его время* (1983). See also: James P. Scanlan, "A. F. Losev and Mysticism in Russian Philosophy," *Studies in East European Thought* 46 (1994).

[249] See also: Evert Van der Zweerde, *Soviet Historiography of Philosophy* (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 34, 47-48, 89, 118.

into one.[250] Upon his return to Moscow in the 1940s after several years of forced labour at the infamous *Belomorkanal* and exile in the Russian province, Losev was able to get a teaching position at the Moscow Pedagogical University. In this function he knew, as commentators have been able to show, how to arrange himself with the ruling Marxist ideology and to promote his ideas relatively undisturbed.[251]

Vladimir Bibihin became a student of Losev in 1964 and maintained regular contacts and scholarly meetings with him until 1984. From 1970 to 1972 he worked as a secretary in Losev's home-office. Being a student of Losev meant being granted access to the secluded life Losev was living as a scholar in his house on Arbat and being admitted to a world of thought radically different from the ideologized humanities at Moscow State University.[252] The conversations with Losev revolved around Plato and Aristotle, Hegel and Husserl, Solov'ëv and Florenskij, around aesthetics, mysticism, and Orthodoxy. Losev was not a Neo-Patristic thinker strictly speaking, and certainly not a Neo-Palamist, but rather a student of classical philosophy. In a conversation recorded by Bibihin he encourages his students to study Palamas but says that he will confine his studies to Neo-Platonism.[253] Horužij has characterized Losev as 'a rearguard soldier', a person who promoted his philosophy and religiosity in an utterly hostile environment. In an interesting observation on style, Horužij writes that Losev continued the style characteristic of the Russian religious philosophers, the emotionally and mystically charged language of Florenskij, Bulgakov, and Frank, but that in Losev's writings, addressed to an outside that was hostile to his message, this style became aggressive, defensive, addressing the reader as an enemy.[254]

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[250] Isai Nakhov, "Losev and Marxism. Lessons of a Life: 1893-1988," *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 35 (1996): 75.

[251] Ibid, Н. Прат, "Лосев и Тоталитаризм (N. Prat, Losev and Totalitarianism)," *Вопросы Филисофии* 5 (2001).

[252] The following recollection of Bibihin is worth quoting at full length, because it conveys particularly well the atmosphere of the meetings with Losev: "Уходя после первого занятия с А.Ф. по Арбату к центру, я был другим. Город изменился, воздух был плотным, пространство глубоким. Я мог двигатся плавно в этой новой густоте. Каждый раз, как я приближалась к дому Лосева, Арбат начинал казаться особенно запустелым, люди на нем совсем неприкаянными. Кабинет на втором этаже с окнами во двор изучал строгую отрешеность. Здесь думали. Болшой человек в кресле с высокой ровной спинкой между заставленными книгами столом и бывшим камином бодрствовал в молчаливой сосредоточенности. 'Здравствуй, Владимир'." (transl. When I walked down the Arbat towards the centre after my first lesson with Aleksandr Fedorovič, I had become a different person. The city had changed, the air was rich, the space around me was deep. I could move easily in this new density. Every time I approached Losev's house, the Arbat began to appear particularly empty, the people around me very agitated. The room on the second floor with the window to the courtyard spoke of strict reclusion from the world. Here people thought. A big man in an imposing armchair among books stacked on the table and in the former fireplace kept vigil in silent contemplation. 'Good evening, Vladimir'.") Бибихин, *Лосев, Аверинцев*, 11.

[253] "Вот и занимайтесь теперь, переводите Паламу. А мне уже и позндо. Если переключаться сейчас на богословие, на Миня, так всю литературу надо менять. Нет, я буду уж по-прежнему заниматься Плотином. Тут у меня много материалам. (transl. Go along now, translate Palamas. For me it is already too late. If one were to switch to theology now, to Migne [Losev is here presumably referring to the complete edition of Patristic scriptures by Abbot Migne, 1875-84 – KS], then all literature will have to be changed. No, I will concern myself with Plotin, as before. There I have a lot of material.)"

[254] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Арьергардныы Бой. Мысль и Миф Алексея Лосева (Sergej Horužij, Rear-Guard Action. The Thought and the Myth of Aleksander Losev)," *Вопросы Философии* 10 (1992): 233-234.

In Horužij's interpretation, Losev's work is the last stage of the Russian metaphysics of all-unity, a stage to which also Bulgakov and Florenskij belonged and which goes back to the work of Solov'ëv. In Losev's elaboration of all-unity, the concept of *imâslavie* played an important role.[255] In the introduction, I already alluded to the debate which polarized Orthodox theologians and Russian intellectuals in the years 1911-14. Bulgakov was one of the first to welcome the new teaching and try to incorporate its theological core-argument, the distinction between essence and energies, into his own theological and philosophical work. Bulgakov, and with him Florenskij and the young Aleksej Losev, recognized that the *imâslavie* gave a new twist to their fundamental idea of all-unity. Solov'ëv's concept of all-unity, however, did not contain the distinction between divine and human essence and energy, and in order to account for this distinction, some changes to the idea of all-unity were necessary. Horužij analyses that all three solved the problem by taking recourse to neo-platonic philosophy. This is especially visible in Bulgakov, who interpreted the notion of energy in neo-platonic terms as the emanation of multitude from a unitary whole, calling this energetic multitude Sophia.[256] The divinization of man would, in Bulgakov's rendering of the idea, result in the synergy not only of the human and divine energies, but also of their essences. And this, Horužij points out, was exactly what the energy-essence distinction in Palamas was *not* about, because there the essence-energy relation of the divine was different from the human.[257] Divinization from the human perspective meant, in Palamatian theology, not becoming essence, but its opposite: de-essentialization. This was something the neo-platonic theory could not account for. For Horužij, the problem of Bulgakov and with him also of Losev lies in their starting point, in the Solov'ëvian concept of all-unity, a framework that incapacitated their theories to grasp the fundamental *difference* between the human and the divine. In Horužij's interpretation, which adopts Florovskij's and Lossky's approach, it is this theorization of difference which becomes the true novelty of Christian thought in Palamas, its "new anthropology".[258]

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[255] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Имяславие и Культура Серебряного Века: Феномен Московской Школы Христианского Неоплатонизма (Sergej Horužij, Imâslavie and the Culture of the Silver Age: The Phenomenon of the Moscow School of Christian Neoplatonism)," in *Опыты из Русской Духовной Традиции (Essays in the Russian Spiritual Tradition)*, ed. Сергей С. Хоружий (Москва: Изд. Парад, 2005). A translation of this text is available at http://www.synergia-isa.ru/lib/lib.htm#H (last accessed 17.01.07)

[256] See the essay by Bibihin on Bulgakov's sophiological interpretation of Palamas: Владимир В. Бибихин, "Православие и Власть (Vladimir Bibihin, Orthodoxy and Power),"
http://www.polit.ru/research/2004/12/14/bibikhin.html last accessed 10.01.2005 (2004).

[257] "Тварное обоживаемое бытие характеризируется иным соотношением между энергией и сущностью, нежели бытие Божественное (transl. The created and deified being is characterized by a different relationship between energy and essence than the divine being.)" Хоружий, "Имяславие," 297.

[258] Ibid.

Sergej Averincev also worked on classical literature, but his interest lay mostly with Byzantine thought. His most important book is on early Byzantine literature,[259] a text which has been described as "in reality dealing with Patristics".[260] Averincev's professional situation was different from Losev's, since he took the major steps of his career in the 1960s and 70s, a period of relative liberty in the humanities. He was an influential teacher, whose lectures on Byzantine aesthetics took place in "auditoria full as if for a football match."[261] Averincev was an active believer, but he nevertheless was elected member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and, in the last year of the Soviet Union, he entered politics as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. In his active church-life, Averincev associated himself with the liberal strand of Orthodoxy, being close to dissident priests like Alexander Men' and Georgij Kočetkov.[262] Outside of the Soviet Union, Averincev was recognized as the leading Russian expert on Orthodox theology, and in 1995 and 1996 he was member of a group of Russian intellectuals visiting Pope John Paul II, a group which also included Horužij.[263] Averincev considered himself a student of Losev, whom he addressed as 'father of our generation' on the occasion of Losev's 90th birthday, but from Bibihin's memories it also becomes clear that their relationship was not always free of jealousy and suspicion.[264]

The work and lives of Losev and Averincev are probably the clearest testimonies of the continuity of an academic and personal engagement with religion and theology during Soviet communism, and it is especially the scholarly aspect which distinguishes them from the continuity we find in the Russian Orthodox Church and among believers. During the Perestrojka-period, when the Soviet authorities became more lenient with regard to religion, Losev and Averincev emerged as the undisputed authorities on Orthodox thought. The Russian Orthodox Church had been in such a disarray for decades, that theological teaching had basically ceased, and even the church-authorities recognized that they had a lot to learn from the lay theologians.[265] Losev and Averincev stand for the continuity of religious thought in the Soviet Union and also in some regard *within* the limitations that the Soviet regime imposed on philosophy. They sought to continue what the Bolshevik revolution had interrupted and, in the case of Averincev, to diffuse this inheritance in the West as well. Their importance as conservators is undisputed, but their relevance as innovators for the Orthodox intellectual tradition is less clear. I will therefore now turn to a second aspect which is of

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[259] *Поетика ранне-висантийской литературы* (1977)
[260] Interview with an acquaintance of Averincev, Moscow, 17.06.2005
[261] Recollection of a former colleague of Averincev during our conversation in Moscow, 16.05.2005.
[262] See section III.2.2.c.
[263] Averinvec had many contacts with Italy, being associated with the journal *Russia Cristiana/La Nuova Europa* and holding, for some time, a fellowship at the Jesuit Centro Aletti in Rome.
[264] Бибихин, *Лосев, Аверинцев*, 235-240, 321.
[265] View expressed by a deacon of the Moscow Patriarchy during our conversation in Moscow, 21.06.2005.

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relevance for Orthodox thought in the Soviet Union: the reception of impulses coming from the West.

III.2.2.b. New impulses: Neo-Palamism and contemporary Western philosophy

Until the end of the 1980s, the access to works in philosophy and theology from the West and from Russia's pre-revolutionary past was restricted by the Soviet authorities. Books of that sort were kept in special sections of the state-libraries, the *spechran* (from *special'noe hranenie*, 'special storage'), which could only be accessed with special permission. Horužij recalls that during his student years in the 1960s, everybody interested in philosophy was aware of these 'hidden treasures'. Especially the study of the Russian religious philosophers of the Silver Age was almost imperative, and despite their forbidden nature and the difficulty to get hold of their texts, these authors were read and discussed. In the previous section I have shown that a figure like Losev could give even personal testimony of this period and that the legacy of authors like Berdâev, Bulgakov, Florenskij, Frank, Struve, etc. was to a certain extent alive. Without making any claim of completeness, I shall, in this section, talk about some instances where new impulses came into the debates and, introducing forbidden Western and émigré-literature, induced philosophers to question the canon of Russian religious philosophy.

In the 1960s, Averincev was involved in the publication of the *Soviet Philosophical Encyclopaedia*. Together with like-minded scholars, among them Horužij and Bibihin, he worked on Western Christian thinkers and on Russian philosophers of the Silver Age. The project of the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia* was important, Horužij recalls, because it allowed researchers to read the works of the Russian religious philosophers or of Christian mystics like Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa, even if they then had to give a largely biographical and reproductive interpretation of it.[266] "This was our own little crusade," Averincev would later say about the *Philosophical Encyclopaedia*.[267]

Besides the encyclopaedia, there were other government-sponsored projects in which scholars would be employed for translating and relating Western philosophy. Bibihin recalls these episodes both fondly and critically. On the one hand they offered an opportunity to read otherwise inaccessible literature and provided invaluable food for thought, on the other

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[266] Horužij during our interview, Moscow 15.06.2005.
[267] Владимир В. Бибихин, "Для Служебного Пользования (Vladimir Bibihin, For Administrative Use)," in *Другое Начало (A new beginning)* (Санкт Петербург: Наука, 2003), 196.

hand, these projects, especially when it came to the Russian religious thinkers, seemed designed to shape their ideas into an official canon that could be read in support of Russian nationalism and, as an anti-individualist philosophy, of communism. "The ones in power started to look for ideological alternatives to Marxism early," Bibihin writes in his article *For administrative use*[268]. As early as 1973 the political strategists started to consider Orthodox patriotism an easy way out of the ideological dead-end. Especially with regard to an ideological underpinning for the Soviet army, the state organs busied themselves with the elaboration of ideological alternatives and for this end employed even the "innate dissidents", as Bibihin calls himself and his lot. These scholars translated and reviewed *spechran*-literature, their texts being published in a series with the signature DSP (*dlâ služebnogo pol'zovaniâ*, transl. for administrative use), numbered and limited editions that would be carefully distributed among the state-officials. Since the authorities imagined that Orthodoxy could provide a particularly useful ideological background for patriotism, research in this field was intensified. Bibihin recalls that in the end of the 1970s, religion was a particularly well-financed part of the DSP-series. These studies remained on a superficial, ideologically-correct level, he writes – a level which merely reflected the parlous state of religion in the country as a whole.[269]

As well as Orthodox writers, however, Western authors were also translated and reviewed. Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Dietrich Bonhöfer were translated for a publication on contemporary protestantism. In 1974, Bibihin began to translate Heidegger, and together with his colleagues he also worked on Merleau-Ponty, Ortega-y-Gasset, Sartre, and Wittgenstein. In 1976, key-authors of European structuralism and post-structuralism, Umberto Eco and Jacques Derrida, were translated.[270] The employees of the Department for Scientific Information and Study of Foreign Literature of the Soviet Academy of Sciences prepared digests of Western philosophy and social science that would then be studied and commented upon by 'official' scholars. Bibihin recalls that the translators were painfully aware that they were not writing for a reading public, and that, above all, they were working years behind the scholars in the West. "When Heidegger was finally published," Bibihin

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[268] Ibid.

[269] Ibid., 193.

[270] The texts are cited by Bibihin as various numbers of Для служебного пользования. Москва: Институт философии АН СССР. Сектор научной информации и реферирования зарубежной философской литературы. Titles were, for example, Современный протестантизм (transl. Contemporary Protestantism), (1973), Диалектика Гегеля в оценке современных западных философов (transl. The dialectics of Hegel in the contemporary philosophical discourse of the West) (1974), Онтологическая проблематика языка в современной западной философии (transl. The ontological problematic of language in contemporary Western philosophy) (1975), Философия Канта и современность (transl. The philosophy of Kant in the present) (1976), Некоторые проблемы зарубежной эстетики (transl. Some problems of foreign aesthetics (1976), Современная феноменология: состояние и перспективы (критический анализ) (transl. Contemporary Phenomenology; its current state and perspectives, a critical analysis) (1977), Современный персонализм и религия (transl. Contemporary personalism and religion) (1977).

writes, "deconstructivism was already in full swing in the West."[271] Bibihin evaluates the long-term effect of these activities critically. In his opinion, the texts were too fragmented, were chosen from too particular a perspective, and could hardly serve as a solid basis for the reception of Western thought once this was no longer a forbidden field.[272] On the other hand, he writes that the work for the information-department opened up a window to the West, especially for those who would not otherwise have got permission to travel to the West, or for those who, "if they happened to be allowed on a two-week trip to Paris", realized only more deeply how insufficient such a short glimpse was.[273]

Bibihin's memories make clear how immensely important access to the human and social sciences in the West was for those scholars working in the Soviet Union who found themselves at the margins of the official Marxist-Leninist canon. It provided them with an outside perspective on their own situation as scholars, on the absurdity of being confined to a closed library, working for a non-public, not even allowed to take home their translations and papers.[274] It seems legitimate to assume that for most of the people involved in these projects, such a glimpse of the outside world would not only confirm their critical stance towards the Soviet human and social sciences, but that it would also shed new light on the habitual canons of dissident-literature. Horužij remembers that the first food for thought for anyone interested in philosophy were, by default, the works of the philosophers of the Silver Age: the DSP papers therefore certainly pointed towards a much larger horizon.

Besides Western literature, those interested in Orthodox thought received the important input of Russian émigré-theology. During our interview, Horužij recalled how he first found out about the latest developments in the Russian émigré-theology. In the early

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[271] Бибихин, "Для Служебного Пользования," 188.
[272] "Неизбежная обрывочность сведении, неспокойный тон рефератов, пикантность непривычного взгляда, а главное, утрата почвы делали реферативный калейдоскоп скорее отравой чем питанием. [...] Теперь, когда разжижилась прежняя вязкость московской среды, можно уверенно думать и говорить, что воздух в стране был бы хоть и проще, но чище, если бы обществования 'для служебного пользования' никогда не существовала. (transl. The inevitable fragmentation of the information, the excited tone of the abstracts, the delicacy of the unusual point of view, and especially the lack of grounding made of this kaleidoscope of abstracts rather a poison than a blessing [...] Today, as the former body of the Moscow milieu has dissolved, one could rightfully think and say that the air in the country would be lighter, but cleaner, if the social science 'for administrative use' had never existed.)" Ibid., 196.
[273] Ibid., 205.
[274] Making DSP-literature available outside of the controlled circulation was a criminal offence: "Были случаи, и не раз, когда при обысках у диссидентов находили номерные издания, и начиналось расследование. В разгоне людей из нашего сектора такие случаи должны были играть какую-то роль, хотя, насколько я знаю, и не главную. Что за хранение номерных сборников меня могут привлечь к отвественность, я боюсь и теперь, весной 2001 года. (transl. There were cases, quite frequently, when dissidents were found to have such numbered editions, and an entire investigation set in. These cases probably played a role in the dispersal of the group of our department, even though I am only aware of a few minor incidents. That I might be charged for the possession of numbered volumes is a constant fear of mine, even today, in spring 2001.)" Ibid., 189.

1970s, he came across John Meyendorff's doctoral thesis on Gregorios Palamas.[275] The book was in French and had somehow passed the censorship for religious literature unnoticed. Unlike other literature of the genre it was not kept in the *spechran*, but could simply be ordered from the librarian. Horužij told me that he was intrigued by this 'new way' of philosophical and theological reflection, especially by Palamas' distinction between essence and energies, which he found unique. He consequently concentrated his studies on the Church Fathers, on Hesychasm, and especially on Palamas.

Neo-Palamism started as a phenomenon of the Russian emigration and it reached the Soviet Union only in small doses. Meyendorff's book is one example, the work of Lossky another. The theologian Nikolaj Gavrûšin has recently recalled a striking episode in Patristic scholarship in Russia. In late 1972, he writes, the Moscow intelligentsia was undertaking a particular kind of pilgrimage to the Novodevičnij Monastery where the publishing house of the Moscow Patriarchate was located. There, in the office of the editor-in-chief, one could find the eighth volume of the *Bogoslovskie trudy*. It was dedicated to the work of Vladimir Lossky – "at that period", Gavrûšin writes, "an epochal event."[276] Like the work of Meyendorff, the theology of Lossky represented an exposition of Orthodox doctrine that was at one and the same time scholarly and religiously convincine and that marked a change from the religious language of the nineteenth century.

In the 1990s, Horužij emerged as a prolific scholar of theology, philosophy and history of religious thought, his interest ranging from the pre-revolutionary Russian religious philosophy to the theology of the Church Fathers to modern and post-modern Western philosophy. The works in which he covers this wide range of topics were published over a few years from 1991; but they testify to decades of intellectual engagement during which Horužij developed his theological and philosophical position while working as a mathematician and physicist in the Soviet Union.[277] The work of those years remained largely unpublished and is only now available to a wide readership. Jonathan Sutton has pointed out that for many young intellectuals the pursuit of scientific and technological studies in the Soviet Union was a common escape-route from the ideologized humanities and social-

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[275] Meyendorff's doctoral thesis "Introduction a l'etude de St. Gregoire Palamas" was published in 1959 in Paris.

[276] Николай Гаврюшин, "'Истинное Богословие Преображает Метафизику.' Заметки о Владимире Лосском (Nikolaj Gavrûšin, 'True Theology Changes Metaphysics.' Notes on Vladimir Lossky)," *Символ* 48 (2004).

[277] In the first half of 2006, Horužij and other members of the section for 'Science and Theology' at the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RANS) renounced their Academy-membership out of protest against the abusive behaviour of some Academy-members. They denounced in particular the 'charlatanism' and 'para-scientific activities' of figures like G. Grabovoj, A. Akimov and T. Šipov, members of the RANS, and the inexplicable conferring of an honorary membership to P. Kadyrov, the pro-Russian Chechen president whose election is generally considered illegitimate. The RANS is no longer conducted by scientific considerations, the protesters conclude. They announce that the section 'Science and Theology' will, in the light of these events, seize to exist and that they will pursue their activities – "these events just underline how important a firm voice in scientific reasoning, philosophy and theology is in our days" – as an independent group of experts. See the declaration published on www.synergia-isa.ru (last accessed 25.10.2006)

science faculties, and Horužij's career is a case in point.[278] During our interview, Horužij himself describes his philosophical career as a moving away from the 'methodological sloppiness' of the pre-revolutionary religious philosophers to the theological rigour of the Neo-Patristic theologians which he then sought to translate into his personal philosophical language of 'synergetic anthropology'.[279]

Horužij's work testifies for this self-understanding. He has written extensively about the Russian religious philosophers, notably Solov'ëv, Florenskij, Karsavin and Bulgakov.[280] He takes a critical approach to the legacy of these authors. In his eyes they do not have much to offer to contemporary philosophy, and he is therefore dismissive of the attempts by some of his contemporaries to revive them.[281] In an article with a particular history, he is very clear on this issue: In this article, Horužij recalls how, in the late Perestroika-years, he suddenly found himself involved in the activities of the ideologists. In 1988, he writes, in the course of negotiations about the publication of essays by Lev Karsavin with an official publishing house, he was asked to write a review of a study entitled "The collapse of Russian idealism", a piece by, as he puts it, "a bureaucratic fighter on the ideological front." Hoping that this would further the publication of Karsavin (which it eventually did not), he agreed to write the review. In 1994 he published it as an article with the title *O Maroderah* (transl. The Looters), now in order to protest against the superficial re-appropriation of the religious philosophers during the late-Soviet and Eltsin-period.[282] The main point of criticism, put forward with a remarkable degree of irony, is the fact that communist ideologues turned themselves into Christian thinkers. It was a very strong gesture for Horužij to publish this piece in 1994, and to many who cherished the legacy of the Silver Age it must have appeared an affront. Its publication only underlines, however, how decisively Horužij had

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[278] Jonathan Sutton, "A 'Religious Intelligentsia' in Present-Day Russia? Towards Responsibility and Engaged Reflection," (Paper give at the conference "The Intelligentsia of Russia and Poland: The Intelligentsia as Creators of Social Values", University of Lund, 22-24 August 2002).

[279] Horužij during our interview, 15.06.05 in Moscow.

[280] Хоружий, *После Перерыва*, Сергей С. Хоружий, *О Старом и Новом (Sergej Horužij, On Old and New Things)* (Санкт Петербург: Алетейя, 2000).

[281] Сергей С. Хоружий, "Философский Процесс в России как Встреча Философии и Православия (Sergej Horužij, The Philosophical Development in Russia as a Meeting of Philosophy and Orthodoxy)," *Вопросы Философии* 5 (1991), Сергей С. Хоружий, "Трансформации Славяанофильской Идеи в XX веке (Sergej Horužij, The Transformations of the Slavophile Idea in the Twentieth Century)," *Вопросы Философии* 11 (1994), Хоружий, "Путем Зерна."

[282] "Меня попросили написать внутреннюю рецензию на толстую рукопись 'Крушение русского идеализма', труд некоего чиновного борца идеологического фронта. Зажавши нос, я исполнил работу золотаря – ради появления в свет Карсавина надо было побороть брезливость. [...] Сегодня борцы не без успеха осваивают новые формы мародерства, став пылкими апологетами русской мысли... (transl. I was asked to write an internal review of a long manuscript entitled 'The collapse of Russian idealism', the work of some bureaucratic fighter on the ideological front. Holding my breath, I did the work – for the publication of Karsavin one could also overcome one's disgust. [...] Today the fighters have rather successfully developed new forms of looting, having become fierce apologetics of Russian thought.)" Хоружий, *После Перерыва*, 254. "Зачем же писать сотин страниц про одно недомыслие и обман? когда в стране нет бумаги? (transl. Why would one write hundreds of pages based of stupidities and lies? when there is a shortage of paper in the country?)" Хоружий, *После Перерыва*, 256.

broken with the canon of Russian religious philosophy, a step induced by his discovery of Neo-Palamism and laid out in more or less all of his works. In a long essay about the émigré-philosophy and theology of the 1920s and 30s, "A step ahead, taken in dispersal", Horužij makes it clear that for him the main intellectual achievement of the Russian Diaspora was made in the field of theology.[283] In the first chapter of the essay he lays out his understanding of Neo-Patristics as offering a new paradigm for religious thought which is not conservative, but based on the idea of creative tradition. During our interview he took issue with Valliere's characterization of the Neo-Patristic thinkers as traditionalists and conservatives. Referring to Florovskij, he insisted that following the tradition of the Fathers is not a conservative principle, but a creative one.

Horužij credits the Neo-Patristic theologians with having changed the orientation of Orthodox thought. Their reappraisal of the dogmatic foundations of Orthodoxy, especially the emphasis on Palamism, has opened up an entirely new field of thought which can also be made productive philosophically. It seems that, almost as a matter of such preparation, a large part of Horužij's work is dedicated to the notion of Hesychasm and asceticism.[284] The Neo-Palamist theologians effected a turn for Orthodox thought which Horužij, with reference to Heidegger, calls *Kehre*, a (re-)turn, or a "modulation of the discourse".[285] However, this turn was a theological, not a philosophical phenomenon, Horužij writes, and when this thought could finally make its way back to Russia after the fall of communism, its philosophical potential had not yet been explored.[286] To do this is exactly the task which Horužij sets himself: "Russian philosophy stands in front of a new beginning," he writes – a new beginning that implies a rethinking of the relationship between theology and philosophy as it has been manifest in classical metaphysics.[287] The elaboration of an anthropology that would overcome the limitations imposed by Western metaphysics is Horužij's philosophical project, and herein he sees similarities of his work to Western post-modern philosophy, especially to Deleuze and Foucault.[288]

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[283] "Шаг вперед, сделанный в рассеянии", *Опиты из росской духовной традиции.*

[284] Хоружий, С.С. *К феноменологии аскезы.* Москва: Издательство Гуманитарной Литературы, 1998; Хоружий, С.С. *Синергия: Проблемы аскетики и мистики православия.* Москва: Ди-Дик, 1995.

[285] "Русская мысль произвела смену своего языка и способа, крутой поворот, который я прежде охарактеризировал хайдеггеровским понятием Kehre, поворот-возврат, несущий тем не менее приближение к цели. В данном тексте я даю ему более ясное и прямое название: модуляция дискурса. (transl. Russian thought underwent a change in its language and its method, a radical turn, which I have characterized earlier as similar to the Heideggerian notion of 'Kehre', a turn-return, bringing one closer to the goal. In this text I use a more precise expression: modulation of discourse.)" Сергей С. Хоружий, *Опыты из Русской Духовной Традиции (Sergej Horužij, Essays in the Russian Spiritual Tradition)* (Москва: Изд. Парад, 2005), 28.

[286] This estimate by Horužij is true for the Russian case, but it is not true for Greece, where Christos Yannaras did engage philosophically with Neo-Palamism as early as the 1960s.

[287] Хоружий, *Опыты*, 29.

[288] See, for example, Horužy's latest text about Descartes and Kant: Хоружий, Сергей С. "Человек Картезия." *Точки-Puncta* 1-2, no. 4 (2004): 61-121.

While Horužij emerged as the most important new scholar of Orthodoxy in the 1990s, Vladimir Bibihin, despite his close connection with Losev and Averintsev over several decades, remained largely outside of the field of religious philosophy. In the 1980s Bibihin was already suspicious about the religious renewal under state-tutelage. In 1985 he broke with his former teacher Losev over an interview the latter gave to the newspaper *Pravda*[289], and in an essay from 1989 he criticizes the political use which was made of the Russian religious philosophers by the rival circles of 'patriots' and 'cosmopolitans'.[290] The books he published after the fall of communism are predominantly philosophical. *The language of philosophy* (1993) was followed by a number of publications, some based on lectures given in the philosophy-department of the Moscow State University.[291] A translator by training, he translated and commented Heidegger and contemporary French philosophers, but also Nicholas of Cusa, Gregorios Palamas, Dionysios the Aeropagite, and many others.[292] He wrote also theological essays, some of which appeared abroad.[293] To what extent his philosophical pursuit in the last decade and a half of his life was determined by religious motives is difficult for me to judge at this point; further research is needed here.[294] What is

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[289] I shall quote a part of the letter which Bibihin writes to Aleksej Losev and his wife Aza Taho-Godi on 23.01.1985 and which he reproduces in his published diaries because it conveys the disappointment with his former teacher over what was thought to be a common struggle against the ideologization of the humanities: "Благодарю за 'крещенское послание'. Я этого номера 'Правды' с беседой Алексея Федоровича раньше не бидел, хотя много разговоров слышал. Конечно, вместо Луначарского 'замечательным лектором' можно было бы назвать для примера Федора Степуна, а вместо 'бесумных крайностей буржуазно-капиталистической цивилизации' сказать просто – 'технической цивилизации', ценсура бы вполне доступила. 'Материалистическое понимание истории' и 'классовой враг' – тоже лишний кус сторожевым собакам, как вы их не перекормить, они вед и без того уже сыты. Но с целом в газете для таких миллионов, наверное, в первый раз послышалось сильное и веселое слово доброго ума. (transl. Thank you for your 'Epiphany epistle'. I had not seen this copy of 'Pravda' with the interview with Aleksej Fedorovič before, but I had heard a lot of talk about it. Of course, instead of naming Lunačarskij as an example of 'an outstanding lecturer' one could have cited Fedor Stepun, and instead of 'the mad excesses of bourgeois-capitalist civilization' one might simply have said 'technological civilization': the censor would have had no problem allowing that. As for 'materialist understanding of history' and 'class-enemy', these are also extra titbits thrown to the guard dogs, like overfeeding those who are already full. But on the whole, this is probably the first time that a paper for so many million readers has published such powerful and positive words by such a genial thinker.)" Бибихин, *Лосев, Аверинцев*, 293-294.
[290] Владимир В. Бибихин, "Свои и Чужие (Vladimir Bibihin, Of the Familiar and the Foreign) " in *Другое Начало (A New Beginning)* (Санкт Петербург: Наука, 2003).
[291] Владимир В. Бибихин, *Новый Ренессанс (Vladimir Bibihin, A New Renaissance)* (Москва: Наука, Прогресс-Традиция, 1998), Владимир В. Бибихин, *Узнай Себя (Vladimir Bibihin, To Know Oneself)* (Санкт-Петербург: Наука, 1998), Владимир В. Бибихин, *Витгенштейн: Смена Аспекта (Vladimir Bibihin, Witgenštein: Change of Perspective)* (Москва: Институт философии, теологии и истории св. Фомы, 2004).
[292] Дарья А. Лунгина, "Другое Начало (Dar'â Lungina, Another Beginning)," *Персона* 5-7, no. 52 (2005).
[293] Vladimir Bibihin, "L'unità Della Fede," *La Nuova Europa*, no. 1 (2001), Vladimir Bibihin, "La Chiesa Militante," *La Nuova Europa*, no. 6 (2002), Владимир В. Бибихин, "Философия и Религия (Vladimir Bibihin, Philosophy and Religion)," *Вопросы Философии* 7 (1992), Владимир В. Бибихин, "Материалы к Исихастским Спорам (Vladimir Bibihin, Materials on Hesychast-Controversies)," in *Синергия: Проблемы Аскетики и Мистики Православия (Sergej Horužij, Synergy. Some Problems of Orthodox Asceticism and Mysticism)*, ed. Сергей С. Хоружий (Москва: Ди-Дик, 1995), Владимир В. Бибихин, "Двери Жизни (Vladimir Bibihin, The Gates of Life)," in *Личность и Абсолют*, ed. А. Ф. Лосев (Москва: Мысль, 1999), Владимир В. Бибихин, "К Бизантийской Антропологии (Vladimir Bibihin, On Byzantine Anthropology)," *Точки-Puncta* 3-4, no. 1 (2001), Бибихин, "Православие и Власть (Vladimir Bibihin, Orthodoxy and Power)."
[294] Gavrûšin even speaks about a "break" in Bibihin's thinking, see: Николай Гаврюшин, "Памяти Владимира Вениаминовича Бибихина (Nikolaj Gavrûšin, In Memory of V. V. Bibihin)," *Страницы* 4, no. 9 (2005).

clear is that in his notes on Averincev, which often acquire the character of a personal diary, Bibihin admits that he cannot share the pure religiosity of his friend; nor did the theology of Palamas seize him in any profound manner.[295] It is also important to note that Bibihin did not make as close a link between his studies of phenomenology, linguistics and French philosophy and his studies of Orthodox theology as his friend Horužij, who includes Western philosophers into his studies of Orthodox theology,[296] or as the Greek theologian Christos Yannaras, who draws on Heidegger for an elaboration of the Palamitian concept of energies.

For an understanding of the dynamics of contemporary Orthodox thought, Bibihin is nevertheless an important and interesting figure. Steeped in the philosophical world of Losev like hardly anyone else; a close friend of Averincev; the husband of Renata Gal'ceva, another prominent member of religious intelligentsia; working as a translator and therefore acutely aware of impulses coming from abroad; and having a highly critical and suspicious attitude concerning any kind of ideologization and political instrumentalization of philosophical thought: Bibihin appears to have found the Orthodox pathway to a philosophical response to the social, political and intellectual upheaval of the post-communist transition implausible. He categorically rejected the nostalgia for the pre-revolutionary Russian religious philosophy and on these grounds opposed those who were turning Losev into a saint-like figure of religious resistance.[297] At the same time, it seems that, unlike his friend Horužij, he did not find the impulses coming from émigré-theology sufficient or convincing for a different kind of religious philosophy. If, as a consequence, he largely withdrew from the religious thinking of the 1990s, then we should consider this an important and sincere gesture, a possible standpoint to take in the face of the Orthodox confrontation with modernity.

III.2.2.c. The Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox fundamentalism

Until now I have described Russian Orthodoxy from the perspective of theologians in emigration and intellectuals in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia. Their thinking, I argue, is a way of *confronting modernity*, a way of defining their place in the modern condition after the problematicality of this condition and their own entanglement in it has been brought to the fore by the experience of totalitarianism. This account of the modern

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[295] Бибихин, *Лосев, Аверинцев*, 338, 353. Horužij confirms in our interview that Bibihin was not convinced of the philosophical value of Palamism, and that this was a point of controversy between them.
[296] According to Horužij, Bibihin did so in some lectures, but most of this important material is still unpublished. Among philosophy-students whom I had the chance to meet in 2004/2005, Bibihin's connection to the religious intelligentsia was little known and apparently considered barely relevant.
[297] This becomes clear from his reflections on the adaptation of Losev's house as a museum and centre for the study of Russian religious philosophy. Бибихин, *Лосев, Аверинцев*, 299-302.

character of contemporary Orthodox thought, its self-reflective confrontation with the condition of modernity does not, however, exhaust the available responses to modernity and to the experience of totalitarianism from within Eastern Orthodoxy. A large part of Orthodoxy has taken a very different approach, or rather, it has moved along the well-trodden path of pre-revolutionary and pre-totalitarian models of defining an Orthodox identity in congruence with the Russian state and vis-à-vis the modern West. A considerable part of the Russian Orthodox Church today takes this standpoint, its most radical formulation being Orthodox fundamentalism. These trends have defined the image of Orthodoxy in the West and they have determined much of the theorizing of East-West relations. A representation of the Orthodox tradition would therefore not be complete without an account of these trends.

The Russian Orthodox Church would seem to be the most obvious bearer of a continuity of religious thinking and spirituality in the Soviet Union. However, scholarly theological work suffered greatly during the communist period, and also the spiritual life was severely cut back. Following the persecution of clerics and believers in the aftermath of the revolution and throughout the 1930s, the Russian Orthodox Church's unequivocal pro-governmental stand during the Second World War brought the Church back into the orbit of politics. During the Second World War, the Orthodox hierarchies stood firmly on the side of the Soviet government in the struggle against fascism. This was both a genuine as well as a tactical move, genuine, because the Russian Orthodox Church is traditionally patriotic and a loyal defender of the Orthodox territory, and tactical, because it was seeking an opportunity to gain ground in the struggle with the Soviet authorities.[298] The strategy proved successful, because in 1945 a new Patriarch could be elected, Aleksej, and the Russian Orthodox Church came under special administration, being credited superior status to other religious denominations in Russia.[299]

At the same time, however, this close allegiance of the Russian Orthodox Church to the authority manoeuvred the religious hierarchy into an increasing alienation from the laity. During the years of repression of religious movements under Hruščëv, many believers suffered from persecution, violence, and imprisonment, while the official Church found itself bound to the regime and barely uttered a sign of protest.[300] In this period fell the rise of a religious dissident movement which linked up with the already existing intelligentsia-dissident movement and which stood in a critical distance to the Moscow Patriarchate and to the

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[298] The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, by contrast, supported Hitler in his "crusade against the Bolsheviks", see: Meerson.
[299] Peter J. S. Duncan, "Orthodoxy and Russian Nationalism in the USSR, 1917-1988," in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Geoffrey A. Hosking (London: Macmillan, 1991).
[300] Ibid., 318.

Soviet authorities.[301] Exemplary for the plight of critical Orthodox believers are the stories of Zoâ Krahmal'nikova and the priest Alexander Men'.[302] Krahmal'nikova founded the group *Nadežda* (transl. *Hope*) in 1975 and was arrested in 1982 for her protest against the collaboration of the Church with the regime. Alexander Men' (1935-1990) was an Orthodox priest of Jewish origin. A charismatic and unconventional figure with many followers, he was murdered under unclear circumstances in 1990. In the 1980s, the liberal Orthodox Christians found a guiding figure in Men', who was critical of the state of the Russian Church of his day. Men' preached a Church independent of the state, socially engaged in the world, and ready to support democratic politics.[303] Among his friends and followers were also Sergej Averincev and Sergej Horužij. Needless to say that Men' was not well-received by the hierarchies of the Moscow Patriarchate that had just managed to stake their claims on the Russian nation. Men' stood in the tradition of liberal Orthodoxy which reaches back to Solov'ëv's criticism of state-church relations and to Bulgakov's advocacy of a socially engaged Church. His importance for liberal Orthodoxy cannot be overestimated and his legacy finds a continuation also today.

A great number of religious dissidents, however, was not liberal in its opposition to communism, but nationalist. Nationalist religious dissidents saw themselves in the tradition of the Slavophiles, were anti-Western in attitude and not strictly opposed to the Soviet regime. The authoritarianism and anti-Westernism of the Soviet government appealed to many of the Orthodox nationalists who asserted that Orthodoxy must be superimposed on existing structures.[304] In the era under general party-secretary Brežnev, this nationalist view of Orthodoxy moved into the orbit of government propaganda. Historians have explained this policy of inclusion by saying that Orthodoxy provided a welcome ideology of nationalism and anti-Westernism at a time when the Marxist-Leninist ideology was losing its mobilizing power.[305] The promotion of Russianness and of Orthodox religious and cultural identity,

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[301] Knox, 53-57.

[302] An informative documentation of the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church and a telling expression of how it was perceived by certain Catholic circles as a Christian brother-church in the catacombs, is the Italian journal *Russia Cristiana* (*La Nuova Europa* since 1992). There we do not only find stories about persecuted Orthodox believers regarded as martyrs, but also a plainly anti-communist, anti-modern and conservative tone. Another conservative think-tank, the UK-based Keston Institute, also monitored church-life in the Soviet Union. It seems, however, that in the eyes of many of these Western beholders, "Orthodox dissent" was often merely understood as a religiously motivated opposition to communism, and not as a (not necessarily anti-socialist) opposition to the Soviet leadership with whom the Orthodox Church was evidently cooperating, nor as an inner-Orthodox opposition to such a collaboration. See for example the strikingly uncritical study: Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church. A Contemporary History* (London, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986).

[303] Александр Мень, "Роль Церкви в Современном Мире (Aleksandr Men', The Role of the Church in the Modern World)," *Путь. Международный философский журнал* 8 (1995). See also: Kostjuk, 118-122.

[304] Knox, 56.

[305] Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia. Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 16. See also: Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right: Right Wing Ideologies in Contemporary Russia* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of International Studies, 1978), Николай Митрохин, *Русская Партия: Движение Русских Националистов в СССР. 1953-1985 годы*

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undertaken in journals such as *Vehe* (transl. *Assembly*) and *Zemlâ* (transl. *The Land*), naturally produced tensions in the multi-ethnic and multi-national Soviet empire, and anti-semitism and tensions between Soviet Russian and Muslim citizens increased. A whole new genre appeared in literature, known as 'village prose', which mourned the passing of the Russian village and praised the values of the peasants.[306] The Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Patriach Pimen since 1972, wholeheartedly supported these nationalist trends. Even though this policy of inclusion was reduced after Brežnev's death in 1982, its legacy could be felt throughout the Perestroika-period and after. Gradually, the Orthodox Church intensified its activities in parishes, religious themes were increasingly present in the media, and in 1988, the 1000 years anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in the Kievan Rus' marked the culmination of the special relation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State with a joint celebration by Patriarch Pimen and Gorbačëv.[307]

Against the background of the special state-church relations in the late Soviet period, it is quite plain that the Russian Orthodox Church met the collapse of the Soviet Union from a position of ambiguity. On the one hand, end of communism meant freedom in the practice and teaching of religion, previously confiscated property was handed back, churches and monasteries re-opened and many citizens became interested in religion. On the other hand, the collapse of the regime brought to the fore information which revealed the extent to which the Church had compromised itself in collaboration with the authorities, causing a loss in image. This ambiguous situation was an object for sociological research and political discussion throughout the 1990s, and the results reveal the fundamental ambiguity between the Russian Orthodox Church's self-image of being Russia's national church and its largely ineffective claim to offer religious guidance in a period of economic and political transition. The general tenor of scholars is that the Church is mainly preoccupied with regaining power in the Russian state, playing on ideological schemes like *symphonia* and on the correspondence of religious and national identity, showing little concern for the individual needs of believers suffering from social injustice.[308]

(Nikolaj Mitrohin, The Russian Party. The Russian Nationalist Movement in the Soviet Union. 1953-1985) (Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2003).

[306] Duncan, "Orthodoxy and Nationalism," 319-320. A prominent representative of this genre was Aleksandr Solženicyn who was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974 and who has confirmed his political stand as a Russian Orthodox nationalist ever since.

[307] Knox, 57-74.

[308] In 1992, the journal *Voprosy Filosofii* organized a round-table on the topic "Religion and politics in post-communist Russia": Д. Е. Фурман and others, "Религиа и Политика в Посткоммунистической России (Материалы "Круглого Стола")," *Вопросы Философии* 7 (1992). There, the sociologist Furman pointed out that Orthodox believers had a tendency to prefer authoritarian rule and restricted democracy and were generally anti-Western and nationalistic. In another study of the political positions of the Russian Orthodox Church, A. Ignatov sees mostly anti-Western, anti-democratic and fundamentalist tendencies. (А. Игнатов, "Богословские Аргументы в Политической Борьбе (A. Ignatov, Theological Arguments in the Political Struggle)," *Вопросы Философии* 5 (1997).) The main point of the article "Religious discourse in Russian Mass-Media: Entropy,

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Also members of the Church itself are aware of the particular situation in which the Russian Orthodox Church finds itself today. Bishop Ilarion (Alfeev), the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate to the European Union, talks about two distinct dimensions of the 'renaissance' of the Russian Orthodox Church, external and internal.[309] By external rebirth he means a factual recovery of the Church in Russian social life, the restitution of property, the building of churches, the re-opening of monasteries, etc. This external recovery, he writes, has been successful, but the inner recovery, a spiritual and theological rebirth of the Russian Orthodox Church is only beginning. In Ilarion's view, the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of the year 2000 marked the completion of the external and the beginning of the inner renaissance of the Russian Orthodox Church with the issuing of a document called *The Bases of the Social Concept for the Russian Orthodox Church*.[310]

The *Social Doctrine*, as the text is usually referred to in translations, lays out the Russian Orthodox Church's position on a variety of socio-cultural phenomena, encompassing a whole range of issues from state and law to secularism, from culture to bioethics.[311] The mere existence of the text suggests that the view that the Orthodox Church should modernize itself, that it should no longer remain in a position of rejection of modernity and instead take a stand on contemporary problems has been gaining ground among Orthodox theologians.[312] In substance, however, the difficulties which the Russia Orthodox Church

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Simfonia, Ideokratia" by A. Agadjanian is that there is a political consensus between the Russian Church and government about the necessity of order and a unified "idea"/state-ideology. Religion is seen in the light of a larger task of maintaining the integrity of the state and of the idea, not as a private matter. (Александр Агаджанян, "Религиозный Дискурс в Российсих Масс-Медиа: Ентропия, Симфония, Идеократия (Alexander Agadjanian, the Religious Discourse in the Russian Mass-Media: Enthropy, Symphony, and Ideocracy) " in *Старые Церкви, Новые Верующие. Религия в Массовом Сознании Постсоветской России*, ed. Киммо Каариайнен and Дмитрий Фурман (Москва; Санкт-Петербург: Летний сад, 2000).) A similar assessment, on the issue of religious education, is made by Willems, who criticizes the exclusive status which the Russian Orthodox Church claims for itself in the Russian state: "From the perspective of the theory of democracy," he writes, "one naturally welcomes the fact that after 70 years of antireligious policies the ROC has been able to start campaigning again for its own point of view, but I am exercised about the fact that the ROC is chiefly concerned for the good of the state in order that the latter should emerge as a state shaped by Orthodoxy. There is no question of a *critical* role for religion, church or theology vis-à-vis culture of the state. […] The definition of Russian culture, morality and 'spirituality' as essentially Orthodox is problematic in view of the fact that Russia is in many respects a pluralist state as far as religion and belief are concerned." Joachim Willems, "The Religio-Political Strategies of the Russian Orthodox Church as a 'Politics of Discourse'," *Religion, State, and Society* 34, no. 3 (2006): 295.

[309] Ilarion Alfeev, "Архиерейский Собор Русской Православной Церкви 2000 Года: Обзор Основых Деяний (The Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Year 2000: An Overview over the Main Issues)," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters, 2003).

[310] *Основы социальной концепции Русской Православной Церкви*, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/141422.html (last accessed 24.01.05)

[311] For two insightful studies of this document, see: Alexander Agadjanian, "Breakthrough to Modernity, Apologia for Traditionalism: The Russian Orthodox View of Society and Culture in Comparative Perspective," *Religion, State and Society* 31, no. 4 (2003), Alexander Agadjanian, "The Social Vision of Russian Orthodoxy: Balancing between Identity and Relevance," in *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jonathan Sutton and Wil van den Bercken (Leuven, Paris, Dudley: Peeters, 2003).

[312] An important figure in this respect is Metropolitan Kirill (Gundâev) of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, head of the office for External Affairs. For a detailed analysis of the theological position of Metr. Kirill, see: Kostjuk, 128-138.

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continues to have in its confrontation with modernity are very apparent in the *Social Doctrine.* It is striking, for example, that in its definition of Orthodox community, the authors of the text do not draw on any of the twentieth century theologians, not on Bulgakov's vision of a socially active Church, not on the ecclesiological theology of the Russian diaspora and its Greek interpreters, which found an echo even in the Second Vatican Council.[313] Instead they cite Homâkov and other nineteenth century sources. It thus seems save to say that the *Social Doctrine* is above all a carefully weighted document which tries to steer clear between extreme conservatism and radical reformism, and the fact that it won the support of both conservative and moderate forces in the Russian Church testifies to this. It testifies for the general strategy of the present Russian Orthodox Church to take a pragmatic stance on contemporary problems while in substance maintaining a conservative attitude.

A serious issue for Orthodoxy today is fundamentalism. Its contemporary spokesperson in Russia used to be Metropolite Ioann (Sničev) of Petersburg and Ladoga, who considered society and ecclesiastical community as identical. Basing himself on the old Slavophile ideal of *sobornost'*, the collective becomes the central category of the social in Metr. Ioann's teachings, individual values and freedom are being downplayed or denied relevance. The Russian sociologist Aleksandr Verhovskij explains that Orthodox fundamentalists rely on a notion of a 'golden age' to which Russia must return. This implies the restoration of the pre-1905 Russian empire, full-fledged autocracy, imperial structures, a privileged status for the Russian Orthodox Church, and a state-Orthodox paternalism.[314] Another critical observer of Orthodox fundamentalism, Konstantin Kostjuk, points out that a key-concept for this ideology is *pravoslavnaâ deržavnost'*, only inadequately translated with 'Orthodox state-power', since *deržavnost'* refers to power and authority in a spiritual, moral, and political sense.

Orthodox fundamentalism is based on a theocentric understanding of the world, according to which Church and state are interpreted as intrinsically related, and Orthodoxy is understood as a cultural and geopolitical concept, preparing the ideological justification for Russia's claim to a renewed superpower-status in the world.[315] Kostjuk even suggests that Orthodox fundamentalism is, from a historical point of view, really at its strongest today,

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[313] See especially: Basilio Petrà, "La teologia cattolica e la scoperta dell'ortodossia nel secolo XX: dal 'contatto rinfrescante' alla 'santa alleanza'," Paper given at the conference *The Human Subject and Community in European Philosophy and Theology. Perspectives from East and West,* European University Institute, Florence, 19 May 2006.
[314] Aleksandr Verkhovsky, "The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Nationalist, Xenophobic and Antiwestern Tendencies in Russia Today: Not Nationalism, but Fundamentalism," *Religion, State, and Society* 30, no. 4 (2002), Aleksandr Verkhovsky, "The Orthodox in Russian Nationalist Movements," *http://religion.sova-center.ru/publications/194EF5E/194F193 (last accessed 02.08.2006)* (2003).
[315] Kostjuk, 122-128.

prepared by the ideologization and nationalization of the Orthodox religion already during the Soviet period.[316] Needless to say that this understanding of the role of Orthodoxy comes hand in hand with Russian nationalism and anti-semitism.[317] Orthodox fundamentalists consider the West and Western Churches as enemies of Orthodoxy, and they single out Jews as the major threat to the Russian people. The Bolshevik revolution is depicted as a Jewish conspiracy. It sounds paradoxical, but despite this fact Orthodox fundamentalists have also made ties with ex-communists. The link here is Stalinism, in itself profoundly anti-semitic, autocratic and nationalist. Stalin, it has to be noted, is usually highly esteemed by Orthodox nationalist thinkers.

In conclusion to this brief excursion about the Russian Orthodox Church and Orthodox fundamentalism, it has to be pointed out once again that the power-pragmatism of the Moscow Patriarchate and the nationalism of the fundamentalists dominate the perception of Russian Orthodoxy in the West and also in the country itself. While the conservative and nationalist interpretation of the Orthodox intellectual tradition feeds into the authoritarian politics of the current Russian government, the 'liberal' Orthodoxy which I am describing in this study has remained a rather marginal phenomenon.

III.2.3. Orthodox theology and religious philosophy in Greece

When talking about the legacy of the Russian émigré-theology we cannot restrict our view to Russia alone, because these thinkers became important for Orthodoxy all over Europe. It is not in the scope of this study to survey the development of Orthodox thought in all the respective countries, but one case must not be left out because there the development of Neo-Patristic theology was taken up much earlier than in Russia and quickly developed into a prolific school – this is the case of Greece. In Greece, being the only predominantly Orthodox country in Europe not under communist rule, we find a theological and philosophical debate which not only draws on Russian sources but also prefigures some of the developments taking place in the Soviet Union and in Russia today.

In order to make the developments clearer, a short excursion into the history of Greek Orthodoxy is necessary. With the fall of Constantinople in the fifteenth century, Greece and large parts of South-Eastern Europe came under Ottoman rule. The occupation had a

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[316] Константин Н. Костюк, "Православный Фундаментализм (Konstantin Kostûk, Orthodox Fundamentalism)," *Полис* 5, no. 58 (2000).
[317] Not all of Russian nationalism is religious. For a classification of Russian nationalist movements, see: Aleksandr Verkhovsky, "Ultra-Nationalists in Russia at the Beginning of the Year 2000," *http://www.panorama.ru/works/patr/bp/finre.html (last accessed 02.08.2006)* (2000).

decisive impact on the development of Orthodoxy. In line with Florovskij's interpretation of Russian Orthodoxy, Greek theologians and cultural historians have talked about a split within Orthodoxy between the faith and the religious practice of the people and an increasingly Western-oriented theology which assimilated scholasticism.[318] The discrepancy between the faith of the people and the theology of the intellectuals became salient when, after the liberation of Greece from the Turks in 1829 and in the course of an accelerated modernization of Greek society, the elite made a decisive effort to educate, modernize and 'enlighten' the people. Just like in Russia, this enlightenment-project drew on Western models in philosophy and theology and introduced pietism as a new element in Greek Orthodoxy. Greek Orthodox theologians and philosophers followed their Russian counterparts and eventually reacted against the intrusion of Western elements.

Philosophers responded with an elaboration of an autochthonous Hellenistic identity, taking up enlightenment-critical romantic tendencies in European philosophy. The theological counter-reaction entailed the pursuit of a theology that called, in the same vein as Russian theology, for a 'return to the fathers'. An important element of this theology was Christology and the reflection on the person. Basilio Petrà has traced the personalist strand of Greek Orthodoxy back to Christos Androutsos (1867-1935), who was one of the first theologians to develop a terminology of personhood with reference to God and to man, and to emphasise the difference in understanding of the notion of person in Patristic and in modern thought. Androutsos did not, however, make a strong distinction between the individual and the person, a point that becomes salient in Neo-Palamism. His works are also characterized by a general conception of continuity between the ancient Greek philosophical tradition and Christianity, a theory which is largely refuted by contemporary theologians, who focus on the innovative aspects of Christianity with respect to ancient thought.[319]

The real breakthrough for an Orthodox theology of the person and for the study of the Church Fathers in Greece took place in the 1960s under the influence of Russian émigré-thinkers, namely the works of Berdâev and Lossky. This breakthrough can undoubtedly be associated with one person – Christos Yannaras – who remains up to today the most famous, innovative and controversial Neo-Palamist thinker in Greece.[320] Born in 1935 in

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[318] Ilias Papagiannopoulos, "Die Kirche als innenpolitischer Faktor Griechenlands," in *Argumente und Materialien zum Zeitgeschehen 11*, ed. Bernd Rill (München: Hanns-Seidl-Stiftung/Akademie für Politik und Zeitgeschehen, 1999), Christos Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodoxy Press, 2007). See also: Basilio Petrà, "Dal pensiero della differenza al pensiero dell'unità. Nota su un'opera di Christos Yannaras," *Vivens Homo*, no. 6/1 (1995).
[319] Basilio Petrà, "Il pensiero personalista nella Grecia del secolo XX. Un primo tentativo di sintesi," in *L'idea di persona nel pensiero orientale*, ed. Giovanni Grandi (Soveria Manelli: Ed. Rubbettino, 2003), 39-42.
[320] For biographical information and an interpretation of his work, see Andrew Louth's introduction to: Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God. Heidegger and the Areopagite* (London, New York: T&T

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Athens, Yannaras became a member of the religious brotherhood *Zoe* in 1954 and took up his studies of theology and philosophy. Soon after, Yannaras joined a reformist group within the brotherhood that sought a theological renewal based on the works of Androutsos. He left *Zoe* and became a student of D. Koutroubis who introduced him to the theology and philosophy of the Russian diaspora. Prepared by the study of the theological ideas of Androutsos, Yannaras assimilated quickly the ideas of Berdâev, Florovskij and V. Lossky for a return to the roots of Orthodoxy. During the second half of the 1960s, Yannaras lived in Germany and France where he studied Heidegger and the French existentialist philosophers, and developed further his ideas about a theology of the person and the difference between Orthodox and occidental Europe. Petrà divides the work of Yannaras in four categories, philosophy, theology, cultural-political essays and autobiographical texts. Of these, the first category interests me most, and it is here where major works like *On the Absence and Unknowability of God* (1967) and *Person and Eros* (1976) belong. The main feature of these works is their attempt to conceptualize an ontology different from Western metaphysics, and to point out the difference in the ways in which Christianity shaped the view of man, God and the world in the Catholic and Protestant West and in the Orthodox East. Yannaras re-formulates the writings of the Church Fathers in a modern idiom, yet without altering their substantive content. Heidegger's terminology of *Sein* and *Seiendes, Mit-sein,* and *ek-stasis* is used to express theological theorems like *ousia, hypostasis,* personhood and energy.

Yannaras is a prolific writer, and his harsh criticism of the modern Greek society and of the West has made him a prominent and controversial public figure. Despite the recognition which Yannaras earned for his philosophical and theological work, he has frequently been criticised for his anti-Western bias.[321] Yannaras' understanding of modernity is that of an instrumentalist, rationalist and utilitarian order that pervades the life of Western societies and expands to other parts of the world. It is particularly striking that Yannaras, despite his awareness of contemporary Western philosophy, does not take serious any critical engagement with the modernist order from within the Western discourse. There seem to be two reasons for this. Firstly, he never steps out of the historical framework of a split

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Clark, 2005). See also: Basilio Petrà, "Christos Yannaras e la verità dell'ethos," *Rivista di teologia morale* 64, no. 4 (1984), Basilio Petrà, "Christos Yannaras," *Credere Oggi,* no. 2 (2004).

[321] Especially in Greece, where Yannaras is frequently present in the media, his anti-western views are discussed controversially. Lacking the knowledge of Greek, these debates are not easily accessible. By courtesy of Prof. Yannaras, some contributions to international conferences have been made available to me in German and English. These give a rough overview over the polemic nature of his work. There we find, for example, a critique of the paradigm of human rights as egocentric (Christos Yannaras, "Human Rights and the Orthodox Church," *Courtesy of the author, December 2003.*); an interpretation of Western modernity as a Christian heresy (Christos Yannaras, "Orthodoxy and the West," *Philoteos* 2 (2002).); a critique of modern political economy as one way of covering up the existential void left by enlightenment philosophy (Christos Yannaras, "Political Economy and Ecclesial Ontology," *ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΚΙΤΙΟΥ* (1998).) and of consumerism (Christos Yannaras, *The Church in Post-Communist Europe,* ed. Institute Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox, The Distinguished Lectures (Berkeley: InterOrthodox Press, 1998).).

between the East and West in terms of theological worldviews and philosophical options. He takes it for granted that nothing right can spring from foundations which he has found faulty.[322] Secondly, his judgment of Western society is based a somewhat crude sociological approach: "Even after upheavals in modern epistemology," he writes, after "the relativization of and radical doubts about the rationalistic method, the collapse of mechanistic determinism, and the demonstration that 'signifiers' are mere conventions even in mathematical proof, utilitarian rationalism shapes the practical side of life and the mental makeup of modern society."[323] The key-word here is *practical*. Yannaras does acknowledge all kinds of changes in the philosophical and scientific outlook on the world, but 'practically', he seems to say, we are still in the age of rationalism and utilitarianism.

We could say that Yannaras to a certain extent remains within the century-old parameters of a Slavophile-style East-West debate. He reads the history of Greece as an issue of ontology, and claims that ontology is empirically verifiable in history.[324] The legacy of Lossky's insurmountable emphasis on the dividing effect of the *filioque* can be felt very clearly throughout his work and constitutes, at least from a Western point of view, its biggest weakness and the most severe obstacle to his reception in the West. In the terminology I set up in the beginning, we could say that Yannaras is not keeping a clear distinction between modernization as a process and modernity as a condition. When polemicizing against technology, industrialization, utilitarianism, and against the destruction of traditional life-forms, Yannaras is speaking in terms of modernization as a process, dividing Europe into a modern West and a traditional East. When engaging Nietzsche and Heidegger as starting points for his elaboration of Byzantine theology, he is moving towards apprehending himself in the condition of modernity. An example for this is the opening of his very first book, which

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[322] Quotes from Yannaras' works which underline this point could fill an entire chapter, here just one for illustration: "Im Rahmen der heutigen technologischen Kultur – die die Welt *verbraucht*, konsumiert, nicht aber *ge*braucht und in Beziehung mit ihr lebt – die sich den Massen aufzwingt mit systematischer Gehirnwäsche und völliger Unterwerfung des Menschenlebens unter das Ideal unpersönlichen Individuellen Wohlstands – im Rahmen dieser Kultur vertritt die orthodoxe theologische Weltsicht nicht einfach nur eine wahrere und bessere Naturlehre, sondern sie verkörpert den gegenteiligen Ethos und die gegenteilige *Daseinsweise*, die Möglichkeit einer dem Konsum sich entgegenstellenden Kultur. Die orthodoxe Kosmologie ist eine sittliche Ausrichtung des Lebens, welche die Verkündigung der personalen Dimension des Kosmos und der personalen Einmaligkeit des Menschen zum Ziel hat. Sie könnte im Rahmen der westlichen Kultur das radikalste Programm eines sozialen, politischen und kulturellen Wandels sein. Nur vergegenständlicht sich ein solches 'Programm' nicht in den Dimensionen einer unpersönlichen Strategie; es bleibt immer Inhalt persönlicher Offenbarung, nämlich einer *Umkehr*, aber auch Inhalt kirchlicher Verkündigung und Praxis der orthodoxen Frömmigkeit. Der messianischen Utopie des Konsum-'Glücks', die den Menschen zur entpersönlichten Monas verfälscht und die sich nur nach den Erfordernisen der Schablone und Struktur des sozialen Systems richtet, stellt die Kirche die personale Einmaligkeit des Menschen entgegen, wie sie in der Askese erreicht wird, das heißt, in der personalen Beziehung zum Kosmos." Christos Yannaras, *Person und Eros: Eine Gegenüberstellung der Ontologie der Griechischen Kirchenväter und der Existenzphilosophie des Westens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1982), 108.
[323] Christos Yannaras, *Postmodern Metaphysics*, trans. Norman Russel (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004), 11.
[324] Petrà, "Pensiero della Differenza," 164.

starts with Nietzsche and with the recognition that "we are indebted to Heidegger for seeing in this crisis the starting point for its historical understanding."[325]

Another important representative of Neo-Patristic thought in Greece has to be mentioned here. Joannis Zizioulas, Metropolite of Pergamon and former student of Florovskij, confines his interventions clearly to the field of theology and has not, unlike Yannaras, aspired to a larger philosophical or cultural-historical analysis.[326] It is nevertheless indispensable to mention and to draw on his work, because he has clarified greatly the communal dimension of Neo-Palamism and has found a positive echo also in the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. His major work, *Being as Communion* is a profound study of Orthodox Christology and a theological-ontological treatise on personhood.[327] Together, Yannaras and Zizioulas have also inspired a number of students both in Greece and abroad, as their teaching activities – Yannaras' in Greece, Zizioulas' at different universities in the UK – demonstrate. From the perspective of Greek Orthodoxy, the theological and philosophical study of Neo-Palamism can therefore be considered well-established.

III.4. Mapping contemporary Orthodox thought

In this chapter, I have mapped the different trajectories of Orthodox thought in the twentieth century, focusing on Russia and Greece. This task seems especially salient at the given point in time, when, in an atmosphere of political, philosophical and theological renewal in post-communist Orthodox Eastern Europe, different trends from the history of Orthodox thought are being revived, including Slavophile and Eurasian ideologies, Russian religious philosophy, Patristics, and debates from the émigré-theology. I have cut across the whole spectrum of Orthodox thought, both academic and clerical, both philosophical and theological, in order to discern the legacies of all these lines of continuity. My main assumption was that what we are dealing with in all these cases is a way of confronting

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[325] Yannaras, *Absence and Unknowability*, 22.

[326] Zizioulas and Yannaras have both influenced and criticized each other. See: Basilio Petrà, "Cristo Salvatore della verità personale dell'uomo nella riflessione ortodossa contemporanea," in *La coscienza morale oggi. Omaggio al Professore Domenico Capone*, ed. Marian Nalepa and Terence Kennedy (Roma: Editiones Academiae Alphonsianae, 1987), 390-391. In the realm of theology, Yannaras did, in fact, encounter resistance against his unconventional combination of history, philosophy and theology from the Orthodox hierarchies. Theologians from Mount Athos published an official document refuting some of Yannaras' provocative interpretations. See: Petrà, "Pensiero della Differenza," 173-177.

[327] John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (London, New York: Continuum, 2006).

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modernity, an expression of the engagement with the modern condition sharpened by the experience of totalitarianism.

This engagement takes place from a religious, cultural, and intellectual standpoint that is different from the Western European mainstream. However, what contemporary Orthodox thought shares with the West, is the experience of totalitarianism, and this experience has led Orthodox thinkers to a process of self-reflection in the course of which they have re-visited the central themes of Orthodox theology and religious philosophy, questioning their adequacy for modern times. Confronting modernity, in this light, means reflecting upon one's own position in the world from within the tradition of Orthodox thought. What I have done in this chapter is to demonstrate the multitude of attitudes towards modernity that arise in the course of this confrontation from within one religious tradition. They can reach from an outright rejection of modernity to an informed and challenging engagement with it.

The Orthodox confrontation with modernity under the impact of totalitarianism is in many ways comparable to Western responses. When comparing the religious thinkers from this chapter with the political philosophers treated in the previous chapter, we find a rather similar constellation. In the West, the experience of totalitarianism seems to confront philosophers with a philosophical either-or choice between liberalism and totalitarianism. Communitarian and postmodern thinkers reject this either-or choice. They try to formulate a philosophy in the space in-between, a non-liberal philosophy of community that resist the totalitarian challenge. In Orthodox Eastern Europe today, the situation is similar. Orthodox thinkers in the twentieth century are faced with the challenge of having to formulate an understanding of the Orthodox tradition in-between the extremes of Orthodox fundamentalism and a Western-style modernization that is experienced as equally totalizing. Needless to say that the Western-style modernization, which Orthodox thinkers react to, is the radical and almost caricature-like application that Western ideologies found in the Orthodox East. Post-totalitarian Orthodox thought is conscious of the totalitarian potential inherent in religious fundamentalism as well as in the modern political project, and against this background some Orthodox thinkers try to give a double-response, *no* to fundamentalism, and *no* to political modernism.

I interpret the programs of theological renewal by Sergej Bulgakov and the Neo-patristic theologians in the 1930s as two modes of facing this challenge, the first comparable to the communitarian response insofar as it seeks to safeguard a social and communitarian ideal for modern society, the second comparable to the post-modern response in the West inasmuch as it starts from the rejection of classical metaphysics. Both schools have found a continuation in contemporary Orthodox thought, represented by liberal Orthodox theologians and in the works of Sergej Horužij and Christos Yannaras.

In this study, I will focus on Yannaras and Horužij because they are the most obvious representatives of contemporary Orthodox thinkers in the tradition of Neo-Palamism who try to make this theology fruitful for philosophy. In this function, they are exemplary for a particular intellectual trend within contemporary Orthodox thought, even though this trend is, at least in the case of post-Soviet Russia, rather limited and marginal. Nonetheless, the study of this particular intellectual tradition is worthwhile and interesting: in the works of Horužij and Yannaras, we find that the contribution of contemporary Orthodox thought in the tradition of Neo-Palamist theology might, in fact, not lie in the field of theology as such, but rather in a radical theological-philosophical dialogue with postmodernity. It is this philosophical tradition within Orthodoxy which has the potential to make a contribution to a post-totalitarian philosophy of community. It is also this intellectual tradition which might have the potential to mark an opening where, at least in Russia, the Orthodox Church remains oblivious to the lesson of totalitarianism – but this is already a different topic that cannot be dealt with here, and I will now turn to re-thinking the political problematic of modernity *beyond* liberal, communitarian and postmodern political philosophy and *across* Western and Eastern Europe.

IV. Extending the interpretative space of political modernity

The political problematic of modernity hinges on the concept of the human subject and community. In the second chapter, I have pointed out how the experience of totalitarianism has led to a reassessment of the ways in which the human subject and community have been approached in the modern political philosophical discourse. Post-totalitarian political philosophy has to respond to the fact that the simultaneous absolute communization of society and absolute atomisation of individuals was among modernity's political potentialities. This response has, on the one hand, taken the path of a reformulation and strengthening of the liberal and individualist paradigm, insisting on a separation of the political from other spheres of human coexistence, thereby excluding the notion of community from the political. On the other hand, philosophers have criticized the liberal circumvention of the problematic of community and have made the human subject and community proper an issue of political philosophy. The first such response is the communitarian one, which claims that being part of a community is an integral feature of the life of each individual and should thus be given more attention as an important element for the functioning of politics. The second response is more radical because it develops out of the Nietzschean critique of classical metaphysics. With their critique of rationalism and essentialism, postmodern thinkers put into doubt the foundations of both liberal and communitarian thinking. Both of these responses to liberalism have their shortcomings: Communitarians make community a central element of their political philosophy, but the precise nature of the relationship between the community and the human subject remains elusive.[328] Communitarians do not inquire philosophically into the meaning of relatedness, they presuppose relatedness as a natural faculty of human beings. In the communitarian view, relatedness and freedom are reconciled practically through the right to enter into and exit from relations, a right guaranteed in a liberal society. The weakness of the communitarian response to liberalism lies in this presupposition, in the failure to explicate the tension between relatedness and freedom. Postmodern thinkers have successfully deconstructed atomist and holist metaphysics of the subject or community, of sovereignty or state as 'essentialist', however, frequently they have stopped at such deconstruction, making it difficult to deduce from this, in principle liberating, gesture any concrete conclusions about the meaning of the political. Taken together, liberalism, communitarianism and postmodernism map the philosophical discourse of modernity, but they, at the same time, spell out its limitations. These limitations are philosophical in nature, of the kind I have just pointed out, but they are also historical and cultural inasmuch as they leave aside an

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[328] A point brought forward by MacIntyre against the communitarians, see: Kelvin Knight, ed., *The Macintyre Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 246. Originally published as 'Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good', *Studi Perugini*, no. 3, 1997.

intellectual tradition that draws on a different historical and cultural experience, namely the Orthodox tradition, which I have described in the previous chapter. The aim of the present chapter will be to think about the political problematic of modernity at the very limit of its interpretative space, to radicalize the communitarian and postmodern critique, on the one hand, and to add to it a new perspective taken from the Orthodox intellectual tradition, on the other hand. I suggest to talk about such a radicalization of the communitarian and postmodern critique with regard to the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Jean-Luc Nancy, and, for the Orthodox tradition, I will focus on the works of Sergej Horužij and Christos Yannaras, who, more than other Orthodox thinkers, have entered into a creative dialogue with Western philosophy.

IV.1. A new anthropology: Sergej Horužij's search for an alternative to the Cartesian subject

At the heart of Horužij's search for an alternative to the Cartesian subject lies the realization that the Orthodox tradition is built around an experience which Cartesian metaphysics[329] cannot account for: the experience of *theosis*, deification. This experience is described in the ascetic literature of the Fathers of the Desert and it is explained in the theology of Hesychasm. Its basic element is the understanding that man exists vis-à-vis another form of being and that a transformation of human being in view of this 'other-being' is possible. In other words, Horužij's objection to Cartesian metaphysics is that it cannot adequately account for mystical experiences. Scholasticism, Humanism and Enlightenment rationalism clearly had no place for spiritual and mystical practices, and counter-currents to the modernizing mainstream, such as Catholic mysticism or Romanticism, conceptualized spirituality often as an individual psychological condition. Postmodern philosophy does mark a change in this neglect of spiritual and ascetic practices as social and anthropological phenomena, but there 'practices of the self' are mostly understood as patterns of coercion.[330] Against this philosophical background, Horužij reminds the reader that once we take the anthropological reality of mystical experiences and spiritual practices seriously, we are

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[329] 'Cartesian metaphysics' refers not only to the philosophy of Descartes, but to the classical metaphysics of the subject as essence more generally, a metaphysics which, as Horužij shows in a series of essays on European anthropology, was formulated at its clearest by Descartes but runs through modern philosophy from scholasticism all the way to Kant. See also: Сергей С. Хоружий, "Человек Картезия (Sergej Horužij, The Cartesian Subject)," *Точки-Puncta* 1-2, no. 4 (2004), Сергей С. Хоружий, "Неотменимый Антропоконтур. 1. Контуры До-Кантова Человека (Sergej Horužij, Manshape Ineluctable. 1. The Contours of the Pre-Cartesian Man)," *Вопросы Философии* 1 (2005), Сергей С. Хоружий, "Неотменимый Антропоконтур. 2. Кантовы Антропотопики (Sergej Horužij, Manshape Ineluctable. 2. Topography of the Kantian Man)," *Вопросы Философии* 2 (2005).
[330] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 3. The Care of the Self* (New York: Random House, 1986).

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inevitably led to a reconsideration of the classical anthropological paradigm of man as an autonomous subject. What Horužij wants to offer is a philosophical anthropology that is open – but not limited – to the reality of mystical experiences. It is important to note from the start that his anthropology is not limited to a mystical understanding of man because it also accounts for a purely immanent reading of human existence, nor is it limited to the mystical experience of Orthodox Hesychasm because Yoga, Sufism or Zen are taken to be equally valid examples. One could also say that Horužij is putting forward a philosophical anthropology that has a place for religious experience while not being a religious anthropology itself.

But let me explain step by step how Horužij unfolds his alternative anthropology. His starting point is what he perceives as a crisis of mankind. This crisis, he writes repeatedly, is not only a Russian, but a global phenomenon, even though it might have found a particularly sharp expression in post-Soviet Russian society where many people suffered an existential loss of orientation in life with the collapse of the old regime. It is the 'suicide terrorist', Horužij writes, that marks the existential confusion of our times.[331] The crisis is of an anthropological nature for him, it has to do with the way in which human beings conceive of themselves, in how they take a place in the world and vis-à-vis each other. It is a crisis of modern philosophy, politics and economics where the human being was conceptualized in terms of subject, substance, essence. Horužij attributes the formulation and perfection of this understanding of man to the intellectual legacy of Aristotle, Boethius and Descartes:

"For a long time, a model [of the human subject] dominated European thought in which […] the identity of a person was understood […] as founded on substantiality. In the classical European anthropological model, human nature bore the character of a substance: Completing the anthropology of Aristotle, which understood man as a definite system of substances, Boethius, at the beginning of the sixth century,[332] advanced the famous definition according to which man is an 'individual substance of rational nature'. Later on the concept of subject (a thinking subject, the subject of reason) was added to this definition, and from here emerged the complete construction of man in his impenetrable philosophical armour: the classical European

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man of Aristotle, Boethius and Descartes is an essence, a substance and a subject. And self-identity."[333]

The argument about the birth of the classical metaphysical subject out of the Latin Christian appropriation of Greek philosophy and its consequent development in Western philosophy is spelled out repeatedly in Horužij's work and in historical-philosophical writings from an Orthodox standpoint in general. The extremely rapid summary of the entire debate in the passage I just quoted is therefore a reference to what is taken to be a thoroughly established argument. Apart from taking the argument for granted, however, there are also clear indications that Horužij does not linger on the problematic of the classical metaphysical subject because he considers it a development that is, in some sense, over and done with. Here he differs from 'civilizational' advocates of Orthodox thought like Christos Yannaras or Dumitru Staniloae, who build on the argument as a proof for culturally and historically grounded differences between the East and the West.[334] What is important for Horužij is the fact that this classical human subject, man as an essence and a substance, has increasingly been put into question since the late nineteenth century. The crisis of modern times lies precisely in the becoming-unfounded of the Aristotelian-Boethian-Cartesian subject, and Horužij reads Western philosophy in the twentieth century as a document of this crisis, referring primarily to the Nietzschean critique of Enlightenment rationality and subjectivity, to the Heideggerian dismantling of classical metaphysics, and to what he regards as attempts to go 'beyond the subject' by authors such as Foucault, Deleuze and Nancy. He situates his own contribution, his 'new anthropology' in exactly this philosophical realm.

Before moving to the proposal itself, it is necessary to reflect for a moment on this self-positioning of Horužij. What is remarkable about the way in which Horužij locates himself in the postmodern discourse, is how he presents this discourse as the status-quo of Western philosophy. For any Western reader, aware of the debates between Anglo-American and continental philosophy and of serious attempts to offer alternative constructive critiques of Enlightenment rationality like Habermas' 'communicative reason', this is puzzling. It is puzzling because Horužij does not give a balanced account of Western debates on the basis

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[333] "Долгое время в европейской мысли господствовала модель, в которой [...] идентичность человека трактовалась [...] на основе субстанциальности. [...] В классической европейской антропологической модели природа человека носила именно характер субстанции: довершая антропологию Аристотеля, представлявшую человека определенной системой сущностей, Боеций в начале VI в. выдвинул знаменитую дефиницию, согласно которой человек – 'индивидуальная субстанция разумной природы'. Позднее сюда еще прибавилась концепция субъекта (мыслещего субъекта, субъекта познания), и возникла законченная конструкция человека в непроницаемой философкой броне: классический европейский человек Аристотеля-Боэция-Декарта есть сущность, субстанция и субъект. И самоидентичность – при нем полностью." Хоружий, *Очерки*, 78-79.

[334] Mihail Neamtu, "Between the Gospel and the Nation: Dumitru Staniloae's Ethno-Theology," *Archaeus* 10, no. 3 (2006), Yannaras, *Orthodoxy and the West: Hellenic Self-Identity in the Modern Age*.

of which he then singles out one strand in which the subject is put under question. The reason for this is obvious: he quite clearly considers all attempts to safeguard the classical understanding of the individual as futile and therefore does not want to lose time with debates that try to stick to it. What stands in a striking contrast to this subscription to a postmodern state of philosophizing, however, and what is, in my view, bewildering even to someone sympathetic to such a starting point, is the *positive* way in which Horužij's puts his assertion of the end of the classical subject and the need to move on from there. What I call here *positive* is meant as a counter-term to the searching and fragmented language of most of postmodern thinking about the human subject. There, language is an indicator of the difficulty to think 'beyond the subject' in an idiom which is profoundly determined by a subjectivist metaphysics. Contemporary philosophers have continued to labour with this problem, and their texts are strategies to deal with it. Horužij quite clearly does not conceive of this as *his* problem, because he does not see himself as speaking from within this body of thought. He takes his language from a completely different reservoir, namely Byzantine theology (and, partly, from quantum physics). What we are therefore left with is a mixture of a problem-awareness that is 'inside', so to speak, and a strategy to deal with it from the 'outside' of the problematic.

Let me linger for a moment on this 'inside'-'outside' dichotomy. At first sight, Orthodox philosophy seems to be speaking to the Western reader from a superior position. Its claim appears to be something like 'with postmodernism, Western philosophy has finally arrived at the point where Orthodox thinkers knew that it would arrive sooner or later anyway, namely at the recognition that a thinking in substances is wrong. Now you are ready to listen to what we have to say.' Orthodox writers often have not restrained themselves from implying such a statement.[335] However, it is plain that this argument does not hold: the theological language in which Orthodox thinkers speak today about matters of common concern for thinkers in the West *and* in the East was retrieved and re-appropriated in the course of the last century. Neo-Palamist thinkers today can draw on a rich body of thought in Byzantine theology, but they do so, as I have shown in my historical reconstruction in the previous chapter, from within a strictly modern context, namely in confrontation with the totalitarian experience.

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[335] For example the following statement by Yannaras in *Person und Eros*: "In den folgenden Jahrhunderten wurde die Rechtfertigung der Theologen des Ostens historisch offenkundig an den tragischen Streitigkeiten der metaphysischen Ausweglosigkeit des Westens: Die Verlagerung der Gotteserkenntnis aus dem Bereich der unmittelbaren persönlichen Offenbarung durch die natürlichen Energien auf die Ebene intellektueller rationaler Schlußfolgerungen hatte als unvermeidliches Ergebnis die scharfe antithetische Scheidung von Transzendent und Immanent, die 'Verbannung' Gottes in einen der Erfahrung unzugänglichen Bereich, die Abtrennung der Religion vom Leben und ihre Beschränkung auf Symbole, die Überwältigung der natürlichen und historischen Wirklichkeit durch die Technik und ihre Unterwerfung unter den individuellen Wohlstand – mit dem Endergebnis des 'Todes Gottes' in der westlichen metaphysischen Tradition und der Erklärung des *Nichts* und des *Absurden* zur grundlegenden existenzialen Kategorie des Menschen im Westen."Yannaras, *Person und Eros*, 41.

Horužij argues in a way that balances the dichotomy of being 'inside' the problematic and at the same time 'outside' of it. He does locate the crisis (or rather, the origin of the crisis) in Western thought, but he does not enter into a polemics with the West. He does not make an argument about a civilizational or cultural divide between the Orthodox East and the West, like Yannaras and many other Orthodox thinkers who place themselves 'outside' do. The reason for this is, in my opinion, intrinsic to his way of understanding the problem. The anthropological crisis is a phenomenon which concerns Orthodox societies as much as Western societies. It has been recognized and pondered by Orthodox thinkers as much as by Western philosophers. The fact that he derives, from within the body of Byzantine theology, an alternative viewpoint on the issue, does not lead him to the conclusion that an Orthodox society or culture is 'superior' to the West. On the ground of his historical studies, Horužij understands very well how marginal and precarious the element of Hesychasm has been for Orthodoxy for a very long time and that it can hardly be made the basis for a cultural argument of 'longue durée'.[336] On the ground of personal experience, in turn, it seems evident that being an open-eyed member of Soviet society would lead to the recognition of the fragility of human integrity and relationships in the face of totalitarian rule and would also profoundly question the durability of something like 'Orthodox society'.

Let me now turn to Horužij's 'new anthropology'. The starting point is, as mentioned above, the 'death of the subject', the crisis of the classical anthropological discourse. This discourse originated in the scholastic appropriation of Aristotle and was based on an essentialist metaphysics, looking at man as an essence or a substance. This approach to man, Horužij writes, correlated with the intuition of a centre; it assumed the existence of some essential core of the human being and was oriented towards the search for this centre and the study of it.[337] Today, after the 'death of the subject', man can no longer be regarded as having a 'centre'. Alternatively, man should be characterized by his *border*.[338] Horužij suggests to us that while it is debatable that man has a centre or essence, it is out of

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[336] According to Horužij the anthropological crisis is not merely a phenomenon which Orthodox thinkers react to as a predicament of the West, but it emerges also from within Orthodoxy: "One can say that in Christian theology the age of Enlightenment and Modern Time was the time of the *forgetting of Man*. This trend was common to theology of all Christian confessions, and so we could say that the unity of Christians was achieved in this particular aspect, only it was unity of a somewhat negative kind." Sergej S. Horužij, "Anthropological Turn in Christian Theology: An Orthodox Perspective. Lecture at Divinity School, University of Chicago, 4 October, 2006," *Courtesy of the author* (2006).

[337] Хоружий, *Очерки*, 13-15. I partly base myself on the English translation of the text "Man's three far-away kingdoms: Ascetic experience as a ground for a new anthropology", available at http://www.synergia-isa.ru/lib/lib.htm#H (last accessed 05.10.2006) "Man's three far-away kingdoms" is the English title which Horužij gives to the Russian "Человек: сущее, трояко размыкающее себя" (literally: "Man: a being, thrice unlocking himself").

[338] "Если человека нельзя более характеризировать 'центром' – его остаетсь характеризировать 'периферией', а точнее – *границей*." Ibid., 15.

question that he has a border, a mark of distinction and finitude vis-à-vis another person, in confrontation with the Unconscious, or in awareness of his own death. What Horužij calls for is a reorientation in anthropology, from the study of the essence or 'centre' (*antropologiâ centry*), which has turned out to be a fiction, to the study of the border (*antropologiâ granicy*).

This reorientation in anthropology implies a shift from focusing exclusively on the human subject itself to comprehending man in relation with his 'Other'. The nature of the 'Other' (*Inobytiâ*, transl. *Other-being*) and, consequently, of the relationship between man and his 'Other', depends on the way in which man is conceptualized. Horužij distinguishes between two principled ways of conceptualizing man: in terms of Being and in terms of consciousness. If man is conceptualized as a specific mode of being, then the 'Other' is a different mode of being, a distinction which Horužij underpins with Heidegger's *ontologischer Differenz* between *Dasein* and *Sein*. If, by contrast, man is conceptualized in terms of consciousness, then the 'Other' represents the Unconscious. Since Being is not at stake in this case, Horužij speaks about an *ontic* perspective. These two perspectives, the ontological and the ontic, constitute two different topics for the anthropology of the border. (Horužij eventually adds a third topic, the virtual, more about this below.) Together, the three topics map the anthropology of the border and bring into view man as a polyphone[339] being. They are not hierarchical or complementary features of human nature, but spell out different potentialities of what it means to be human.

What the three topics have in common is that the relationship between man and his 'Other' is in all three cases conceptualized in terms of 'manifestations' (*proâvlenie*). Human manifestations, Horužij writes, are not only acts in an empirical or behaviouralist sense, but also thoughts and sentiments, or impulses that may or may not develop or be turned into full-scale acts. Horužij conceptualizes these human manifestations in terms of 'energies', basing himself on Orthodox theology and the distinction which is central there, between essence and energy.[340] Above I have already said that Horužij's work builds up on the mystical-ascetic tradition of Hesychasm, a tradition which has developed a sensibility to understanding human manifestations in this way. What Horužij adds, however, is that for him the energetic paradigm is not limited to the religious discourse, to the relationship between man and the Divine. He conceptualizes all three anthropological topics of man and all three modes of Other-being as energetic manifestations, reading all of human experience through the lens of an 'energetic' (as opposed to an essentialist) ontology.

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[339] Ibid., 23.
[340] See also section III.1.1.

The heuristic parallel which Horužij uses at this point is taken from physics: synergetic processes in physical systems.[341] The most important of the effects which the interaction of energetic systems in physics produces is the re-structuring of the respective systems. In physics, this is called a 'synergetic' (*sinergetičeskij*) process.[342] For Horužij, such synergetic processes are structurally comparable to the interaction which takes place at the anthropological border, to the transformation of human manifestations in view of an energetic 'Other'. Horužij calls this the anthropological phenomenon of synergy (*sinergiâ*), a term used in this sense by Hesychast theologians.[343] Synergetic processes involve what Horužij calls 'extreme (human) manifestations' (*predel'noe proâvlenie*), 'extreme' because they manifest themselves at the person's 'border'.

Even though I have said that Horužij extends the energetic paradigm beyond the religious-mystical discourse, it has to be noted that the anthropological phenomenon of synergy is rooted in the first, in the ontological topic of the border. It is from this perspective that mystical experiences that characterize a religious worldview acquire existential reality. At the ontological border (*ontologičeskaâ granica*), the being of man is at stake. This is where the 'transcending' of human nature may take place. Extreme human manifestations at this border are what overcomes a person's horizon of being in view of another mode of being. Conceptualizations of such processes of transformation can be found in all spiritual and ascetic-mystical practices, for example Yoga, Sufism, Buddhist meditation and Orthodox

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[341] "[…] при подобном описании феноменов Границы возникает явная параллель антропологии Границы с теорией физически открытых систем. Для таких систем главную роль в их поведении играет взаимодействие их внутренних энергий с внешними, которые могут проходить через данную систему с силу его открытости. [...] Для физических открытых систем существуют различные механизмы взаимодействия их энергий с внешней энергией, принадлежащей некоторому внеположномы источнику, и среди таких механизмов играет особую роль синергетический механизм, или синергетическая парадигма. (transl. The phenomenon of the border can be adequately described as a parallel between the anthropology of the border and open-system theory in physics. […] Open systems in physics have different mechanisms how their energy interacts with an other energy that derives from some outlying source; among these mechanisms the synergetic mechanism, or the synergetic paradigm, occupies a special place.)" Хоружий, *Очерки*, 20.
[342] "Если система специальным образом подготовлена, а именно, выведена предельно далеко от области своих обычных, стабильных режимов – в состояние, удаленное от равновесия (что называется 'раскачкой' системы), то поток внешней энергии ету систему может осазывать не разрушительное, а структурирующее боздействие; в системе начинаются цепные процессы самоорганизации, выстраивания иерархической последовательности усложняющихся динамических структур, и эта структурная перестройка способна переводить систему в качественно и радикально новое состояние. (transl. If a system is prepared especially, namely, if it is removed as far as possible from the regions of its usual stable regimes and brought to a state which is very far from equilibrium (this preparatory procedure is called 'shaking' of the system), then the flux of outer energy through the system may produce not destructive, but structuring effects. Spontaneous processes of a self-organizing type arise which generate hierarchies of more and more complicated dynamical structures and bring the system to a radically new form." Ibid., 20-21.
[343] The Russian language allows for a clear distinction between synergetic processes in physics (*sinergetičeskij*) and synergetic processes in an anthropological and spiritual sense (*sinergijnij*). Unless clearly specified, Horužij always refers to synergy in the latter sense. He also stresses that the comparison between physical systems and anthropological and spiritual practices is only a limited heuristic devise: "Язык описания физических систем заведомо лишь в небольшой мере примерним к антропологической и в особенности духовной реальности. (transl. The language of the description of physical systems is, admittedly, only partially adequate for anthropological, let alone spiritual reality.)" Ibid., 21.

Hesychasm. Horužij's entire work about Hesychasm can, in fact, be read as an exemplary discussion of the ontological border of man. In Hesychasm, the practitioner treats himself as an energetic formation in a series of ascetic and spiritual practices ('the ladder') with a view to effecting a *trans*-formation. Notably, this energetic transformation cannot emanate from the human self alone, it must rely on an interaction with the 'Other'. From the Christian perspective, this 'Other' is the triune God, and transformation, *theosis*, takes place in view of Divine grace (*blagodat'*). In short, it is at the ontological border where the person makes a 'religious' experience, an experience of an existential transformation. Needless to say that Horužij does not think of this experience as 'belonging' to any of the confessions or religious traditions. He is making a more general argument for the reality of religious experiences, made tangible in spiritual and ascetic practices.

The ontic topic of the anthropological border is concerned with a person's being vis-à-vis the Unconscious. More precisely, at the ontical border (*ontičeskaâ granica)*, human manifestations interact with manifestations that are induced by an energetic source in the same horizon of being but beyond the horizon of experience. The interaction with this 'Other' takes the form of psychic conditions that are studied in the field of psychoanalysis. Extreme manifestations at the ontical border are, for example, neuroses, psychoses, manias – phenomena that are at the borderline of the conscious and un- or subconscious. Horužij refers mostly to the works of Lacan and Deleuze in his account of the Unconscious. While he largely subscribes to their rendering of the issue, he considers their approach too limited. In his view, psychoanalysis restricts the study of man to the area of the ontical border, denying the existence of the ontological and virtual dimension of human existence. From the perspective of the ontical border, a mystical experience has no plausibility, it appears as an abnormal psychic condition.

The virtual border (*virtual'naâ granica*) of man is certainly the most difficult among Horužij's concepts and in a sense the least elaborated. We have seen that both the ontological and the ontical 'Other' can be conceptualized as energetic configurations that enter into interplay with human manifestations. I read Horužij to be saying that, by contrast, at the virtual border we have extreme human manifestations but they point at no 'Other' energetic source. The pre-conditions for a synergetic process – the interaction of manifestations of a human and another source – are therefore not given.[344] Horužij seems to attribute most phenomena of contemporary popular mass-culture to this realm. They are examples for an under-actualization or forgetting of human potential.

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[344] Хоружий, *О Старом и Новом*, 311-352, Хоружий, *Очерки*, 40-44.

With his anthropology of the border, Horužij is putting forward an alternative to classical anthropology. There, man was defined by his centre and it was assumed that a person's being in the world hinges on this centre. The clearest example of this is Descartes' reduction of the self to its bare minimum, the *cogito*. In Horužij's anthropology of the border, the contrary movement is taking place. Not a reduction towards a centre, but a triple unfolding towards the outer limits of the self. Horužij suggests that man is first and foremost constituted by his relationship to the 'Other'. This relationship unfolds in three principled dimensions – the ontological, the ontical and the virtual, and in their possible combinations ('hybrids'). Where before we would have man as an essence and a centre, and where the post-metaphysical philosophers of the twentieth century identified a lack, Horužij puts man as an energetic constellation and as a pluralistic being endowed with a triple border.[345] The main point is that the borders are not closed, but that they are realms in which processes of interaction with the respective 'Other' can take place. These processes aim at what Horužij calls 'unlocking' (*razmykanie*), the interaction of man's manifestations with the energies of the 'Other'. From an 'anthropology of the border', Horužij has thus moved to an 'anthropology of unlocking', synergetic anthropology (*sinergijnaâ antropologiâ*).[346]

Having come thus far, we can finally ask what Horužij's alternative anthropology actually brings forward in terms of a response to the political problematic of modernity: What is the human subject, and what is the meaning of community which Horužij derives from his reading of the Orthodox tradition? How can the situative dimension of the political be conceptualized in the light of the ideas I have just presented? In order to clarify this point it is helpful to read Horužij's 'new anthropology' against the background of another 'new' take on ontology in the twentieth century: Martin Heidegger called the forgottenness of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*) the major shortcoming of classical metaphysics. His *Fundamentalontologie* was designed as a response, but we know that Heidegger himself did

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[345] "Анализ […] – наиболее систематичный путь поиска альтернативы давно критикуемой декартовой концепции субъекта, путь к ответу на остро стоящий в современной мысли вопрос: *Кто приходит после субъекта?* (transl. This analysis [...] is the most systematic approach to a search for alternatives to the long criticized Cartesian concept of the subject, a road towards an answer to the question which contemporary thought is confronted with: *Who comes after the subject?*)" Хоружий, *Очерки*, 23.

[346] It is important to emphasize once more that Horužij finds the prerequisites for such an 'anthropological unlocking' chiefly in the ontological topic of the anthropological border, in man's active relationship with the transcendent. The accounts of unlocking in the ontical and virtual realm are incomparably less profound. In the light of this imbalance between the 'synergetic potential', if one may call it like that, of the three different realms, one observation has to be made explicit: The exposition of an anthropology of the border in terms of the ontological, ontical and virtual has, to a certain extent, served the purpose of legitimizing the discussion of *one* dimension which Horužij clearly is mostly concerned with: religious experience. Horužij's 'anthropology of the border' is, to a certain extent, a secondary reasoning to the observation of the anthropological reality of spiritual practices, more specifically to the study of Hesychasm. It is not only the latest development of his entire oeuvre, it also suggests a certain aspiration to take a step back from the very detailed analysis and study of Hesychasm and to situate it in a broader picture.

not escape, in 1934 and however briefly, the temptation of re-grounding this 'new' ontology in an essentialism of the most destructive kind. I would like to suggest that Horužij's synergetic anthropology can be read both as a commentary on Heidegger's failure and as a response to Heidegger's question. It is, one the one hand, a commentary on the risk of totalizing a discourse inasmuch as it lays out an anthropological model in which the question of Being can be asked once again, but in which it is not asked exclusively. Horužij conceptualizes the human subject in pluralistic terms, as determined by a triple border, not in terms of the ontological border only. On the other hand, Horužij gives a response to the Heideggerian problematic of de-essentializing the human subject insofar as he invokes an ontology of the human subject that it not essentialist (the classical Western model) but energetic (the Palamist model). In sum, Horužij outlines an alternative to the Cartesian subject that succeeds in maintaining a pluralistic, non-essential model of man and that opens the anthropological discourse once again for ontology, for a debate about being-in-the world and Being as such.

At the same time, however, this achievement of Horužij also constitutes the limit of his philosophical anthropology in political terms. When we are interested in the political as 'a place of being together', as 'the way in which a society institutes itself', or 'as the principles that shape human coexistence', we are not primarily interested in a person's relationship with an ontological, ontical or virtual 'Other', but in his or her relationship with the fellow human being. About this relationship, Horužij has relatively little to say.[347] The only occasion where Horužij writes about community is when he describes the environment for ascetic and spiritual practices, i.e. when he writes about the ontological topic of the border.

At the ontological topic of the border, the possibility for a human being to emerge as an energetic formation – or, in words which are not Horužij's but which clarify the idea, 'to realize his or her potential for unlocking' – depends on the person's free choice and on the person's capability to recognize that he or she has this choice. The possibility to perceive of oneself as having that choice depends on knowledge, education, environment, in other words, on one's being part of a tradition that is built around a specific understanding of the person and of its potential relationship with the transcendent. The ontological topic of the anthropological border is necessarily spelt out in terms of a religious tradition, because only a religious tradition attributes a certain way of being to the human subject *and* accounts for the potential to be 'otherwise'. This potential is formulated in terms of a *telos*; it is the *telos* which gives stability and continuity to practices of 'unlocking' over time. The stability and continuity of practices in view of a shared *telos* is necessarily borne by a community, it cannot be the

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[347] I owe this observation to Dr. Evert van der Zweerde.

work of the singular human being alone. From the perspective of Horužij's 'synergetic anthropology', individual progress at the ontological border remains a unique and personal matter, a free decision, but it is the community that provides the tools for this progress and at the same time flows out of the shared practices:

> "[Spiritual] practice as such is a process of strictly individual self-transformation. But its *organon* is created in a coordinated work of many generations of adepts, and then it must be preserved and transmitted in time, which is also a collective work. Hence a certain community is needed for the existence of each spiritual practice […] This community is called *spiritual tradition*. Thus any spiritual practice is, in fact, a dual structure, the *dyad*, in which individual practice and collective tradition are united in such a way that the latter provides the necessary conditions for the former, serving as a kind of organic milieu that surrounds it and ensures its functioning, its life."[348]

It is this double-constellation of personal freedom and shared practices which makes synergetic anthropology neither entirely atomist nor entirely holist. If we try to translate Horužij's synergetic anthropology into a thinking about the situative dimension of the political, it becomes clear that for Horužij the 'situative' is a body of practices. Community is that what manifests tradition, the stability and continuity of practices over time. Community, in short, takes place in view of a *telos*. For Horužij, the reasoning about community stops here. He remains elusive as to the nature of the *telos* inasmuch as he does not tie it to a specific religious postulate – he does not advocate Orthodoxy in confrontation with other theological and philosophical traditions. As a matter of fact, Horužij wants to bring forward nothing more (and nothing less) than an anthropology which preserves an independent place for religious experience in the anthropological discourse.

Political philosophy, however, cannot stop here. It can take the point that community is best conceptualized as a body of practices, and that these practices need some sort of stability and continuity over time. But then, political philosophy has to ask what the nature of this stability and continuity is. In other words, it has to scrutinize the idea of a *telos*. Castoriadis and Lefort remind us, that political philosophy is concerned with a community's self-institution – the kind of self-institution which Horužij invokes with the concept of *telos*. More precisely, however, Castoriadis and Lefort insist that modern political thought after the experience of totalitarianism must be concerned with the contingency of a community's self-institution. For them, the task of post-totalitarian political philosophy is therefore to continuously keep suspended any potential *telos*, to denounce any claim of an absolute beginning and absolute legitimacy derived from a transcendental point of reference as yet

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[348] Horužij, 8.

another theologico-political construct. This – the deconstruction of any potential *telos* – has, in fact, become the program of postmodern political philosophy. But also liberal political theory has taken note of the problematic, if only to ignore it with the claim that politics can do without a substantial formulation of what holds people together. Communitarianism, too, attributes an important political role to a *telos,* a tradition, or a 'source' of commonality and selfhood, but it does not confront the issue full-scale when it grounds this function in the social make-up of human beings. Re-thinking the political problematic beyond all these approaches means re-thinking the *telos* in a post-totalitarian and post-deconstructive way. This is a question that we find addressed by yet another interpreter of the Orthodox tradition, namely by Christos Yannaras.

IV.2. Freedom and relatedness: Christos Yannaras' reflections on Heidegger

Martin Heidegger's *Letter on 'Humanism'*, in which he reflects on the achievements and limitations of his major work *Being and Time*, provides a good entrance point for the cross-reading of Western philosophy and Orthodox theology that we find in the works of Christos Yannaras. It was the achievement of *Being and Time* to have re-opened the question of Being – a question which classical metaphysical thought had obscured. This concealment of Being was particularly visible in the way in which classical metaphysics understood the human subject, in modern humanism. Humanism, as it was derived from Roman conceptions, was based on the assumption that man was an 'animal rationale'.[349] This characterization of man became questionable with the critique of metaphysics in *Being and Time*.[350] The point that Heidegger made there was that we recognize beings as presence and have a sense of them in their absence. In both cases the fact that beings are or are not *in time*, that they are present or absent in time, is the crucial factor for our understanding of the being of beings. What we do not grasp in this way, however, is Being as such. Classical metaphysics is caught in what Heidegger calls *Seinsvergessenheit*, the

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[349] "Der erste Humanismus, nämlich der römische, und alle Arten des Humanismus, die seitdem bis in die Gegenwart aufgekommen sind, setzten das allgemeinste 'Wesen' des Menschen als selbstverständlich voraus. Der Mensch gilt als das animal rationale." Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den 'Humanismus' (1946)," in *Gesamtausgabe. Wegmarken* (Frankfurt/M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 322.
[350] "Diese Wesensbestimmung des Menschen ist nicht falsch. Aber sie ist durch die Metaphysik bedingt. Deren Wesensherkunft und nicht nur deren Grenze ist jedoch in 'Sein und Zeit' frag-würdig geworden." Ibid.

'forgottenness of Being'[351], because it considers Being via the being of beings, not Being as such.

Heidegger repeats this point in the *Letter*, where he stresses that the concealment of Being has had a limiting effect on the understanding of the human subject. While classical metaphysics conceptualizes man on grounds of nature, as being (*Seiendes*), Heidegger wants to ask how man is different from nature.[352] He thereby brings into focus a difference which classical metaphysics ignores: the difference between beings (*das Seiende*) and Being (*das Sein*), the ontological difference.[353] What makes man 'human' in the full sense, is precisely that human being (*Dasein*) 'takes place' in the light of Being as such (*Sein*) – Heidegger describes this with the term *Ek-sistenz*.[354] The task which emerges in *Being and Time* and which Heidegger formulates once again in the *Letter on 'Humanism'* is thus to think man in relation to Being as such (*das eksistente Wesen des Menschen*).[355] The limitation of *Being and Time* could be said to lie in the fact that it does not accomplish this very task. Heidegger recognizes this, when he writes that it would have been the task of the missing third part of *Being and Time*, the chapter 'Time and Being', to lay out an existential analytic of being-in-the-world as ecstatic relatedness to Being.[356] The reason why this step (*Kehre*) is missing in *Being and Time* was the inadequacy of the available language, the limit imposed by the language of classical metaphysics.[357]

It is precisely at this point, where the Orthodox interpreters of Heidegger – Horužij and Yannaras – step in. They, too, insist that instead of conceptualizing the human subject on grounds of nature, philosophy has to ask how man is different from nature, and they want to see the human subject discussed ontologically, not ontically. They, too, feel challenged by the difficulties to speak about man's relatedness to Being. However, what they propose in

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[351] "Die Seinsvergessenheit bekundet sich unmittelbar darin, daß der Mensch immer nur das Seiende betrachtet und bearbeitet." Ibid., 339. See also: Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* The Blackwell Philosopher Dictionaries (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 72.

[352] "Außerdem aber und vor allem anderen bleibt endlich einmal zu fragen, ob überhaupt das Wesen des Menschen, anfänglich und alles voraus entscheidend, in der Dimension der Animalitas liegt. [...] Man kann so vorgehen, man kann in solcher Weise den Menschen innerhalb des Seidenden als ein Seiendes unter anderen ansetzten. [...] Aber dadurch wird das Wesen des Menschen zu gering geachtet [...]. Die Metaphysik denkt den Menschen von der animalitas her und nicht zu seiner humanitas hin." Heidegger, 323.

[353] "Die Metaphysik stellt zwar das Seiende in seinem Sein vor und denkt so auch das Sein des Seienden. Aber sie denkt nicht das Sein als solches, denkt nicht den Unterschied beider." Ibid., 322. In English, the 'ontological difference' which Heidegger makes between *das Sein* and *das Seiende* is usually rendered as *Being* and *beings or entities*. See: Inwood, 26-27, 46-49.

[354] "Das Stehen in der Lichtung des Seins nenne ich die Ek-sistenz des Menschen. Nur dem Menschen eignet diese Art zu sein." Heidegger, 322-323.

[355] Ibid., 327.

[356] "[...] wie 'das Seinsverständnis' im Bereich der 'existentialen Analytik' des 'In-der-Welt-Seins' allein gedacht werden kann, nämlich als der ekstatische Bezug zur Lichtung des Seins. Der zureichende Nach- und Mitvollzug dieses anderen, die Subjektivität verlassenden Denkens ist allerdings dadurch erschwert, daß bei der Veröffentlichung von 'Sein und Zeit' der dritte Abschnitt des ersten Teiles, 'Zeit und Sein' zurückgehalten wurde." Ibid.

[357] "Der fragliche Abschnitt wurde zurückgehalten, weil das Denken im zureichenden Sagen dieser Kehre versagte und so mit Hilfe der Sprache der Metaphysik nicht durchkam." Ibid., 328.

response to Heidegger's question is an entirely different philosophical language and 'metaphysics'. Both Yannaras and Horužij can be said to react to the task formulated but not completed by Heidegger – to lay out an existential analytic of man's being-in-the-world as ecstatic relatedness to Being. The relatedness of man to the transcendent Being[358], this is what a philosophy rooted in Neo-Palamist theology can address without the burden of classical metaphysics because it does not share this burden. What such a philosophy does share with Heidegger and with Western philosophy on the whole, however, is an experience: the experience of totalitarianism. This means that it shares the recognition that after this experience, Being as the transcendent must never be thought as an essence, as one meaning once and for all, or as the theologico-political. Put differently, ontology after totalitarianism must address man's existential relatedness to Being without jeopardizing man's existential freedom. Where Horužij opens up a space for the ontological in the anthropological discourse but, when discussing community, falls short of convincingly safeguarding this opening from the potential of a totalitarian formulation, we find, in Yannaras, the transcendent Being as a source for practices of community qualified further through an ontology of freedom and relatedness.

Yannaras' existential analytic of man's being-in-the-world and being-vis-à-vis the transcendent is for the most part in line with Orthodox Neo-Patristic theology.[359] The mystery of the Christian God, we shall remember, lies in the fact that the Divine has both the properties of unity and of diversity.[360] God is both one as well as three. Joannis Zizioulas explains how, when elaborating the meaning of the Trinity, the Greek Fathers did not determine as the 'cause' of the Divine one unity or substance of which existed three hypostases (this interpretation prevailed in Western theology, where Augustine chose to refer to Divine substance with the abstract noun *divinitas*[361]). For the Cappadocian Fathers the 'cause' of the Divine was the person of God the Father.[362] "The basic ontological position of the theology of the Greek Fathers", Zizioulas writes, was that "no substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, but the ontological 'principle' or 'cause' of being […] is not the substance or nature but

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[358] In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes: "Sein ist das transcendens schlechthin." Cit. in: Ibid., 336.
[359] Yannaras is here more narrowly Orthodox than Horužij, whose synergetic anthropology spans a wider frame within which the Orthodox experience – or religious-mystical experience as such – can find a place.
[360] See III.1.1.
[361] "[…] Augustine proceeded to a disjunction between God and Father; making of divine substance a notion (*divinitas*) logically prior to that of the Father, and assigning to it the role of expressing divine unity." Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, 118.
[362] "Although the Cappadocian Fathers do speak of the one substance of God with reference to his unity, they never do what Augustine did, namely elevate the one divine substance above or before the person of the Father. Substance may indicate divine oneness, but the ground of unity remains the Father." Ibid.

the *person* or hypostasis. Therefore being is traced back not to substance but to person."[363] The Fathers described the qualities of the person of God the Father as *freedom* and *love*: freedom, because God creates the world *ex nihilo*, in an act of freedom, and love, because he brings forth the Son and the Spirit, in other words, he makes his being identical with relatedness or communion.

The simultaneous unity and diversity of the triune God finds an analogy in the make-up of the human being. "Created 'in the image' of God in Trinity," Yannaras writes, "man himself is *one in essence* according to his nature, and *in many hypostases* according to his person."[364] What he means is that all men have a common nature but this nature has no existence except as personal distinctiveness. From this perspective, to speak about the human being as 'animal rationale' is an unduly reduction. What makes the human being 'human' is precisely what is *not* nature. Just like the Christian God has his 'ontological cause' not in *divinitas* but in his being Father, Son and Spirit, a person's existence is predicated on his or her distinctiveness. This distinctiveness is lost out of sight when philosophical anthropology focuses on what human beings share in their belonging to a specific 'species'. The human subject is part of nature, it is the bearer of characteristics that belong to nature and that are, in one way or the other, common to all of humankind, but at the same time the human subject is more than nature inasmuch as each person exists in a unique fashion, irrepeatable and distinct from any other person. This uniqueness of the person escapes any rational or a-priori definition, it may be known only in personal relationship: "We know each human personal hypostasis only by participating in the energies that reveal its existential otherness," Yannaras writes, "in speech, in thought, in imagination, in judgement, in intention, in the capacity to create, to love, to be original, etc. All these energies are common to all human beings, for which reason they make known to us what human beings *are* as a whole, that is to say, the *essence* or nature of humanity. Yet each human being expresses himself, thinks, imagines, judges, wills, creates and loves in a unique way or mode, distinct and unparalleled."[365]

Created in the image of God, the human subject has the qualities of freedom and relatedness. However, for the human being the quality of relatedness is a potentiality, the realization of which is predicated on the first quality, on freedom, on free choice. Man has to choose to enter into relationship. It is important to bear in mind at this point that central to the Christian understanding of the human subject is the event of the fall. Only through this event does the Orthodox understanding of the person become plausible. Man is 'in the image of

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[363] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 41-42. Footnote 37.
[364] Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 19.
[365] Yannaras, *Absence and Unknowability*, 84-85.

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God' in the principle of freedom: "[…] man is capable of either accepting or rejecting the ontological precondition for his existence," Yannaras writes, "he can refuse […] personal communion, and say 'no' to God […]."[366] Man has, in fact, said 'no' to God with the event of the fall. The meaning of the original sin is that man has refused the relationship with God and has forfeited relatedness to his fellow human beings. From a Christian view it is precisely through the person of Jesus Christ, namely in the celebration of the Eucharist and in repentance, that a reversal of this 'no' is possible. In the Church, the restoration of the quality of relatedness in personal relationship with God and with fellow human beings takes place. Being truly 'in the image of God' means for Christians not only exercising freedom, but exercising freely relationship. What follows from this is that from an Orthodox viewpoint a human subject conceptualized only in terms of individual freedom is incomplete. A human being is only truly 'person' when in relationship with others. This relationship, however, is not borne by the human subjects alone but takes place in the light of man's existential relatedness to the Divine. It takes place in view of a transcendental *telos* which is defined as freedom and relatedness.

Some Church Fathers[367] have described the quality of relatedness in terms of *ekstasis*. Yannaras takes up this concept and elaborates it with reference to Heidegger's notion of *ek-stasis*. Heidegger coined the term 'Ek-sistenz' in order point at man's relatedness to the transcendent. For Yannaras, the term *ekstasis* denotes something similar: 'Ek-sistenz' only insofar as the human subject is in relationship, this is what Yannaras calls ecstatic personality or *eros*. "There is a 'faint echo' of the divine Trinitarian 'mutual coinherence' in each selfless human act of love," Yannaras writes. "Human beings correspond to their creation 'in the image of God' to the extent that they realize their existence as erotic self-transcendence in the *personal* mode of existence."[368] Realizing one's personal distinctiveness through loving self-transcendence is, in Yannaras' view, the task which is put in front of human beings *qua* their being in the image of God.[369] Human freedom lies precisely in the possibility to take up this task or not.[370]

The Orthodox understanding of human freedom leads to a, from a modernist point of view, paradoxical constellation: Free is who is in personal relationship. In everyday understanding, the contrary is true: we are unfree when we are bound in relationships, and

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[366] Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 20.
[367] In Maximus Confessor and in the Aeropagite-texts. See: Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 44. Footnote 40.
[368] Yannaras, *Absence and Unknowability*, 101.
[369] "Personal distinctiveness *forms the image* of God in man. It is the *mode of existence* shared by God and man, the *ethos* of Trinitarian life imprinted upon the human being." Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 23.
[370] "What we call the *morality* of man, is the way he relates to this adventure of his freedom. Morality reveals what man *is* in principle, as the image of God, but also what he *becomes*, through the adventure of his freedom: a being transformed, or 'in the likeness' of God." Ibid., 24.

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we are free when we are independent. The distinction between positive and negative liberty which I have mentioned earlier (II.2.1.) does not fully exhaust this paradox. Advocates of positive liberty believe, as Quentin Skinner has pointed out, that human nature has an essence and that human beings are free only if they succeed in realizing that essence. The danger connected with the idea of an essence is clear: "Those who imagine that human nature has an essence, and thereby hold that there is just one goal to which we all ought to commit ourselves, tend to bully or at least to behave self-righteously towards those of more pluralist allegiances", Skinner writes.[371] The Orthodox proposal which Yannaras is formulating here differs from such a concept of positive freedom: Here, the freedom of the person lies not in the realization of some essence, but in the free choice whether to desire a 'positive' self-realization or not. This is the freedom of the human being to accept the idea of being created in the image of God or to reject it. Most importantly, however: Even when the person understands him- or herself in the image of God and seeks an ever more adequate realization of this image (this is the meaning of *theosis*), there is no 'end', no essence to be realized. What is sought after in this 'positive freedom' is not essence, but hypostatic relationship.

Such an understanding of freedom is more basic and more anarchical than the classical distinction between negative and positive liberty. Where Skinner proposes a 'third concept' of liberty in the form of an alternative concept of negative freedom, we could say that the Neo-Palamist authors propose a 'fourth concept' of liberty in the form of an alternative concept of positive freedom. They retain that positive liberty is subject to free choice, and they reject the idea that the goal of positive freedom can be any 'essence'. Through these two provisions, Yannaras defies the totalitarian potential of positive liberty, because his understanding of positive freedom does not allow for the formulation and institutionalization of an 'end' to which personal relationships are the 'means'. Looked at in this way, we find that Skinner's neo-Roman concept of liberty and the Orthodox understanding of liberty are merely two sides of one and the same coin: the neo-Roman argument denies, "that the will can be autonomous unless it is also free from dependence on the will of anyone else."[372] The Orthodox argument upholds that man, created in the image of God, is autonomous from the Divine will, and is thus free to make a choice between positive and negative freedom.

The bearer of positive freedom in this sense is the person who partakes in concrete practices of community, practices which gain stability and continuity in view of *theosis*. What is meant here is a participation in a 'movement towards' God, towards the *telos* of restoring

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[371] Quentin Skinner, "A Third Concept of Liberty," *London Review of Books* 24, no. 7 (2002): 242.
[372] Ibid.: 263.

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God's image in each person, restoring the qualities of freedom *and* relatedness.[373] Prototypical for this movement are the ascetic practices of Hesychasm ('the ladder'), which is also why Horužij makes this topic the centre of his research. Yannaras, who is less focused on the specific case of monastic asceticism, is interested in the transposition of the movement inspired by the *telos* of freedom and relatedness to society as such, and he therefore focuses on the communal event of the Eucharist.[374]

It should not come as a surprise that, given this interest, Yannaras is throwing a critical light on the institution of the Church in modern times. For him, the Church ought to be the taking-place of relationships and thus the site of a potential transformation of human beings in communion. It's aim should *not* be to be an institution which dictates an ethic. This, however, is precisely what the Christian Churches (and Yannaras does not exclude the Orthodox Churches from this judgement) developed into in the modern period. The codification of morality which takes place in the Catholic catechism, or, for that matter, in a recent document like the Russian Orthodox Church's *Social Doctrine,* is diametrically opposed to Yannaras' vision of the *freedom* of morality, which defies an objective formulation. "If by the term 'social ethics'," he writes, "we mean a theory, a program or a code which aims at an 'objective' improvement in people's corporate life, an 'objective' change in the structures and preconditions for their coexistence, and better regulation of the 'objective' relationships which form people into organized groups – if these aims are pursued independently of personal distinctiveness and freedom, the sphere in which they are dynamically and existentially realized – then certainly so long as the Church remains faithful to her ontological truth she has no such ethics to display, nor could she come to terms with such an ethic."[375] An 'objective ethics', as Yannaras calls it here, bears the potential of totalitarianism, may eventually amount to the theologico-political and jeopardize personal freedom and personal relatedness: "Communion or society – personal relationships which go to make up a community of life – cannot possibly exist when truth is an objective datum, when there are no distinct personal approaches to the truth which permit the distinctiveness and freedom of persons – the potential for relationships – to become apparent."[376] The crux of the totalitarian experience, I have said in the beginning, is the simultaneous absolute

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[373] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 62.

[374] "[…] the Eucharist sums up a mode of existence which finds its social realization in the asceticism of the Church. […] asceticism is not an individual exercise of the will, nor a masochist attitude towards human needs and desires, but an opportunity for communion and an act of communion. […] One might venture to maintain, then, that asceticism, as a social manifestation and practical application of the Church's truth, represents also a radical moral, social and ultimately political stance and action. Radical, because it directly and actively undermines the holistic systems of individualistic utilitarianism and their totalitarian mechanism." Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 218.

[375] Ibid., 214. It is also telling that Yannaras' most recent book, not translated from Greek, bears the title *Against Religion* (2006).

[376] Ibid., 203.

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communization and absolute atomization of human beings; with Yannaras we could say that it is the loss of personal freedom *and* the loss of personal relatedness.

Summing up the argument, we can say that the ontological premise which Yannaras takes from Orthodox theology is that the human being can be conceptualized as singular and related at one and the same time. The key-term 'person' carries all the implications of what Horužij has described as 'anthropology of unlocking'. But where Horužij has focused on synergy and on practices of the self that carry towards an existential unlocking, Yannaras' has brought to the fore how central freedom is for any such process to be meaningful. What we find in Yannaras is precisely not a collective ethics, but a personal *ethos* that entails the potential of communion. "If communion is an ontological fact," he writes, "[…] then this presupposes that it has a dynamic, existential realization – that there must be a *hypostatic* bearer of the potential for communion, which is every member of the communion or society. And the potential for communion assumes also a potential for non-communion, which is to say that it presupposes freedom as a definition of the fact of communality."[377] For Yannaras, just like for Horužij, this existential choice between communion and non-communion takes the form of partaking or not-partaking in a tradition that is spelt out as practices. Finally, their argument is straightforward: for them, the monastic or Eucharistic community creates a form of being-together that does not violate personal freedom, and therefore spells out a kind of politics which defies the risk of totalitarianism.[378]

Asceticism, Eucharist, a kind of early-Christian vision of community, is this at all a response to the problematic of political modernity? As a short-cut answer, it certainly is not. However, it seems to me that, when following through the entire analysis of Horužij and Yannaras, elements of their answer turn out to be indeed relevant for our discussion of community after the experience of totalitarianism: *the quality of freedom, the role of practices, the meaning of tradition*. With the elaboration of these elements, they are responding directly to some of the shortcomings of the contemporary philosophical discourse, in particular to the problem of grasping the relationship between the freedom of the human subject and its being part of a community. What we can take from the Orthodox response to totalitarianism, is that the relationship between the human subject and community is not broken, like liberal theory would have it, nor is it natural, like communitarianism argues, nor does it eternally escape determination, like postmodern thinkers present it. Relatedness is a human potentiality for the Orthodox thinkers, and they are concerned with modes of realizing this potentiality. These modes, these 'practices' are

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[377] Ibid., 212.
[378] Ibid., 219, 223.

not simply habits, customs or culture. Nor are they arbitrary. They possess stability and continuity over time as a tradition which unfolds in view of a *telos*, a *telos*, however, that resists a theologico-political formulation.

A *caveat* is necessary here: The theological primacy of freedom and relatedness has not prevented Orthodox thought from becoming, for a large part of its history, foundationalist and exclusionary. From the Slavophile discourse of the Russian nineteenth century to the Serbian-Orthodox nationalism of our days to the state-subservience of post-Soviet Russian Orthodoxy, the instances of the theologico-political taking the upper hand in Orthodox thought have been frequent. What I have been trying to do here is to describe the other side of the story, the one which resists the totalitarian potential inherent in the Orthodox tradition. With my historical and conceptual analysis I have shown that only from within their being-in-the-condition-of-modernity did twentieth century Orthodox theologians begin to recover their ancient tradition and to single out elements that are relevant for the modern philosophical discourse. This re-establishment of a tradition, valid for a specific and as for now minor trend in contemporary Orthodox thought, not only itself qualifies as a profoundly modern gesture, it also questions the validity of categorizations like 'the modern individualist West' and 'the traditional East'. While this insight is hardly stated by Yannaras himself, who, as I pointed out above, frequently polemizices against the West,[379] we find it expressed explicitly in the work of one of his students, Ilias Papagiannopoulos, who writes that "we have arrived at a point where the very ending of Modernity leads *from within* to *constitutive encounters* with other traditions." These traditions, he continues, "open themselves to creative transformations of their pre-modern character within the main modern culture and the fundamental questions that it posits."[380]

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[379] In a more recent essay, written in or shortly after 1999, as a topical reference to the NATO bombing of Serbia suggests, Yannaras actually seems to acknowledge that a spiritual tradition can bring forward a response to modernism while understanding itself as partaking in the condition of modernity. In this text he reflects on the possible responses to Western modernism from within the spiritual traditions of Judaism, Orthodoxy, and Islam. What a response from within any of these traditions must not do, he writes, is to completely reject the civilization and achievements of modernity: "What we must certainly not do is to slip into the easy answer of fundamentalism: an escape backwards, into pre-modernity," he insists. Instead, one should, from within these traditions, "participate actively and dynamically, and above all quickly, in the formulation of post-modernity. To make use of the achievements of modernity and transcend the stalemates it creates." Yannaras credits Emmanuel Levinas from the Jewish tradition, Berdâev, Florovskij, Lossky, and Meyendorff from the Orthodox tradition, and a series of Islamic authors for having made first steps in this direction. Christos Yannaras, "Decline Seen as a Challenge: Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam: Three Traditions Facing the Dilemma of Modernism or Fundamentalism," *Courtesy of the author, December 2003.*
[380] Ilias Papagiannopoulos, "Re-appraising the subject and the social in Western philosophy and in contemporary Orthodox thought," in *Studies in East European Thought* 58 (2006), 302.

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IV.3. Practices of community: Jean-Luc Nancy, Alasdair MacIntyre and the radicalization of postmodernism and communitarianism

The Orthodox Neo-Palamist response to the challenge of totalitarianism can now be brought into a comparison with two other such responses, namely the communitarian and the postmodern. Such a cross-reading brings to the fore that certain elements of a post-totalitarian philosophy of community are common to the Eastern and the Western responses to liberalism. For Jean-Luc Nancy, the notions of *practice* and *freedom* are important, and Alasdair MacIntyre reintroduces into communitarian philosophy the concept of *tradition*. Both of them effect a certain radicalization of their respective strands in contemporary philosophy .

The main thrust of the postmodern response to liberalism has been the critique of those concepts, which modernist political philosophy takes for granted: the individual, community, sovereignty, the 'contract'. Critics of postmodernism have interpreted this gesture as a deconstruction of the political without putting anything else into its place. And indeed, putting 'something else' into the place of deconstructed subjectivity, sovereignty, or community, does not come easily for postmodern political philosophy. One author who is explicit about this task and whose insistence on going beyond deconstruction I would like to interpret as a 'radicalization' of postmodernism, is Jean-Luc Nancy. It is Nancy who asked *Who comes after the Subject?*[381] and who, with this question, made the claim that a post-deconstructive subject can and ought to be thought. The 'paradox of political sense', as Nancy calls it, lies in the fact that the very moment a meaning is given to the political, the political entails the risk of a totalitarian truth. Sovereignty, the people, humanity – these notions have, with the experience of totalitarianism, lost their legitimacy for grounding the political. What they responded to, however, namely the need to make sense of the political, of being-in-common, has stayed with us as a question. We still have to ask for the 'sense' of the political, Nancy insists, but we have to ask in a new way.[382]

Starting-point for Nancy in his thinking about the political in a new way, is Heidegger's *Fundamentalontologie*, a project that failed because Heidegger ran aground on totalitarianism. His 'first philosophy' did not escape, at least for some time, a foundationalism of the most exclusionary and destructive kind. "This very point then," Nancy writes, "indicates to us that place from which first philosophy must recommence: it is necessary to refigure fundamental ontology […] with a thorough resolve that *starts from the plural singular of*

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[381] Cadava, Connor, and Nancy, eds.
[382] Nancy, *Sense of the World*, 90-91.

origins, from *being-with*."[383] The ambition of Nancy's text *Being Singular Plural* is nothing less than "redoing the whole of 'first philosophy'", redoing ontology "by giving the 'singular plural' of Being as its foundation."[384] Indispensable for such an ontology is the recognition that "everything that has ever laid claim to the truth about the nature, essence, or end of 'man' must be undone,"[385] has in fact been undone with the Nietzschean critique. Nancy is heeding the lessons by Heidegger and Nietzsche. What he wants to do is to think the human subject and community after and in the light of their totalitarian destruction and in view of their philosophical deconstruction.

Taking into consideration this lesson means that the situative dimension of the political, defined as the shape, sense and stage given to social relations (*forme, sens, scène*)[386], must remain indeterminate. Postmodern thinkers have tried to grasp this indeterminacy with notions such as 'the empty place'[387], 'the empty chair'[388], or 'the opening'[389]. An emptiness that must not be filled nor forgotten[390] – this is the ground on which the political is situated for postmodern political philosophy. Nancy, however, does not stop there. What he wants to do is to address the very opening and emptiness of the political. He does so with his ontology of the *singular plural*. It is this very move towards something else in the place of the indeterminacy of the situative dimension of the political, which turns his philosophy into a 'radicalization' of the postmodern response. Nancy proposes to think about the situative dimension of the political in terms of being singular plural, saying that every *one* only has existence qua being in relation with *another one* or other ones: "[…] not only must being-with-one-another not be understood starting from the presupposition of being-one," Nancy writes, "but on the contrary, being-one (Being as such, complete Being or *ens*

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[383] Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 26.
[384] Ibid., xv.
[385] Ibid., xii.
[386] Lefort, 216-219.
[387] Claude Lefort, "The Logic of Totalitarianism," in *The Political Forms of Modern Society. Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. John B. Thompson (Oxford: Polity Press, 1986).
[388] Agnes Heller, "Politik nach dem Tod Gottes," in *Bilderverbot*, ed. Michael J. Rainer and Hans-Gerd Janßen, Jahrbuch Politische Theologie 2 (Münster: LIT, 1997).
[389] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'etat de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Editions Galilee, 1993). Cit. after: Heller, "Politik nach dem Tod Gottes," 85. The motive of the 'lack' in postmodern thought and its corresponding motives in Christian theology has been explored by Peter Zeillinger (Peter Zeillinger, "Com-Munitas and Com-Passion. The Rupture as Event (and Avènement) of Identity," Paper at the conference *The Human Subject and Community in European Philosophy and Theology. Perspectives from East and West,* European University Institute, Florence, 19 May 2006).) I owe the following considerations to this text and to conversations with him, Ilias Papagiannopoulos and Sergej Horužij during the workshop I organised in May 2006 in Florence, entitled "The Human Subject and Community in European Philosophy and Theology. Perspectives from East and West."
[390] "Der leere Stuhl wartet auf den Messias. Wenn jemand den Stuhl besetzt, kann man sicher sein: es handelt sich um den pervertierten oder verlogenen Messiah. Wenn jemand den Stuhl wegnimmt, dann ist die Vorführung zu Ende und der Geist wird die Gemeinde verlassen. Die Politik kann diesen unbesetzten Stuhl nicht gebrauchen; aber solange man den Stuhl beläßt wo er ist, genau dort im Zentrum des Raumes, wo er in seiner warnenden, vielleicht sogar pathetischen Leere fixiert bleibt, müssen die politischen Handlungsträger sein Dasein immer noch in Rechnung stellen. Zumindest steht es ihnen frei, sein Dasein in Rechnung zu stellen. Alles übrige ist Pragmatismus." Heller, "Politik nach dem Tod Gottes," 87.

realissimum) can only be understood by starting from being-with-one-another."[391] *Being singular plural* – this is Nancy's ontological premise: "the singular-plural constitutes the essence of being, a constitution that undoes or dislocates every single, substantial essence of Being itself."[392]

Being singular and being plural at one and the same time – in view of the Orthodox response I have outlined above, this resonates with the ontological principles of freedom and relatedness. What the Orthodox and the postmodern response to the challenge of thinking community after totalitarianism share, is the insistence on the indeterminacy of the ground of being-together. For both, determinate 'religion' (which from the Orthodox Neo-Palamist perspective means a mistaken interpretation of religion) has been displaced from the stage of the political. It has been displaced by secularism, formally, but more thoroughly by the Nietzschean announcement of the death of God. And not only 'religion' has been displaced, but also its secularized inheritors, the theologico-political in all its different modes. Nancy is very clear about this point in his polemic against Christianity: "Sense," he writes, "can proceed only from a deconstruction of Christianity,"[393] and he specifies: "Which signifies, to be precise, something other than a critique or a demolition: the bringing to light of that which will have been the agent of Christianity as the very form of the West, much more deeply than all religion and even as the self-deconstruction of religion, that is, the accomplishment of philosophy by Judeo-Platonism and Latinity, ontotheology as its own end, the 'death of God' […]."[394] The Orthodox thinkers cited above would not be offended by this statement, they would agree. For Yannaras, the rejection of religion in postmodern thought is the logical consequence of the metaphysical grounding of Western theology. Postmodernism denounces essentialism as the basic category of Western metaphysics, and if theology is understood as bound up with the essentialist categories of Western philosophy, then it is inevitable that theology is denounced as essentialist, too – and this is indeed what happens with Nietzsche, Heidegger, and in Nancy. For Yannaras, however, it is clear that postmodern philosophy cannot admit theology because it lacks the awareness of the potential of *apophatic* theology.[395] In his interpretation, postmodernism cannot admit religion because it cannot *not* think it as essentialist – it cannot think religion as *experience*.

The Orthodox response to political modernism is a religious response. It is, however, not a *confessional* religious response, in the sense that it postulates the one truth of a specific Church. It is religious in the sense that it attributes a certain way of being to the

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[391] Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 56-57.
[392] Ibid., 28-29.
[393] Nancy, Sense of the World, 55.
[394] Ibid., 183. Footnote 50.
[395] Yannaras, *Absence and Unknowability*, 54-55.

human subject *and* accounts for the potential to be 'otherwise'. Being 'otherwise', self-transformation, lies at the centre of any religious experience. The Orthodox response is an *apophatic* religious response – that what it points to must not be filled nor forgotten. But this is Heller's way of speaking about the empty chair of the Messiah, and it is only half of what the Orthodox response actually says. Orthodoxy holds the place of the centre, of the essence or substance, empty, but it speaks about the experience of the Divine 'energies'. For the Orthodox, Yannaras reminds us, the agnostic potential of apophaticism is held in check by the experience of the Church and of mystical-ascetic practices. This is where the Neo-Palamist Orthodox thinkers go beyond the postmodern authors Derrida, Heller and Lefort with whom they otherwise share so much ground.[396] The Orthodox spiritual tradition operates in the horizon of a transcendent Being which escapes theologico-political essentialization. It escapes essentialization because it is, theologically, ontologically, based on the distinction between essence and energies. It is the *energies* which are the subject of ontology*,* and not the essence. The energies, in turn, become tangible in the form of *practices* – practices of relating oneself to the other and to the 'Other'.

It is interesting to note that *practices* also become the central element of Nancy's singular plural ontology. In *The Sense of the World,* Nancy refers to the political as the practices of 'tying the (k)not': "The tying of the (k)not is nothing, no *res*, nothing but the placing-into-relation that presupposes at once proximity and distance, attachment and detachment, intricacy, intrigue and ambivalence."[397] Political modernism has thought this tying in the form of the 'contract', but what Nancy wants to do is "to think the social bond according to another model or perhaps without a model. To think its act, establishment, and binding."[398] "A politics of the incessant tying of singularities with each other, over each other, and through each other," he calls it, a politics "without any *end* other than the enchainment of (k)nots, without any structure other than their interconnection, and without any possibility of calling any single (k)not or the totality of (k)nots self-sufficient (for there would be 'totality' only in the enchainment itself)."[399] Eventually, Nancy talks about the *praxis* of the (k)not: "It is the *tying* of the (k)not that must come to the crucial point, the place of democracy's empty

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[396] We could ask whether this is where Neo-Palamism goes beyond the apophaticism of Judaism. I am not pursuing this question, which was brought to my mind by Horužij, because I lack the competences to discuss it. It is an interesting question. What can probably be said assuredly is that this is the point where Neo-Palamism goes beyond the apophaticism of Neo-Platonism. For a study of the parallels between Neo-Platonic negative theology and postmodern philosophy, see: William Franke, "Apophasis and the Turn of Philosophy to Religion: From Neoplatonic Negative Theology to Postmodern Negation of Theology," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 60, no. 1-3 (2006). On the point that Neo-Palamism is different from Neo-Platonism, see: Kapriev, "Systemelemente," 277, Хоружий, "Имяславие."
[397] Nancy, *Sense of the World*, 111.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Ibid., 111-112.

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truth and subjectivity's excessive sense."[400] Practices of relating give sense to the political, the political comes to stand for the "the maintenance of a relation that communicates no sense other than the relation itself."[401] These relationships do not have an 'end', the practices of relating are not the 'means' for a final formulation of the relationship, because such a final formulation would already amount to a 'total' sense.

The political situated in practices of relating – this is what the Orthodox and the postmodern response share. At a closer look, however, we find that despite of this similarity in conceptualizing community, a crucial difference remains – a difference that touches upon the conceptualization of the human subject. A philosophy of community after totalitarianism, we recall, must account for the freedom of the human being *and* its relatedness to other human beings. Nancy and the Orthodox thinkers hold opposing views on how this 'and' is achieved, on how the singular being *freely* relates to its being plural in community. For Nancy, the link between being singular and being plural is not an issue. The human being *is* singular plural. Human freedom lies in the fact that persons relate to each other without being invested into the formulation of a relationship that would be larger than the act of relating. Being related is not a secondary quality of a singular self.[402]

With this last sentence the Orthodox thinkers would in principle agree, only that for them being related is not a 'natural' quality of the singular being. For the Orthodox, freedom lies in the faculty to decide for or against relating. In *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy writes that human beings *are in relation* just as much as they *are individual*, and he wants to make the point that Western philosophy has so far not adequately accounted for this fact. For the Orthodox thinkers, human beings are not in relation automatically, they *can* and *ought to be* in relation, they are called upon to realize their relatedness *qua* their having been created in the image of God, but it is their free choice whether to do so or not. When Nancy writes, that "we are in touch with ourselves insofar as we exist. Being in touch with ourselves is what makes us 'us', and there is no other secret to discover buried behind this very touching, behind the 'with' of coexistence,"[403] he postulates a givenness of human relationships that in the Orthodox perspective becomes much more problematic: "The potential for communion

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[400] Ibid., 111.
[401] Ibid., 117.
[402] There is not "first the individual, then the group: first the one, then the others; first the rights-bearing subject, then the real relationships; first 'individual psychology', then 'collective psychology'; and above all, first a 'subject', then 'intersubjectivity'." Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 44. The same view is expressed by Esposito: "La verità è che tutte queste concezioni sono unite dal presupposto irriflesso che la comunità sia una 'proprietà' dei soggetti che accomuna: un attributo, una determinazione, un predicato che li qualifica come appartententi ad uno stesso insieme. O anche una 'sostanza' prodotta dalla loro unione. In ogni caso essa è concepita come una qualità che si aggiunge alla loro natura di soggetti, facendone soggetti *anche* di comunità." Esposito, *Communitas*, x.
[403] Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 13.

assumes also a potential for non-communion, which is to say that it presupposes freedom as a definition of the fact of communality."[404]

Yannaras has criticized the postmodern understanding of freedom as indeterminacy and of relationship as given in *Freedom of Morality*. There he analyses the work of Cornelius Castoriadis and, while giving him credit for having pointed out the contingency of the modern rationalist order, he is critical of Castoriadis' theory of the indeterminacy of being because it cannot account for the 'bearer' of this indeterminacy: "[…] the theory of the dynamic indeterminacy of life *is* holistic when there is no *hypostatic* bearer of this freedom and distinctiveness; that is to say, when freedom and distinctiveness are not an achievement but an objective datum."[405] In what could be read as a direct commentary on Nancy, Yannaras writes: "If we make the ontological fact of communion definitely objective in its historical, phenomenological dimension, we then remain bound by the metaphysics of conventional intellectual identities; we are simply putting the idea of 'communion' in the place of the concept of being-in-itself as an entity."[406] The Orthodox and the postmodern approach to the political differ on the issue of personal freedom. They have to differ on this point, because one is a tradition which operates in the view of a *telos* that makes of relatedness an achievement and of freedom a predicament, whereas the other postulates relatedness and freedom in immanence. For both, the meaning of community lies in practices of relating, but where Nancy leaves these practices undetermined, the Orthodox inscribe them into a tradition and give them a concrete form – ascetic practices, the celebration of the Eucharist. In this way, practices have stability and continuity over time in view of a, in itself 'singular plural', *telos*.

This is how far one can go when reading across the Orthodox and postmodern thinking about community. That an irreducible difference remains, is not unexpected, what is surprising is rather the considerably large ground which the two responses to the experience of totalitarianism share. Nancy's attempt to situate the political in the *singular plural* represents a radicalization of the postmodern response to political modernism. It goes beyond the gesture of deconstruction and seeks to put into the space that has been opened up a different approach to the political. This approach can be described as *practices of community*. That these practices remain infinitely indeterminate, however, distinguishes the postmodern not only from the Orthodox, but also from another 'radicalized' critique of political modernism: namely Alasdair MacIntyre's communitarianism.

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[404] Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 212.
[405] Ibid., 211. See also his polemics with Castoriadis for not being aware of the potential of the ontological premises of Orthodoxy: Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 209. Footnote 17.
[406] Yannaras, *Freedom of Morality*, 211-212.

Alasdair MacIntyre has rejected the definition 'communitarian' for his philosophy,[407] and, indeed, his work is as much a response to liberalism as it is to liberal communitarianism and postmodernism. However, while it would not be correct to characterize him as a communitarian of the kind of Taylor, Walzer or Sandel, the term 'communitarian' nevertheless seems an appropriate description for his theory of tradition which interests us here. MacIntyre's understanding of community grounded in tradition resonates with the Orthodox concept of practices in view of a *telos*, and his suggestion how tradition can become meaningful under conditions of modernity is worth considering in comparison with the postmodern rejection of tradition and the Orthodox post-totalitarian elaboration of tradition. His dedication to one specific intellectual tradition, finally, marks the limit for reading across his radicalized communitarian and the Orthodox and postmodern response.

Traditions, for MacIntyre, are integrated systems of intellectual enquiry. Comparing a tradition-based enquiry with a craft, MacIntyre emphasises that such an enquiry takes place on the level of theory as well as on the level of practice.[408] An intellectual tradition is a way of understanding the world and of relating to the world. MacIntyre gives different examples for intellectual traditions thus understood, the Athenian *polis*, early Christianity, or Puritanism. Partaking in any of these tradition has, historically, meant the sharing of theoretical premises and of practices which have been spelt out coherently and cooperatively over time.[409] Continuity, stability and cooperation over time, these are also the feature of the Orthodox understanding of tradition, tradition which manifests itself as practices in view of the *telos* of *theosis*. For the Orthodox, we recall, practices and experiences hold in check the agnostic potential of apophatic theology. A tradition, in both MacIntyre's and the Orthodox view, is spelled out as the stability and continuity of practices over time, a stability and continuity that derives from a *telos* or *truth.* They are thus both at odds with the postmodern view of infinite pratices of relating. Where the two approaches differ, however, is in how they safeguard this *telos* or *truth* from totalitarian formulation: For the Orthodox, the *telos* itself defies an objectified formulation of its practices; for MacIntyre, objectivity within a tradition is possible, but there is a plurality of truths and traditions.

In MacIntyre's view, which he expresses in his early work *A Short History of Ethics*, rival moralities and traditions co-exist in the space of modern relativism. Modern man is autonomous, free to remain without a tradition or to choose one particular tradition or value-system from which to draw moral guidance. What troubles MacIntyre about this diagnosis is that in the last consequence, modern relativism does not provide grounds for judgement

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[407] See: Knight, ed., 244.
[408] Alasdair MacIntyre C., *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (London: Duckworth, 1990), 65.
[409] Ibid., 150.

about what makes one value-system preferable over another. He rejects 'human nature' as a common denominator for judgement because he rightly recognizes that different moral outlooks and value-systems have different understandings of human nature. From this follows that modern man is free to choose with whom to be morally bound and by what ends, rules, and virtues to be guided. It also follows that modern man is bound to make this choice unless he is to become utterly solipsistic.[410] This is where MacIntyre turns around the liberating feature of the Enlightenment and formulates it as a question of 'choosing a tradition'. His entire work after *A Short History of Ethics* is concerned with what this choice entails and how it can be justified.

In an argument which MacIntyre shares with Castoriadis, he lays down that the Enlightenment's attempt to do away with the pluralism of traditions and to establish one tradition of intellectual enquiry once and for all – rational enquiry based on reason – failed. The Enlightenment had proclaimed a unitary conception of reason defined as instrumental rationality. The genre which best represents this understanding of reason is the encyclopaedia, the ordered representation of knowledge and progress within a single framework that amounts to truth. MacIntyre then describes how Nietzsche, the genealogist, broke with this mode of rational enquiry. For Nietzsche, there was a "multiplicity of perspectives within each of which truth-from-a-point-of-view may be asserted but no truth-as-such."[411] After genealogy, MacIntyre writes, it has become difficult to appeal to rules of rationality as such. They have given place to strategies of insight and strategies of subversion.

MacIntyre does not want to accept the Nietzschean answer, namely that perspectivism is the last word on the failure of the Enlightenment to establish a rationality once and for all. Unlike Nietzsche, MacIntyre does not think that the Enlightenment set itself the wrong task, he does not consider the idea of pursuit of truth fallacious as such, but in his view the Enlightenment was simply a particularly weak pretender in the cause. In MacIntyre's words, "the thinkers of the Enlightenment set out to replace what they took to be discredited traditional and superstitious forms of morality by a kind of secular morality that would be entitled to secure the assent of any rational person. So in Scotland, England, France and Germany alike philosophers as different as Hume, Bentham, Diderot and Kant tried to formulate moral principles to which no adequately reflective rational person could refuse allegiance. The attempt failed."[412] The failure of the Enlightenment unleashed perspectivism, but it did not proof the impossibility of moral objectivism. Moral objectivism, MacIntyre claims,

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[410] Alasdair MacIntyre C., *A Short History of Ethics*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 1967), 257-259.
[411] MacIntyre, *Moral Enquiry*, 42.
[412] Alasdair MacIntyre C., "The Claims of *after Virtue*," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 70.

is and remains possible even after the failure of the Enlightenment. It can be sustained *within* a tradition.

What we find in MacIntyre, is a completely different way of heeding the lesson of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and the experience of totalitarianism than the strategies adoped by the authors I have treated so far. MacIntyre does not draw the conclusion that the deconstruction of truths and rationalities is the only possible way to move forward, like postmodernism; nor does he retreat from the formulation of an objective morality into an apophatic knowlege by experience, like Neo-Palamism. He, quite simply, postulates a plurality of traditions and the freedom of choice between them. MacIntyre admits that no tradition of intellectual enquiry can provide an overall-standard from which to decide disagreement between different rationalities. There is, in other words, no 'total' rationality. All there is are different rationalities, which respond, in varying degrees of adequacy, to current problematics,[413] and people are called upon to decide between them.

MacIntyre's assertion of the plurality of traditions after genealogy is relevant for our understanding of the Orthodox Neo-Palamist intellectual tradition which I have described in this study. 'Tradition under conditions of modernity', I called it in chapter III, meaning that in the twentieth century we find a group of Orthodox thinkers who consciously seek to reconnect to a theory and body of practices from the past in order to elaborate Orthodoxy under the impression of its failures and trials in the face of totalitarianism. Another way of expressing the idea of 'tradition under conditions of modernity' is to be speaking about 'broken' tradition.[414] The experience of totalitarianism, one could argue, is the most striking image of the breaking of traditions. The trial of Russian Orthodoxy in the twentieth century could be taken as an example for such a breaking of tradition, a breaking that does not only entail a destruction by external force, like the persecution of members of the Church and destruction of religious sites, but also a loss of legitimacy and moral authority of an intellectual tradition itself by failing to reflect critically on its complicity with a totalitarian ideology. Not only the Russian Orthodox Church under Soviet rule is meant here, also pre-revolutionary Slavophile religious philosophy and its contemporary heirs. Neo-Palamism, I have shown, was a response to both of these failures of Orthodoxy to adequately meet the challenges of totalitarianism.

MacIntyre sounds like a postmodernist when he upholds the principled plurality of traditions. He describes as 'contested justices, contested rationalities' a person's self-

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[413] Alasdair MacIntyre C., *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (London: Duckworth, 1988), 361.
[414] I owe the reflections on the brokenness of tradition to conversations with Ilias Papagiannopoulos. Sergej Horužij also reflected on this point during a conversation. One has to convince oneself that the tradition exists, he said, and then one can seek to accede to it. His writings on Hesychasm can be read as an affirmation of a tradition which is not self-evident anymore.

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reflective belonging to a tradition,[415] recognizing that partaking in a tradition implies exclusion. MacIntyre tries to alleviate this exclusionary aspect by appealing to the functionality of traditions, to their unequal capacities for solving problems, and to the human capacity to communicate over those differences.[416] He even seems to take a step beyond Nancy when he describes the singular being endowed with a faculty of *choice* between or for or against relating to one tradition or the other. But he eventually retreats from arguing for this faculty of choice in the human subject, for an existential personal freedom, when he repeats the well-rehearsed communitarian argument that people 'inhabit' a tradition somewhat naturally: "Most of our contemporaries do not live at or even near that point of extremity, but neither are they for the most part able to recognize in themselves in their encounters with traditions that they have already implicitly to some significant degree given their allegiance to some one particular tradition."[417] It seems to me that the limit of MacIntyre's approach lies in this communitarian turn of his argument. MacIntyre does not overcome the major shortcoming of communitarianism, namely the presupposition of relatedness as a natural faculty of human beings. Turning around the criticism which Sandel voiced against liberalism,[418] MacIntyre's meta-theory of tradition may be parasitic on a notion of personal freedom and diversity that it does not itself provide.

MacIntyre's conclusion to his meta-theoretical reflections is the conscious choice of one tradition. In *After Virtue*, this tradition is still broadly called Aristotelian. It is only later, by the time of writing *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* that Christianity fully comes into the picture. There MacIntyre argues that ethics is best understood in terms of Aquinas' synthesis of Aristotle's teleological account of practical rationality and the genesis of human action with an Augustinian understanding of the deformed will and the theological conception of grace

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[415] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* , 394-395.

[416] "I have asserted not only that the kind of small-scale political community that deserves our rational allegiance will characteristically have a high degree of shared cultural inheritance, but also that its life will have to be informed by a large measure of agreement not only on its common good, but on human goods in general. And not only liberals may find this alarming. For this may seem at first glance to be a kind of community that could have no room for individuals or groups who hold and are recognized to hold radically dissenting views on fundamental issues. What will be important to such a society, if it holds the kind of view of the human good and the common good that I have outlined, will be to ask what can be learned from such dissenters. It will therefore be crucial not only to tolerate dissent, but to enter into rational conversation with it and to cultivate as a political virtue not merely a passive tolerance, but an active and enquiring attitude towards radically dissenting views, a virtue notably absent from the dominant politics of the present." Knight, ed., 251-252. Originally published as 'Politics, Philosophy and the Common Good', *Studi Perugini*, no. 3, 1997.

[417]"Most of our contemporaries do not live at or even near that point of extremity, but neither are they for the most part able to recognize in themselves in their encounters with traditions that they have already implicitly to some significant degree given their allegiance to some one particular tradition." MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* , 397.

[418] That it is parasitic on a notion of community it cannot itself provide. Sandel, "Procedural Republic," 91. See: II.2.2.

required to overcome it.[419] MacIntyre's decision to single out Thomist Aristotelianism as the tradition which convinces him more than any other non-Enlightenment tradition represents a radicalization of the communitarian argument that morality needs 'sources'. In *Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor invokes Christianity as a moral source for modern society towards the very end, but he never is as explicit about it as MacIntyre. Taylor understands Western modern secular society as derivative of the Christian community of the past. In his view, "modern culture, in breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom, also carried certain facets of Christian life further than they ever were taken or could have been taken within Christendom."[420] MacIntyre is not so positive in his judgement. For him, modern morality is not a better derivative of Christianity, it is rather in need of a conscious reappropriation of Christianity.

The Christianity MacIntyre means is Thomism. In terms of Christian theology, MacIntyre's Neo-Thomist viewpoint and Neo-Palamism are incompatible. Thomas Aquinas and Gregorios Palamas laid the foundations for two different models of theology and philosophy, one teaching transcendence, the other energies.[421] This is the point where a cross-reading of MacIntyre and the Orthodox tradition would enter into a theological debate and where my cross-reading in search of conceptions of the political stops. What I have been interested here is the quality of freedom, the role of practices and the meaning of tradition in a radicalized communitarian response to modernism. That the two intellectual traditions which invoke a Christian patristic heritage largely concur on the last two topics, and differ on the question of freedom, is, at this point, a satisfactory finding. It also suggests that 'freedom' in communitarian philosophy has not been thought to its end, has not been read against and in the light of the critique of essentialism, which postmodernism has provided us with. MacIntyre's 'pluralism of essences' does not convince when it comes to the grounding of personal freedom and diversity.

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[419] It is important to note that this is not a retrospective justification of a standpoint MacIntyre held already previously. In his youth, he was religious, but Presbyterian, not Catholic, and during a Marxist period in his life prior to writing *After Virtue* he even considered himself a-religious. Alasdair MacIntyre, "An Interview with Giovanna Borradori (1991)," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 263.
[420] Charles Taylor, *A Catholic Modernity? Charles Taylor's Marianist Award Lecture* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16-18.
[421] See III.1.1.

IV.4. Three elements for a post-totalitarian philosophy of community

Taken together, the three philosophical approaches I have described in this chapter – Neo-Palamist Orthodox thought, Nancy's postmodernism and MacIntyre's communitarianism – extend the interpretative space of political modernity. They extent it conceptually by partly responding to, partly sharpening the problematics and shortcomings of liberal, postmodern and communitarian political philosophy. What a cross-reading of these authors has brought to the fore, is that central topics for a discussion of the situative dimension of the political in our times are *the quality of freedom, the role of practices* and *the meaning of tradition*. It is with the elaboration of these three topics, that the authors provide elements for a philosophy of community in the post-totalitarian *and* post-Cold War constellation of Europe.

For the authors treated in this chapter, negatively defined freedom is not an adequate response to the phenomenon of the totalitarian atomisation of individuals. Nor is positive freedom in the way described by Talmon, Berlin or Skinner satisfying inasmuch as it entails the risk of totalitarian communization. From the discussion of the Eastern Orthodox and a radicalized postmodern and communitarian response to liberalism, there emerge different interpretations of freedom, which do not fit either the negative or the positive definition. Freedom towards oneself, freedom as predicament, freedom as indeterminacy, and freedom as the choice of inhabiting a tradition or not, these are the various aspects of freedom which stand for discussion in an extended interpretative space of political modernity. When looked at in this way, freedom is not either negative or positive, but it may become either that or the other by faculty of the human subject who is the bearer of this freedom. On this point, it seems to me, the Orthodox intellectual tradition does indeed have a strong argument to add to the political philosophical discourse. It brings into focus that we might better not talk about freedom as being *in principle* negative or positive, but about freedom *in practice*.

Practices mean something very different for each of the authors treated in the previous chapter. They are concrete physical and psycho-somatic activities for Horužij, who is interested in ascetic practices. They are modes of interaction for Yannaras, who thinks about the celebration of the Eucharist. They are fleeting contacts and acts of communication for Nancy; and they are the stable patterns of a craft for MacIntyre. In an extended interpretative space of political modernity, practices, it seems to me, should be discussed in all of these aspects. We may speak about practices of the self, or about practices of community, but eventually we are reminded that the two aspects belong together. In both views, the bearer of these practices is the human subject. The human subject is defined first and foremost by the quality of freedom, a freedom, however, that acquires meaning and content in practice – in relating to oneself and to other human beings, or in not relating.

Some of the above-mentioned authors refer to this practiced freedom as *tradition*. We are accustomed to think about tradition as something that lies before modernity, as something that is overcome by it. With this study, I propose a different interpretation of tradition. 'Tradition under conditions of modernity' is not a relapse into pre-modern understandings of the self and the world, it is an elaboration of tradition from within modernity. It is the attempt to think about the stability and continuity of practices over time in defiance of a totalitarianism that achieved stability and continuity through coercion. 'Tradition under conditions of modernity' suggests that personal freedom and stability and continuity of practices can co-exist. With Castoriadis and Lefort, I want to suggest that modern political philosophy, which has to face up to the contingency of its self-institution, also finds itself in the position of having to re-visit its founding myth of having overcome all tradition. Philosophy in an extended interpretative space of political modernity should, in my view, be concerned with the topic of tradition.

Having said this, however, it needs to be emphasized that, with the discussion of the Orthodox intellectual tradition in this study, I also wanted to show that such a concern with tradition from the perspective of political philosophy is not arbitrary. It is not arbitrary in the sense that it brings into view tradition as response and as responsibility in the face of modernity's achievements and failures. Tradition as a mode of being self-reflexive about modernity, could be one way of describing this. From the example of the Orthodox intellectual tradition, we see that a tradition is under constant discussion and re-interpretation, it is not a unified formative element. Tradition may amount to a mode of being self-reflexive in the modern condition, but it may also imply closure and the rejection of modernity. For this reason, it seems to me, that one precondition for the discussion of tradition in the extended interpretative political philosophical space is historical understanding. We need to know what we are talking about before we choose to treat a subject of tradition or to reject it as irrelevant for political philosophy. In this study, I have chosen to treat as a subject relevant for post-totalitarian political philosophy the Orthodox Neo-Palamist elaboration of the concept of the human subject (Horužij's anthropology of the border, Yannaras' notion of person) and of community (*organon, communion*), and I have elaborated their approach in a cross-reading with Western authors. I have decided *not* to treat in this context topics and notions that are usually associated with Orthodox political thought, for example *sobornost'* or *symphonia* – for me they are, in Europe's post-totalitarian and post-Cold War constellation, a subject for the history of political thought, not for political philosophy.

On the question of the situative dimension of the political, none of this amounts to a conclusion. I am not offering a philosophy of community after totalitarianism. Nor, however, have I merely dismantled the existing approaches of liberalism, communitarianism and

postmodernism. Where I have criticized these, I have also pointed out authors who address their shortcomings, and where I have accused them of ignoring an intellectual tradition that is temporally, spatially and culturally removed from the Western mainstream, I have shown that there is considerable correspondence between Western and Eastern responses to totalitarianism. The re-thinking of the political problematic of modernity from the East and beyond liberal, communitarian and postmodern political philosophy has served the purpose of extending the interpretative space of political modernity, of sharpening the problematic of community and the human subject after the experience of totalitarianism and of singling out some issues which are especially pertinent as elements for a post-totalitarian philosophy of community: the quality of freedom, the role of practices and the meaning of tradition.

V. Epilogue

Starting with a definition of political modernity from the angle of its greatest trial, namely totalitarianism, this study has pursued two questions: How to conceptualize community after the experience of totalitarianism? And, what can the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition contribute to this debate? In the second and the third chapter, I have prepared the ground for finally giving an answer to these two questions in the fourth chapter. From the contestation that the interpretative space of political modernity spelt out in terms of liberalism, communitarianism and postmodernism has its limits (II.3.), I have moved to analyzing how the Orthodox intellectual tradition in the twentieth century has reacted to the 'lesson' of the experience of totalitarianism (summed up in III.4.), before, finally, drawing some conclusions on the contribution of the Eastern Orthodox intellectual tradition to an extended space of political modernity (IV.4.). Instead of rehearsing the conclusions given in all these respective parts, I prefer to end this study with some considerations about methodology and potential questions to be pursued further.

Being *after* the experience of totalitarianism, implies unsettlement and unease with modernity itself – an unease which finds expression in postmodernism, but also in a critical engagement with the legacy of the Enlightenment more generally. Into this context of an unsettled modernity, I put an intellectual tradition which has frequently been regarded as non- or pre-modern. However, I have *not* presented this comparison as the encounter of an unsettled and 'weakened' modernity that meets a self-contained and 'unspoilt' tradition – such an argument, which might please theorists of civilization, is in historical and intellectual terms plainly untrue. The Orthodox tradition, I have shown, is put on trial by the experience of totalitarianism just like Western intellectual traditions, and it emerges from this experience with an equal sense of unease and unsettlement as the West. Despite a historical trajectory that is different from the Western process of modernization, Orthodoxy partakes in the condition of modernity. And just like Western philosophers, who have taken various standpoints in this condition, Orthodox thinkers have formulated responses – responses to the shortcomings they identify in Western philosophy, but also in their own intellectual tradition.

The difficulty of this analysis therefore lay in the fact that both sides of the comparison, the Western political discourse and the Orthodox intellectual tradition, are pluralistic and tension-ridden in themselves. This is, first of all, a methodological difficulty. It requires the elaboration of immense debates that could easily fill entire libraries (the interpretative space of political modernity, the Orthodox spiritual and intellectual tradition), before picking out a few very specific elements which are then brought into comparison. The liability of the choice is the first and obvious problem. As for my choice of Western authors, I

take responsibility for disregarding potentially relevant works. However, what distinguishes Nancy and MacIntyre from other authors is the great clarity of their break with the modernist tradition – Nancy through his critique of essentialism, MacIntyre through his insistence to recommence political and moral philosophy from before the Enlightenment. Authors such as Habermas or Taylor doubtlessly also take issue with liberal utilitarian individualism, but they do not break with the Enlightenment as such. One could say that their unsettlement in the modern condition is less profound than that of Nancy or MacIntyre. As for my choice of representatives of the Orthodox tradition, I defend it with more authority, on the basis of a comprehensive overview over Orthodox thought in the twentieth century. My focus on the Neo-Palamist tradition is motivated by the fact that, among Orthodox thinkers who reflect on their being in the condition of modernity (I have pointed out that this is not the case for all of Orthodox thought today), they effect a very clear break with the Enlightenment tradition by moving back in time to the anti-Scholastic and pre-Enlightenment Byzantine theology. Also here the case is different for a thinker like Bulgakov, who seeks not the displacement of the modern discourse, but rather a modulation. In short, my choice has been guided by the criterium of how profound the unsettlement and unease with modernity becomes for authors who reflect on the experience of totalitarianism.

The second methodological problem, however, arises after the choice. The authors I have selected for close analysis in the last chapter are themselves in a struggle. They are trying to come to terms with a modernity that has become problematic and they have no certainties to fall back onto. Nor can they invent new certainties, because the entire lesson of totalitarianism was to caution against claims to absolute truth. In the last chapter, I describe the different strategies which Orthodox, postmodern and communitarian thinkers pursue in order to assert community *and* the freedom of the human subject without amounting to yet another potentially totalitarian construct. It is plain that a comparison of such undertakings is, philosophically and methodologically, very challenging. For this reason, I have limited myself to singling out a few elements that are pertinent for all of these authors. These elements can be elaborated further, but eventually the nature of the debates that have brought them forth prohibits their conclusive discussion and definition.

Methodological difficulties arise not only from the two difficult-to-define poles in the comparison, but also from the point where they are most easily defined and distinguished: religion. I have brought together a philosophical approach that draws on Orthodox religion and trends in Western political philosophy that are not particularly religious. I have compared these intellectual trends not on the basis of a similarity in genre, but on the basis of a shared problematic – the challenge which totalitarianism poses to a thinking of community. On the level of a meta-theory of political philosophy, this study therefore has demonstrated how a perspective based on religion and tradition may find its place in the interpretative space of

political modernity. This could be taken as an example for the kind of political dimension of religion which Claude Lefort has invoked when he said that a philosopher who "thinks of the principles that generate society and names them 'the political', […] automatically includes religious phenomena within his field of reference"[422]. What I have, in some sense, added to this argument of Lefort, is the qualification that religious phenomena are hardly ever unitary formative elements, but that they are under constant discussion and re-negotiation and ought to be understood in their historical and theological dimension.

In the concrete case of Horužij, Yannaras and MacIntyre, it seems to me, that their understanding of religious tradition deserves special attention in the extended space of political modernity. They do not present us with religion that launches a fundamentalist attack on the West, nor with religion that claims to be the better side of secular modernity, but rather with religion understood on the very basic level of relating to oneself, the other and the world. Such an interpretation of religious tradition adds an important facet to the debate about religion in the interpretative space of political modernity, which for the most part excludes religion. It is also at odds with the various institutions, interpretations and manifestations of religion, which trouble scholars and politicians with their 'return' to the secular modern space. Horužij's suggestion of an anthropology that has a place for religious experience, rather than a religious anthropology, deserves further consideration in a time where the relationship between politics and religion is again under negotiation.

Terminologically problematic was my argument about the modernity of Europe, given that some of my major reference-authors – Rawls, Taylor, Walzer, MacIntyre – are North American. Would I not have had to limit myself to European authors, and would my argument not have unfolded differently if I had? This is a question which only further research will answer, but what is almost certain is that the picture of the interpretative space of political modernity which I developed out of the deliberately overemphasized token-positions of liberalism, communitarianism and postmodernism will become much more complicated with further reading. Nonetheless, what I referred to as 'entangled modernities' is really one condition of modernity shared by the West after totalitarianism and after the Cold War. This constellation constitutes a challenge and a chance, not only for Europe but also for other parts of the world. Europe is the site where this entanglement is strikingly visible, and it brings into focus a Europe that is not only defined by its Western identity, but also by its Eastern cultural and intellectual traditions.

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[422] Lefort, "Theologico-Political," 221.

It is the nature of a lot of comparative research that it does not 'solve the problem', that it rather opens up a problematic in all its facets and points out various ways of approaching it. The same has been the case with this study. I have not offered a definition of the modernity of Europe, a solution to the challenge that the experience of totalitarianism poses to a thinking of community, nor have I proposed a meta-theory of religion and the political. But, I have made some steps in each of these directions. With this study, I have countered divisive approaches to Europe, sharpened the problematic of community after totalitarianism, and extended the interpretative space of political modernity.

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