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**Faith, Science and the Question of Death: Retrieving the Philosophical Vision
of Nikolai F. Fyodorov**

Abstract: In this study¹ I critically discuss the religious philosophy of Nikolai F. Fyodorov. Beforehand I will offer a synoptic overview of its key components. The thought of Fyodorov may serve as a model for case study work in regard to two crucial questions: (1) What is the relation between the past and the future? and (2) What is the relation between faith and science? These questions receive their spiritual, theological and philosophical answers through Fyodorov's reflection on the (3) overcoming of death. In offering his answers Fyodorov taps into the innermost depths of Christian spirituality which is interpreted in ways which are not always 'Orthodox' in the conventional sense. On one hand he offers a vision which prophetically yet idiosyncratically anticipates the "resurrection of all by all" (viz. Philosophy of the Common Task): this in itself calls for a radical revision of humanity's guiding ethical, political and cultural principles (viz. Supramoralism). On the other hand, he expounds visionary proposals for the role science has to play precisely within the project of resurrecting the deceased and restoring free conscious life to all being (viz. Regulation). Fyodorov is acclaimed as one of the pioneering anticipators of climatology, rocket and space astronautics, cryonics, genetic engineering, cloning and body re-design; also, he is endorsed as the forerunner of Russian cosmism and influencer of transhumanism. His thought is radical, maximalist and limital. As well, it is informed by the purity of a moral saintliness. Inasmuch his philosophical vision may help us re-examine our own understanding of the relation of the past to the

¹ This study is the finalized result of preparatory work for the PP presentation given under the same title at the Institute for Patristic Studies in the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of the Vlatades, Acropolis, Thessaloniki 23 January 2018. The event was organized by the Inter-faculty Committee for exploring the relations between tradition and modernity (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki = AUTH). The co-chairmen of the said Committee are Dr Miltiadis Konstantinou (Dean of the Faculty of Theology: Professor of Biblical studies) and Dr Argyris Nikolaidis (Faculty of Sciences: former Professor of theoretical physics). This would not have been possible without the blessing of His Grace Bishop Nikiforos, residing as Hegumen at the Vlatades monastery; nor without the warm support of Dr Symeon Pashalidis, Professor of Patristics & Hagiography (AUTH) and Director of the Patriarchal Foundation for Patristic Studies at the Vlatades monastery. To the aforementioned distinguished gentlemen and scholars I hereby extend my deep collegial gratitude.

future, as well as the relation of faith to science, and, to re-address the predicament of dying. For the same reason it allows us to metacritically examine the neuralgic points of Fyodorov's proposals. Lastly, I strive to reflect the mentioned problematic within a historical perspective, hermeneutically, hoping to provide orientation points for further discussion.

Keywords: God, mankind, image and likeness, personhood, primordial sin, death, faith, science, re-evolution, resurrection, the Common Task, supramoralism, regulation, pre-Soviet and Soviet culture, Russian cosmism, transhumanism

“At the basis of his philosophy was his grieving for the human predicament, and there was no man on earth who felt such sorrow at the death of people and such thirst to return them to life”

(Nikolai Berdyaev, **1915**)

Introduction. Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov (1829-1903) was born into Russian higher nobility (Klyuch, Tambov region): an illegitimate son of Prince Pavel Ivanovich Gagarin (1798-1872) and Elisaveta Ivanovna. After Fyodorov's grandfather died in 1832 his uncle, Konstantin Ivanovich Gagarin, took care of the family estate. And, since Fyodorov's father (a man fond of the arts) was often absent and immersed in setting-up theatres and plays (Odessa, Kishinev etc), his uncle did his best to have the young Fyodorov receive a fine education (Tambov Gymnasium [1848], Odessa Richelieu Lyceum [left in 1854])¹. He spent a significant part of his life, from 1854 to 1868, as a teacher of history and geography in Russian provincial schools. Finally, after a spell in the Tchertkov Library (from 1869), he settled in Moscow's Rumyantsev museum (from 1874)². This allowed him a permanent exposure to books, journals and latest news from the worlds of philosophy, science and the arts. Because of his self-denying lifestyle, humble character, gigantic erudition—and, primarily, because he was regarded as a new (Christian) teacher of humanity—Fyodorov was dubbed the “Moscow Socrates”³ (S. Bulgakov [1911]; V. N. Ilyin [1929]). A common trait for Russian religious philosophers is to treat the revealed truths of faith as plausible philosophical premises. These are subsequently used to address burning issues in the fields of religion, philosophy, history and generally in the social and natural

¹ George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*, Oxford University Press, New York 2012, 54-55 = abbr. RC.

² He spent his final years working at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³ Sergei Bulgakov, “The Enigmatic Thinker” (Russ.), in idem, *Two Cities: Explorations of the Nature of Social Ideals*, vol. 2, Put', Moscow 1911, 260-172.

sciences. This is realized through a critical praxis of illuminated reason, using disciplined discursive methods for sustained reflection and argumentation. At the same time, notably, the tradition of Orthodox ecclesial spirituality is utilized as a creative source of primary ideas, values and orientation points.

Fyodorov is paradigmatic in the said sense. Dostoyevsky and Solovyov endorsed his teaching profoundly. Tolstoy stated that he is proud of the moral heights reached by Fyodorov's thought. He adds that he could defend them "as if their where his own", regardless of the fact that he hastened to disclaim that he would endorse them. Others acclaim his genius and lasting influence as well: be it positive or negative. The influence needn't be substantially direct, explicit, nor positive, in order to be acknowledged as present. Conditionally speaking, one can establish a commonality of certain important Fyodorovian themes and concerns (say, the primacy of the "spiritual-ethical" understanding of reality) in the case of religious philosophers such as Svyatogor, Yaroslavsky, Gorsky, Setnitsky, Berdyaev, Florensky, Bulgakov, V. N. Ilyin, N. O. Lossky (to mention just a few). His influence impacted not only philosophers. In one way or the other it was felt in other fields as well: in theology (Florensky, Bulgakov, Zenkovsky, or Fedotov and Florovsky et alii), science (Muravyov, Tsiolkovsky, Chizhevsky, Vernadsky, Kuprevich et alii) and art: literature, poetry, music and painting (Beli [Bugae], Zamyatin, Remizov, Fet, Platonov; Skryabin, Rachmaninov; Chekrygin, Filonov, Kandinsky, Malevich, the "Amaravella" group and Roerich, or Labas et alii).

After the posthumous publication of his magnum opus, *The Philosophy of the Common Task* (*Filosofia Obshchago Dela*: I Verny 1906, II Moscow 1913)⁴, written between 1878 and 1892, collected and edited by his pupils V. A. Kozhevnykov and N. P. Peterson, it became clear that his thought represents a cultural event of the first order: a "unique, inexplicable and incomparable event" (Akim L. Volyinsky). As the histories of Russian philosophy suggest⁵, he laid-out the key regulative ideas which fertilized and formatted the ascent of modern Russian

⁴ I use the Russian critical edition rendered by A. G. Gacheva, S. G. Semyonova (eds.), N. F. Fyodorov, *Collected Works in Four Volumes* (*Sobranie Sochineniy*), vols I-IV, Progress, Moscow 1995 = abbr. CW (All further quotes [unless otherwise stated] refer to this edition via the said abbreviation). The fifth volume is an addition to the fourth. It includes commentary.

⁵ Vasily V. Zenkovsky, *History of Russian Philosophy* (Russ.), vol. II, YMCA Press, Paris 1950, 131-147 = abbr. HRF.

religious philosophy⁶. Especially the ideas of: 1. Godmanhood, 2. integral knowledge, 3. all-unity, 4. sophianism, 5. in-churchification and 6. (anti-western) Kulturkritik. Subsequently, these have served as the main discussion topics and foundational orientation points for theory and practice.

More specifically, a school of Fyodorovians emerged. Both philosophers and natural scientists were affected, idealists and materialists alike. This school constitutes what is now acclaimed as Russian cosmism⁷, including its side-currents: those of transhumanism, immortalism and scientific futurism. In its ranks one finds a diverse yet unifiable assembly of amazing minds: Muravyov, Umov, Tsiolkovsky, Korolev, Bugaev, Vernadsky, Chizhevsky and others. The proposals of the manifold representatives of Russian cosmism issue forth from Fyodorov's daring as much as astounding speculation. Both the master and his followers attracted harsh criticism and, equally, powerful affirmation: from theologians, philosophers, scientists and the wider thinking public. The variegated depth of Fyodorov's multilayered influence, however, is not questioned. Again, in a qualified sense, he may be regarded as the spiritual "father" of Russian philosophically grounded cosmism. At the same time, as was said, he is the conceiver of a recognizable style of religious philosophizing informed by the main themes, ideas and ideals of Orthodox Christianity. This type of religious philosophy produced hitherto unheard of manifestations of the inspired thinking spirit. Some may be taken as authentic contributions to the field of philosophy. As well, not a few may be regarded as promising philosophical developments of the legacy of the Orthodox Church's tradition. A number of ideas and proposals of religious philosophy *modo Russo*, admittedly, have been

⁶ Of course, it would be incorrect, as much as unnecessary, to single out Fyodorov as the sole forefather of the Russian religious "renaissance" (N. Zernov) of the 19th and 20th century. The roots are far too intertwined and complex to allow for such a cultural and hermeneutical reduction. Still, he is one of the fountain heads behind the movement as such.

⁷ George M. Young (cf. *op. cit.*) offers an overview of the "forerunners" of Russian cosmism (12-20), as well as an overview of what he rubricates as "religious" cosmists (92-144) and "scientific" cosmists (145-176), with sections on 20th century Fyodorovian "followers" (193-218), including its "offshoots today" (219-234). This is thus far the only Anglo-American attempt to present this movement within one relatively broad sweep: presupposing, as it does, that cosmism is or may become a unified doctrine (despite, or because of, the immensity of its spiritual-theoretical expanses and the diversity of its conceptual networks). Of course, much systematic, methodological and critical-polemical work remains to be done in order to further clarify and stabilize this subject matter. A recent study by Marina Simakova offers a rich bibliographical, culturological and philosophical framework for understanding the genesis, structure and history of Russian cosmism. It also includes convincing explanations of the motives powering the more recent "cosmist turn" in aesthetical, art-performative and philosophical-scientific theorizing: cf. Marina Simakova, "No Man's Space: On Russian Cosmism", *e-Flux Journal*, 74 (June 2016): www.e-flux.com/journal/74/59823/

evaluated as either awkward or non-Orthodox, and some as bordering on the lines of the heretical. All in all, as Svetlana G. Semenova, affirms boldly, and rightly, within the history of Russian (“fatherland”) thought, including that of world philosophy itself, Fyodorov occupies a position of a “religious Master” who has given us a “most powerful, unexpected and fertile philosophical optic”⁸.

“... the most general evil affecting all—in fact, an evil-doing—is death, and therefore the supreme good, the supreme task, is resuscitation”

(Nikolai F. Fyodorov, *Philosophy of the Common Task*, Verny 1906)⁹

Thematic. Fyodorov dedicated his life to devising an effective solution to the challenge of death¹⁰. What is more, he wants to salvage the past. He concludes that the future is meaningful only in the case of a substantial retrieval of the past. For this reason he turns to both faith and science: that is, to theology and technology. In fact, his conclusions state that positive science can lead humanity to this colossal accomplishment. He adds that Christianity itself demands such a deed. Fyodorov’s philosophy is anchored in the intersection of two main relations: that of the (a) past and the future, and that of (b) religion and science. The very heart of this intersection comes out of the “grave”. According to Fyodorov, it springs from the question about (c) death: “In the torments of the consciousness of mortality the human soul was born”¹¹. In what follows I venture to explain the extraordinary proposals given by the Russian philosopher. As a result, I critically evaluate Fyodorov’s understanding of the aforesaid relations, including his teaching on the meaning of death. Lastly, I offer an overview of his standing legacy.

Philosophy of the Common Task. Does Fyodorov wish to disregard the future in the name of an abstract and dead past? The answer is: Absolutely not. This is so because he regards the past primarily through the faces (lik, lica) of our deceased ancestors. Consequently, to retrieve the past means to collect the concrete persons of those who have perished (i.e. their hypostases). The act of collecting (gathering: sobornost) is deeply connected to the act of

⁸ Svetlana G. Semenova, “N. F. Fyodorov’s Philosophy of Resuscitation” (Russ.) = abbr. FPhR. Cf. A. G. Gacheva, S. G. Semyonova (eds.), N. F. Fyodorov, CW, I, 5.

⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, “The problem of brotherhood or kinship, of the causes of the unbrotherly, unkindred, that is, the unworldly state of the world, and of the means for the restoration of kinship” (Russ.) = abbr. PBK. Cf. idem, PBK: CW, I, 140.

¹⁰ “The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1Cor. 15:16).

¹¹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, “On the Horizontal and Vertical Position: Death and Life” (Russ.) = abbr. HVP. Cf. idem, HVP: CW, II, 157.

recollecting (memorizing: pamyat). Both of these endeavours are expressions of an action of love. However, this act of love needs to be substantial in the absolute sense. Otherwise it remains or becomes a sentimental mimetic gesture which is ontologically futile. Fyodorov claims that the history of mankind, thus far, is a history of failure to generate such an act. “History as fact is mutual extermination [...] of people like ourselves, the pillage and plunder of nature (i.e. the Earth) through its exploitation and utilisation, leading to degeneration and dying (i.e. culture)”¹². The reasons for this malfunction are many, claims Fyodorov. Three of these stand out. Firstly, the sons (daughters) have abandoned their fathers (mothers). Secondly, this is caused by and also induced by deep forgetfulness of the sons’ absolute debt to the forefathers (from whom they have received the absolute value: life). And thirdly, the previous two are permeated by a resignation before death. “The renegade of filial duty has forgotten that the son’s love for father takes precedence over the love for power”¹³. Not without Old Testament and New Testament undertones (Mal. 4:6¹⁴; Lk. 1:17¹⁵), Fyodorov’s philosophy proposes to overturn this history of abandonment and forgetting. The “overturn” is to be achieved by what he calls the Common Task (obsche delo).

1.1. Resurrectionism. What is this Common Task? Firstly, it is “... a response to catastrophes affecting all humans—that is, death and all that leads to it”¹⁶. Secondly, the grand Deed is nothing less than the new pan-human effort, executed by the sons and daughters, to resuscitate and resurrect the deceased generations of their ancestors. Thirdly, this pan-human effort demands the reconstitution of brotherly relations against divisive relations, of which there are three kinds: (a) unbrotherliness among human beings (b) unbrotherliness between the living and the dead and (c) unbrotherliness between destructive nature and destructive mankind. Brotherliness, kinship, sonship are terminological variations of the main operative distinction of the Fyodorovian system. Other distinctions are derived from it: especially, the learned (knowledge and city conglomerate) against the unlearned (labour, and country community) and the wealthy against the poor.

¹² Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1, 138.

¹³ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, “The art of imitation (false artistic re-creation) and the art of reality (real resurrection)” = abbr. A. Cf. idem, A:CW, II, 130.

¹⁴ “He [Elijah BL] will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse”.

¹⁵ “And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” [reveals the Angel to Zechariah BL].

¹⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1, 185.

Moreover, Fyodorov's pan-human undertaking is to be achieved by the means of positive science (also inspired and guided, as we shall see, by the Spirit of Christ [viz. Jn. 14:26; 16:14-15]). Part of these radical proposals is Fyodorov's innovative statement that the resurrection, note, needs to be "immanent"¹⁷. It has to be accomplished this side of the "transcendent" resurrection implied by the Dread Last Judgment. This entails an interiorization of the eschaton. In other words, Fyodorov claims that the doctrines of Christianity demand an immanent resurrection praxis conducted by the sons who ought to (must!) devise a technology which will enable this event to come to pass within history, in cooperation with divine agency. This would usher an apocatastatic apocalypse "now"!

Fyodorov's philosophy entails a series of astounding transformative reversals of established ideas and ideals, including the accordant fields of thought and practice. The radical shift in levels of the transformative approach to human problems is indicated by the following statement: "... the revolution¹⁸ may be determined as a supplanting of the Common (obsche) fathers-oriented [...] Task by the mere social (obschestveno) task, that is, as the permutation or negation of the debt of sons towards the fathers, of the (debt to) resurrect the dead, in the name of the welfare of the living"¹⁹. In this sense, a fortiori, Fyodorov may be seen as more radical than any socio-economically oriented revolutionary²⁰, the Leninist fundamentalist notwithstanding²¹. In yet another sense, he may be recognized as a spirit pre-emptively

¹⁷ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1, 151.

¹⁸ In this concrete case, Fyodorov regards the French revolution as shallow and frivolous. Since, he finds that it deals with ideological, social and economical matters "only". The same can be said, mutatis mutandis, for other revolutionary projects if and where they lack his approach to radicalism.

¹⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1, 185. For this reason Fyodorov is relentlessly critical towards both communist socialism ("evil of Marxist matterocracy") and capitalism ("evil of anarchic individualism"): cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, "As long as there is death, there will be hunger and disease, and conversely: As long as there is hunger and disease, there will be death" (Russ.) = abbr. DHD. Cf. idem, DHD:CW, II, 2.57 et passim.

²⁰ A subversive relation between Fyodorov's engagement with the social-political and that of the Russian revolutionary ferment in ideas and ideologies needs to be noted. It needs to be explored further. To leave it out of one's explorative scopes would impoverish the understanding of the Fyodorov event.

²¹ One of the left-oriented Fyodorovians, who eventually accepted the Soviet revolutionary-ideological system, Valerian N. Muravyov (1885-1931), pleads for the real and literal victory over "objective" time: to wit, a triumph realized within history by a revolutionary collective united through science in action. It is no coincidence that Muravyov (who also corresponded with Leon Trotsky), confesses that: "We are far greater Bolsheviks than the Bolsheviks themselves": cf. Vladimir G. Makarov, "Archive Secrets: Philosophers and the Authorities. Alexandr Gorsky: A Destiny Crippled by the 'Right of [Ruling] Authority'" (Russ.), *Voprosyfilosofii*, 8 (2002) 99; also cf. Valerian Muravyov, "Overcoming Time as the Basic Task of the Organization of Labour", in idem, *Overcoming Time*, tr. from Russ, into Serbian: Z. Buljugic, Brimo : Logos, Belgrade 1005, 88-219 = abbr. OTI.

reworking—transmuting or even hijacking²²—the ideals and goals of both Russian revolutions (1905,1917), as spelled-out by the revolutionary intelligentsia. Let me illustrate and clarify further by taking several paradigmatic examples of what I call Fyodorov’s transformative reversal proposals. Expounding these examples takes us into the core of Fyodorov’s philosophy of the Common Task. Namely, this exposition will introduce us into his teaching on Supramoralism. In turn it will allow us to understand its applicative side as well: notably, his teaching on Regulation.

The first fundamental reversal relates to ontology. In traditional ontology the main question, i.e. “What is being?”, casts a shadow over the question of “Why do living beings die?” The question of “What is being?” takes primacy over the truly crucial question of “How?” is being. “If the subject of science is the solution of the question about causes²³” argues the Russian, “then this means that science (nauka) explores the question ‘why does the existent exist?’ [...]. The question ‘why does the existent exist?’ is entirely unnatural and artificial. Since, as it is unnatural to ask ‘why does the existent exist?’ so it is natural to ask—‘why does that which is living die?’”²⁴ Therefore ontology needs to be reversed (transformed) by a special kind of thanatology. Sequentially Fyodorov’s thanatology²⁵ states that only personal beings are aware of death. Only they anticipate death as the catastrophically tragic event. And, in principle, personal beings acknowledge the death of other beings as equally unacceptable. Hence classical ontology needs to be reconstituted as personology²⁶. That is to say, it needs to be readdressed by an ontology of relationally conceived personhood²⁷ (viz. being as kinship, communion and solidarity). This would, then, offer knowledge about what needs *to be* the case, rather than

²² According to Communist jargon he would be labelled as the “counter-revolutionary” par excellence in a negative sense. Yet, paradoxically, one must again add the provision that he was a revolutionary spirit of the first order, albeit one coming from “outside-above” (Christian) and from “inside-within” (hyper-modernist): both at the same time. Technically speaking, then, Fyodorov’s proposals may be regarded as a counter-revolutionary strategy with revolutionary effects in the domain of possibilities.

²³ This indicates Fyodorov’s impressive erudition. It is plausible to infer that he is acquainted with Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytic* where this definition of “science” is given (i.e. science as episteme grounded in the knowledge of causes). Cf. Aristotle, *Analytica posteriora*, 71 b 9-11.

²⁴ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, vol. I, 45. In contradistinction to Aristotle, Fyodorov asks not “what is being” (to ti en einai [*Metaphysica*, VII, 1029b]) nor “what is being qua being” (to on he on [*Metaphysica*, IV, 1003a]). Rather, he poses the question of its way of being (tropos hyparxeos) in regard to death, decay and decomposition (phtora).

²⁵ Technically, he does not use this term. But it is de facto introduced by his extensive, elaborate and disciplined reflections on death.

²⁶ Hence his personology is a function of his thanatology and vice versa.

²⁷ It would take a whole study to explore this personalist-communional potential in Fyodorov’s thought. In any case, I venture to here highlight this pioneering streak: that is, the germinal vestiges of a Christian relational personalist ontology in Fyodorov.

merely describe what *is* the case²⁸. And, the case so far is that persons²⁹ (hypostases) perish. “Death transforms real presence of the person³⁰ into mere representation of the person. Therefore reinstated loving kinship demands the return of the deceased, each one being—irreplaceable”³¹. This explains why Fyodorov’s thanatology and personology presuppose the transformative reversal of mere intellectualism into projectivism. The goal is to bridge the wounding gap between theory and practice, thought and being, ideals and reality, nature and history, etc. For, pragmatically, the only way to transport an idea(l) into reality is through a project: “The common property of all the categories of action—is immortality. Here is why reason receives significance not subjective and not objective, but rather—projective...”³².

The second fundamental reversal relates to social economical politics. The main aims of social politics, historically speaking, deal with effects, not with main causes: the causes of death. Yet it is death which is the root of all intermediate forms of human poverty, depravity and inequality. “The first paschal [sic] question is how to replace the problem of poverty and wealth by that of death and life, which is the same for rich and for poor”³³. The real basis of all “super-structures” (let me use the Marxist idiom) is not found in the alienating relations of production, socio-economically speaking, but in the disrupted relations of nature-being, that is, in the reproduction of dying (which can be read as a horrifying “not-being-able-to-hold-together”: equally affecting human and non-human orders of nature-being). Whilst preparing a solution Fyodorov adds: “... the social question can be decided not by socialism, but only by nature-knowledge (*estestvoznanie*)”³⁴. Not any “nature-knowledge” (or “social knowledge” for that matter), however, will satisfy Fyodorov’s maximalist aspirations. Both the social and natural sciences are content (ever so eagerly) to discover the means to make life better, to unveil more knowledge and devise superior tools for the preservation, mediation and advance of human life. Nonetheless, “... if we consider social tasks as ultimate goals, we distort the idea of God, we

²⁸ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, vol. I, 44-45. As well, we can here glean the insertion of ethical concerns into ontological matters.

²⁹ That is, entities of priceless worth in principle.

³⁰ Literally in Russian: “*licezrenie*” = “the looking into the other: face to face”.

³¹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 59.

³² Cit. acc. to Nikolai Berdyaev, “The Religion of Resuscitadve Resurrection (‘The Philosophy of the Common Task’ of N. F. Fyodorov)” (Russ.), *Russkaya Mysl*, (July 1915) 76-110 = abbr. RRR.

³³ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, “Supramoralism, or the All-universal Synthesis (i.e. all-universal union)” (Russ.) = abbr. S. Cf. *idem*, S: CW, I, 390-391.

³⁴ For Fyodorov’s criticism of socialism (which has replaced religion which in turn has escaped into the “transcendent” domain leaving the field open for socialism without God), cf. N. F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 59-60.

deprive Him of perfection, we perceive Him as Ruler and Judge³⁵, we admit that we are incapable of being brothers and have no Father”³⁶. In other words, without evidencing God in concrete social-scientific and social-political practice, collectively, we subvert not only the divine, but also travestize the social as such: to wit, eliminate the very possibility of eminent sociality: i.e. the God-human collective traversing the horizon of history: against, through and beyond death. Lamentably, the modern natural and humanistic sciences³⁷ (including a plethora of socio-economical and socio-political regimes based on them) take death as a given “natural” and-or “social” reality: as a fated cosmic necessity, and, simultaneously, jettison the divine meta-context of material and socio-historical reality. That is why ultimately, argues Fyodorov, socio-economic politics need to be reversed (transformed) by a special kind of physics³⁸. This is to be a physics of resuscitation³⁹ of all human and non-human beings. For, as long as there is death, there will be hunger and disease: and conversely⁴⁰. We could say that Fyodorov demands the reinstatement of the most fundamental human “natural” right: the right to be ever exempt from death⁴¹, or, inversely, the right to unrestrained life.

A completely new (“hyper-revolutionary”) notion of the political is thus inaugurated. It is noteworthy that Fyodorov’s Common Task philosopheme “utilizes”⁴² a pre-eminent Marxist directive in order to realize a pre-eminently Christian goal. He in fact “baptizes” Marx’s 11th Thesis on Feuerbach: “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the

³⁵ Fyodorov’s rejections of deism, as well as vulgar (binary) secularism, are notable.

³⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 185.

³⁷ It is useful here to note that Fyodorov pleads for, and works towards, the elimination of the objectified water-tight distinction between the so called real-hard sciences (realia) and the so called imaginative-humanistic sciences (humaniora). As we shall soon see, he voices the idea remarkably in his programmatic teaching on supramoralism viz. the “all-universal synthesis”. By the same token he anticipates the (now ubiquitously endorsed) inter-disciplinary mode of scientific holistic consciousness.

³⁸ According to the idiom of the Fyodorovian Valerian Muravyov: “... pure science must direct genetics, politics and production”: cf. *idem*, OTI, 108.

³⁹ Fyodorov distinguishes between “resuscitation” = restoration (*voskreshenie*) and resurrection (*voskresenie*). Both terms are inextricably linked in his thought. However, they are not exactly the same: neither semantically nor functionally, nor ontologically.

⁴⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, DHD: CW, II, 257-259. Of course, eliminating hunger and disease, even death, cannot automatically solve the spiritual-moral side of the pathological aspects of power strife and power passions. For this, as we shall see, a massive spiritual-moral revolution is needed as well, unconditionally.

⁴¹ That all human agents desire infinite and unlimited life, existentially, is presupposed by Fyodorov. Therefore, the implied moral universalism of human “natural” rights is not questioned.

⁴² The real question here is to what extent is this counter-subversive “utilization” consciously implemented, or not, by Nikolai Fyodorovich?

point is to change it”⁴³. However, according to the main thrust of Fyodorov’s thought, the only *real* change of the “unworldly state of the world” would be the resurrection of the fathers and mothers by the sons and daughters, etc. In that case, the collective resurrection praxis is *the* final realization of philosophy: that is, revolution. Furthermore, the physics of resuscitation is the other—applicative— side of Fyodorov’s ontology of personhood. Both imply, and demand, the accomplishment of the task of resurrecting the forefather’s face (prosopon) as a concrete living being (hypostasis). Devising adequate means for that, in the fields of all the sciences, will serve the highest purpose and will bring emancipation⁴⁴ from all bondage, finally from corruptibility and death. This includes the non-human created order as well⁴⁵. As we may anticipate, Fyodorov is far from being a vulgar positivistic philosopher-scientist. Rather, he may be regarded as a meta-positivist (V. N. Ilyin). For lack of a better word, his pragmatic vein is spiritualized.

Philosophy of the Task and science of the Deed must serve a meta-empirical goal: “Resuscitation, as an action, is positivism in the sphere of final causes...”⁴⁶. This explains why Fyodorov’s concept of meta-physical physics (or, of political physics in the said sense), also, presupposes the transformative reversal of atomized urban citizenry (including the equally fragmented proletariat of the suburbia) into an organic solidarity of resurrection-oriented kinship: say, into a pan-human “Comintern” of resurrectors aware of their historical vocation. His

⁴³ Karl Marx originally wrote the text in Brussels in 1845 under the title “1) *ad* Feuerbach”. Friedrich Engels rendered a redaction of it in 1888, entitled “Theses on Feuerbach” (appended to his own work *Ludwig Feuerbach*). The first Russian translation of the “Theses” appeared in Moscow in 1914.

⁴⁴ Fyodorov lends unique verbatim realism to the task of ushering the New Testament promises in regard to the predicament of death. A specially edited biblical fabric (serving as an omnipresent referential meta-context) is weaved into most, if not all, of his socio-cultural and-or political-economical reflections. The philosophy of the Common Task wishes to take avant-garde steps, scientifically and in terms of re-organizing labour (in fact, in terms of resetting [rebooting] the whole social-symbolic order itself), in the name of realizing the final freedom of the “children of God”, in accordance with the words of St Paul: “For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom (ten eleutherian tes doxes) of the children of God. [...]. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons...” (Rom. 8:10-21, 23). Fyodorov overcompensates the “awaiting” moment by a revolutionary programme attuned Christologically. This is a programme of praxis equally hostile to individual mysticism and to collective quietism: a theoretical manifesto befriending Pauline theology in terms of revolutionary visions as well as visions of a supremely atypical revolution.

⁴⁵ The biblical underpinnings of Fyodorov’s sensitivities are always at hand, reverberating throughout: “We know that the whole creation (pasa he ktisis) has been groaning together (synodinei) in the pains of childbirth until the present time” (Rom. 8:22).

⁴⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1,56. Again, let us note Fyodorov’s knowledge of the Aristotelian theory of the four causes (Gk. aitia: the material, formal, efficient and final causes). Cf. Aristotle, *Physica*, II3; *Metaphysica*, V 5.

political physics, thusly, inaugurates a messianic absolutism⁴⁷ of the universalized brotherhood of resurrection. It is to be established from “ground zero” in the name of resuscitation, integration and regulation. That is, in the name of a simultaneous restitution⁴⁸ and hyper-modernization of reality. “The desolation within the cemeteries is a natural consequence of the decay of kinship and its transformation into citizenship”: moreover, “... museums, especially natural science museums⁴⁹, and schools should be built in the vicinity of cemeteries [...]. To save cemeteries, a radical change is necessary: society’s centre of gravity should be moved to the countryside”⁵⁰. And, the cemetery church should always and everywhere be the main central Church—*sabornaya*, *katholikon*—because the purpose of the Liturgy is resurrection in Christ⁵¹.

The third fundamental reversal relates to ethics. Broadly speaking, the philosophical tradition of ethical reflection can be projected into three main approaches: the ethics of duty (deontological), the ethics of consequences (utilitarian) and the ethics of virtue (aretological). It is neither altogether simple nor necessary to confine Fyodorov’s understanding of the ethical within one or all of these categories⁵². Still, one could venture to claim that he, primarily, undertakes a substantial revision of deontological ethics (alongside, he keeps a special virtue ethics in mind⁵³, and is aware of the far-reaching consequences of the behaviour of individuals and collectives). Firstly, mere utilitarian ethics

⁴⁷ Presumably, a resurrection-friendly “politburo” of scientists, artists and priests would dictate the terms of this “paschal” revolution: note, this side of an otherwise historically deferred apocalypse. By doing accordingly, they would in fact subvert the “expected” (die-and-be-judged) into something “unexpected” (co-resurrectyourself-with-God—now!). In short, they would accelerate history and subvert it by realizing total freedom, including freedom from death.

⁴⁸ This *restitutio in integrum* should be understood in the sense of re-creating pre-original life: re-forming the dead into the living; re-instituting creation into a life free from the strictures of sin, mortality and death, and free for endless creative possibility.

⁴⁹ Cit. acc. to Nikolai Berdyaev, RRR, 76-120.

⁵⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 73-75.

⁵¹ As we shall grasp, this notion is part of Fyodorov’s vision of the cosmic Liturgy: that is, of a Liturgy which will transcend the confines of the church walls of any particular temple, engulfing the whole of creation within a never ending action of resuscitation, culminating (or commencing) in the atoning resurrection of the deceased generations of humankind.

⁵² There is no clinically pure deontological, utilitarian or virtue ethics. All three kinds, in fact, possess serious considerations of rules, consequences and virtues. The point is to see wherein lays the fundamental notion-value which supports a given ethical framework as such. In Fyodorov’s case, I’d say, it is duty coupled with responsibility.

⁵³ Where the human being (humanity) is truly virtuous if and only if virtue entails the maximal striving by all capacities, individual and collective, to resurrect being.

is dismissed by Fyodorov. Since, it defines the Good as that which is “useful” (heteronomy) and of interest for the “greatest” number of subjects. Alongside, it disregards the main problem: that of retrieving the dead, which is the Good par excellence (a Good not to be negotiated by consequentialist calculations, nor by a fleeting “democracy” of opinionated votes on what is useful “hence” good). Secondly, deontological ethics is re-considered, if not reconstructed and overcome. Deontological ethics is founded on motifs of respect for the moral law as such (autonomy) regardless of external interests of the moral agent. Nonetheless, it prescribes a formal universal law, i.e. the categorical imperative, which, as in the case of utilitarian ethics, leaves the main predicament of humanity unsolved. In a word, it is blind to past generations of persons who have perished, including countless sediments of expired natural organisms, etc. Alongside, it envisages the duty to future generations only in abstract imaginary terms. Finally, the Kingdom of God (where all souls are headed to congregate, hopefully, and on the basis of moral worth) happens to be a formal postulate: an “ideal” of a “Kingdom of ends”. The following lines ensue as the result of Fyodorov’s assessment of Kant’s thought as a whole (which he deems the summit of western philosophy, tying in the ark strung from Descartes to Nietzsche):

“All that is good in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—that is God—is an *ideal?*-, and in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, is a reality *beyond this world?*. So reality consists of (a) a soulless world, an irrational, unfeeling force which it would be more appropriate to call chaos than cosmos [...] and (b) a helpless soul, a knowledge of which can be called psychology (in the sense of psychocracy)⁵⁴ only projectively, since a soul, separated from God and from the world, is only a capacity to feel, know and act, while deprived of energy and will. In this we find the separation of the soul from energy and the world, from reason and feeling. Their union can only be accomplished through a *project**, but this is not to be found in Kant”⁵⁵.

1.2. Supramoralism. Therefore, posits Fyodorov boldly, “... the *duty** to return life to our fathers-ancestors, resuscitation, is the highest and unconditionally universal morality [...]; on the fulfilment of this duty of resuscitation depends the destiny of the human race”⁵⁶. These

⁵⁴ If achieved, that would be what Fyodorov would endorse: the realization of integration, all-universal synthesis and real restoration, etc.

⁵⁵ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 48. (The asterisk sign denotes that italics are added by BL).

⁵⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, “Supramoralism, or the All-universal Synthesis (i.e. all-universal union)” (Russ.) = abbr. S. See idem, S: CW, I, 388.

considerations introduce us into Fyodorov's teaching on supramoralism, to which we duly turn in what follows next. In developing the aforesaid he proposes to regard the Good in terms which are far more comprehensive than what is usually suggested in philosophical reflection on morality. What the philosopher is saying is that ethics need to be reconstituted on a substantial level. Ethics (moral law) need to be re-worked to include duties to past generations (not only towards the presently living generation): and, ethics need to be re-worked to include duties towards non-human otherness, viz. the natural cosmic environment. This necessitates the advocacy of what he calls the real Good, which would revert men into sons of men⁵⁷, and bring the prodigal sons⁵⁸ to the God of the fathers in order to implement the duty of testament executors (*dolg[a] dusheprkazchestva*): that is to say, general resurrection. This is the very meaning of the Liturgy. The Liturgy is *the** Good justifying itself and constituting the Common Task⁵⁹.

Therefore, ethics need to be reversed (transformed) into *theurgy*⁶⁰ through Liturgy and both, we shall see, lead to *cosmourgy*. In short, mere moralism needs to be overcome by a meta-moralistic morality: such that it is grounded in an act of not merely "bettering" behaviour, but in an effective act of reconstituting *being* in cooperation with divine agency, to wit, with the triune God as the synthetic⁶¹ agency par excellence: "The Trinity is the Church of the Immortals and its human image and likeness can only be a Church of the resurrected"⁶². As we may observe, the philosophy of the Common Task cannot be reduced to, nor explained by standard ontology, gnoseology, sociology nor ethicology. But what is meant by "theurgy"? This is another crucial

⁵⁷ Like many others, this locus, too, indicates the underlying biblical threads that constantly weave-in the philosophical and religious dimensions of Fyodorov's reflections on the destiny of humankind and of the cosmos. Within this particular line (locus) the phrase refers to human sons of human fathers (cf. Mic 5:7; Heb. 1:6-9; cf. Ps. 8:4-8; Ps. 144:3). However, this phrase has other OT and NT anchoring points (e.g. OT: Psalms; Ezekiel; Daniel – e.g. NT: the four Gospels; Acts; Book of Revelation) which indicate towards the connection between sons of men and *the* Son of Man. It invites a likening of men to Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29), and, equally, it invokes their filial adoption to the Father by the Spirit in Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:6-7). Since Jesus is both: the Son of God and the Son of Man. Of course, the title Son of Man is primarily a Messianic self-identification of Christ himself. He readily chooses to use it, and he does so profusely. Because, such usage allows Jesus to reveal his divine character and mission (e.g. Matt. 24:30; 26:64 [^aDan. 7:13-14]): at the same time, it allows him to retain his immanent involvement with the human condition and destiny of humankind.

⁵⁸ OT: "For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of the Lord" (Is. 30:9); NT: "After a few days, the younger son got everything together and journeyed to a distant country, where he squandered his wealth in wild living" (Lk. 15:13). BL

⁵⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, "The Agathodicy (the justification of Good) of Solovyov and the Theodicy (the justification of God) of Leibniz" (Russ.) = abbr. AT: cf. idem, AT: CW, II, 180.

⁶⁰ This is mirrored, analogically, in Fyodorov's thesis about "gnoseology" becoming "gnoseourgy".

⁶¹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 64.

⁶² Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 90.

regulative idea of Fyodorov's thought. Answering this question takes us into the epicenter of his philosophy. It is revealed by his doctrine of Supramoralism (which presupposes and develops further the above listed transformative "reversals"):

"In Supramoralism all dogmatics is transformed into ethics (that is, dogmas become commandments)—an ethics inseparable from knowledge and art, from science and aesthetics, all of which merge into ethics: the divine services themselves need to become acts of atonement, i.e. of resuscitation [sic]. Supramoralism [...] is based on the supreme commandment given before the Pascha⁶³ and the last commandment given after the Resurrection⁶⁴ by the First of the risen, as the necessary condition for continuing the task of resurrection. [...]: it calls for re-creation and resuscitation by which we are likened to the Creator; for this is what Christ prayed for in his last prayer [...]⁶⁵. Immediately after His resurrection, Christ indicated the way to such unity, which would endow us with the likeness of God [...]"⁶⁶.

Christologically regarded, theurgy translates into human cooperation with Christ the God-man, and conversely. It also implies continuing the resurrection process, liturgically and technologically. Equally, and for that reason, it entails productive labour: action which turns ideas into realities and collapses the division between subject and object, knowing and being, symbol and reality, possible and impossible, etc.⁶⁷ Fyodorov views the participation in Godmanhood, dynamically, as a historical extension of Christ's resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11:43). Retroactively, Lazarus' resurrection demands full human cooperation (with Christ and among themselves) in the process of re-integrating deceased ancestors as restored into life, and as transformed: physically and morally⁶⁸. This makes the Russian visionary confident that Supramoralism and Christianity "coincide". It is here necessary to add three explanatory points.

⁶³ "Be perfect, therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). BL

⁶⁴ "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19). BL

⁶⁵ "That all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in us" (Jn. 17:21). BL

⁶⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, S: CW, I, 388.

⁶⁷ It is apt to mention that on these grounds Fyodorov reverses Auguste Comte's periodization of history. According to Comte, the main periods of history are the following: mythological, metaphysical and positive (where the positive period, marked by empirical rational science, is superior to the previous two). According to Fyodorov, the metaphysical and positive eras are characterized by the divorce of knowing (theory) and doing (practice). Hence they should both be (a) renamed as "metaphorical" and (b) they should be re-evaluated within the possibilities opened-up by the mythological period (Fyodorov calls it "mytho-urgical"). Because, therein is preserved the unity of thought (name) and reality (presence). That is why Fyodorov holds that "mytho-urgy" is synonymous to "theurgy". Cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 295.

⁶⁸ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 86.

Firstly, Fyodorov interprets Supramoralism to be the final (Paschal) consummation of the Church's Chalcedon doctrine: "... the teaching about the two wills, acting in harmony, has remained only a dogma, a theory, lacking expression in actual life"⁶⁹: "Christianity has not fully saved the world, because it has not been fully assimilated"⁷⁰. That is to say, Christianity "is not simply a doctrine of redemption, but the very task of redemption"⁷¹. We now recognize as well that his philosophy of re-collecting (a gathering memory; vospominanie, zapominanie) has another side: namely, the philosophy of re-remembering (literally, a vivifying memory; pamyat) which, ultimately, resuscitates members of humanity into a spiritualized ecclesial organism (viz. membership of all in resurrection Life).

Secondly, Fyodorov interprets the content of theurgy as that of an all-integrative Liturgy (theurgia as leiturgia). The projected liturgical "immortalization" moreover represents a creative extension of *art*⁷². This is an art par excellence. It differs from other hitherto known arts not merely in terms of formal markers allocated to art by traditional aesthetic theory. According to Fyodorov's conception, this art should be eminently synaesthetic and supremely capable to integrate all manner of human knowledge, including a host of transformative technologies, crafts and skills. Its high goal is to enable and vouchsafe the humanization of the cosmos and cosmization of humanity. Moreover, this "art of arts" should be grounded within the reality of Godmanhood, to wit, in Christ the pre-eternal creative Logos. Speaking in Christian cosmist terms, becoming fully divine-human in Christ means to become maximally human and maximally cosmist: both at the same time. The same holds as true for art. The maximalization of art's potential is possible only in and through a theurgic event: actually, within the liturgical reality of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church. Consequently, the ultimate work of art is the fully resurrected human being⁷³.

As Irina Gutkin explains, "In Fedorov's philosophy [...] aesthetics was allotted a role of a true positive science because a true work of art, in Fedorov's definition, was that which contained the blueprint for new—future, ideal—life. [...]. Rather than simply represent reality

⁶⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1,160.

⁷⁰ Cit. acc. to Nikolai Berdyaev, RRR, 76-120.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Analogically speaking, the same holds as true for technology.

⁷³ I would here indicate towards a striking parallel: namely, St Irenaeus of Lyon's statement: "The glory of God is a human being fully alive"; cf. idem, *Against Heresies*, IV, 20:7 in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*7, 1037B. (Fyodorov's network of implicit and explicit patristic references is another topic, one yet to be explored fully).

[...] art must subdue the blind forces of nature and transform the external world' into a 'better world' of the future"⁷⁴. Or, in the words of the Fyodorovian Valerian Muravyov: "Then, every human being, in the sense of his constitution and form, will truly be created as something special and incomparable, in the same way works of art are now created. Then, Goethe and Shakespeare will not be creating plays but human beings and human communities"⁷⁵. This is how Dostoevsky's dictum "beauty will save the world" receives its Russian cosmist augmentation, or concretization.

In summation, according to Fyodorov, the ultimate meaning of the Liturgy is: firstly, to give witness to the pending resurrection through the uninterrupted co-existence of all generations (this is depicted symbolically by the hosts of saints on the temple walls); secondly, in the Eucharist to allow the blood of Christ to establish panhuman brotherhood, kinship and communion by the Spirit; thirdly, to "overcome" the extra-liturgic reality. The Liturgy (taken as the internal "constitution of the temple") contains both the programme and the power of transformative reversal of the invalid state of things within the extra-temple reality, i.e. in cosmic nature. For, in its present state nature represents "a travesty of the image of God [...] a travesty of co-existence (immortality) which entails succession, i.e. the mutual displacement of one generation by the other [...]; in other words, death..."⁷⁶. Thus, the theurgic Liturgy is envisaged as a profoundly transformative event of a pan-cosmic order⁷⁷.

Thirdly, this leads us into the applicative side of Supramoralism. It is opened to view by the following question: How is resurrection and-or immortalization to be realized in concrete terms? For, if there are none, then Fyodorov's philosophy may reveal a serious limit weakness.

1.3 Regulation. This is where science comes to play nothing less but a crucial role. It is laid-out within Fyodorov's doctrine of Regulation. Let me say in advance that Fyodorov's conceptualizations of the role and capacities of science are truly visionary as much as revolutionary in the futuristic sense. And, allow me to remind that it is here that

⁷⁴ Irina Gutkin, *The Cultural Origins of the Socialist Realist Aesthetic: 1890-1934*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Illinois 1999, 42.

⁷⁵ Valerian Muravyov, "The Scientific Transformation of the Organism" in idem, *The Culture of the Future* (unpublished writings), 1925-1927 = abbr. COF. [Published in V. Muravyov, OTI (Belgrade 2005), 230-268: 267 (supra-heading: *The Seal Over the Abyss*)].

⁷⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 300.

⁷⁷ There is a connection here to be observed (and to be further explored) between Fyodorov and the teaching of St Maximus the Confessor on the cosmic liturgy and the integrative Logos, revealed as the pre-eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ.

his conception of cosmic Liturgy connects with the movement which he fathered, namely: Russian cosmism. One name only may suffice here: Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935). He is the undisputed founder of rocket science and pioneer of astronautics. It is almost unknown that Fyodorov was his influencer and teacher: of Supramoralism, and of mathematics, for three formative years in the Chertkov library⁷⁸. “Till now consciousness, reason and morality were localized on planet Earth [...]. Palestine and the Hellenic world are examples of this sort of localization—art and science in Greece, religion in Palestine, whence they then spread all over the Earth. But only when religion and science are united will it be possible to disseminate the influence of rational beings even beyond our Earth”⁷⁹. This entails the colonization of the whole cosmos coupled with resurrection activity dedicated to all beings which are dead or have perished: on an intergalactic scale.

Before explicating the main proposals of the Regulation doctrine, it is necessary to reflect on its philosophical presuppositions. This allows us to appreciate the unity behind Fyodorov’s understanding of social and of natural history. It takes us deeper into his thought: strewn between Concept and Vision. Both natural history and social history are imbued with an irrational, destructive, blind and evil force. Thus they condition each other. Humankind is responsible for the negative outcomes because of primordial sin. Nikolai Fyodorovich understands primordial sin to be the allowance of unbrotherly relations. These follow from the sin par excellence: the choice of prodigality over and against loving sonship (kinship) to God the Father (Is. 30:9; Lk. 15:13). Consequently, this entails the other side of primordial sin: the refusal to introduce rational governance over the Creation, thus denying God’s Commandment (Gen. 1:2.8) and releasing the irrational force into human and non-human nature. For the same reason, humanity is responsible for the positive overcoming of the said processes (and guilty of passivity in regard to the said activity). Being an image of God (*obraz, lik*), the human being is enabled—called—to become a re-creator of the created order through god-given powers of free rational will. On one hand: “History is a ravaging of nature and an annihilation of men by one another”. On the other hand: “Earth itself has become conscious of its fate through man, and this consciousness is

⁷⁸ Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky, *Notes From My Life* (Russ.), Tula 1983, 61 (cf. FPhR, 5). (Tsiolkovsky’s autobiography was originally published in 1935 in the Russian Journal *Molodaya Gvardia*, N° 11-12).

⁷⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, A: CW, II, 2.31. It is noteworthy that in 1895 Tsiolkovsky published a tract with an indicative title: *Dreamings about the Earth and the Sky* (Russ.).

evidently active—a means of salvation”⁸⁰. This means that the human being is the “eye” of otherwise “blind” nature. Therefore humankind is the horizon in which evolution becomes self-conscious. Fyodorov extrapolates the full social-structural and civilizational consequences of such “cosmist” insights: “Universal military service is a preparation for the common sacred struggle not against but for each other, against the force of nature acting outside and within us”⁸¹.

The words cited above (A: CW, II, 231; PBK: CW, 1,155) enable us to glean the fuller meanings of the spirit powering Fyodorov's teaching on Regulation, as well as Russian cosmism. In general, cosmism could be determined as an awareness that in humankind evolution has become (1) self-consciously active: aware of the supreme goal of introducing purpose and meaning, as well as death-defying ordering of life i.e. (2) immortality into the universe (kosmos). Humanity thus acts as the steward of creation in accordance with God's plan (if the given cosmist is Christian theist⁸²): or, humanity acts in such a way that it introduces the mega-plan into the cosmos itself (if the given cosmist is atheist Marxist, agnostic or esoterically gnostic). In doing accordingly, the cosmos evolves⁸³ to a level where the (3) all-unity in oneness of meaning,

⁸⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, 1, 155. This anticipates the theistic evolutionary theory of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Vide: idem, *Le Phénomène Humain* (1955) written in the late 1930ies, at least 50 years after suchlike ideas were conceived by the Russian.

⁸¹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, 1, 148.

⁸² Some cosmists have confessional allegiances, strong or loose, with the tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church. This however doesn't fully exhaust the defining process in regard to the prefix “Russian” in Russian cosmism. Since, some of them, being atheists or agnostics, do not subscribe to Russian Orthodoxy. This leaves the question of the “Russianness” of Russian cosmism still open. If we take into account the Soviet (SSSR) Communist belief in the omnipotence of science and the belief in the unlimited capability of the “universal socialist man” to conquer and transform nature in absolute terms, then we might come closer to identifying the trait of “Russianness” in cosmism (Especially if the aspect of Russian messianism is added: Orthodox Christian or Leninist-Marxist, keeping in mind the totalizing approach as well: either through the tsarist state or the Communist state). But again, even this leaves things complicated. For, we find Russian cosmists who are neither Orthodox Christian nor Soviet Communist but, for instance, are more inspired by Eastern esoteric doctrines, etc. As well, it seems that cosmism as a theoretical term should be connected to the generically human “cosmic” awareness, behavior and endeavor. This, then, demands the integration of similar cosmist tendencies in non-Russian humanity as well (e.g. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Le Phénomène Humain*, 1955; Oliver Reiser, *Cosmic Humanism*, 1966 etc). An underlying all-unifying theoretical principle needs to be deduced so as to inclusively ground the super-complex idea and reality of cosmism as such, etc. (Of course, this is not the place to delve deeper into this theoretical and methodological problem: yet, it should be noted). For reflections on the connection of Soviet doctrines and some fundamental precepts of Fyodorov's philosophy cf. Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Fedorovism in Early Post-Soviet Russia: The Collapse of the Meta-imperial Project”, *Slavonica*, 1-2:2 z (2017) 1-19.

⁸³ In Vernadsky's idiom, the cosmos evolves from the geosphere level to the biosphere level, that is, it reevolves on its way to and through the “noosphere” level. The term “noosphere” (Gk. nous = intellect or mind) was coined in Paris in 1926 by Vladimir Vernadsky (1863-1945) together with Edouard Le Roy (a Henri Bergson student) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In cosmist usage it denotes the developing consciousness or mental sheath surrounding and permeating the Earth. It is seen as connected to the biosphere (organic existence) and geosphere (inorganic existence). These layers of existence, however, are not fully nor properly integrated. The next stage of terrestrial (possibly extraterrestrial) evolution is to be opened by the process in which the noosphere (i.e. inter-relating and

kinship, love and re-creative expansion into the Good becomes visible: equally possible and realizable.

Therefore, Fyodorov views evolution anthropically and activistically⁸⁴. However, he does so in spiritual terms, not in terms of a vulgarized (socio)Darwinist projection. The human person as of the image of God (*imago Trinitatis*, *imago Dei*) is to remain immutable in terms of its ontological integrity. However, the development of human nature (both psycho-somatic and spiritual-intellectual capacities), realized rationally through god-aiming activity, is open to radical transformation and seems not to be immutable. This potential in Fyodorov's thought signals an overlap with certain aspects of transhumanism⁸⁵. Inasmuch it represents, likely, an instance of subversive creativity, especially in comparison to the more rigid sides of traditional Christian notions on what humankind is or is destined to become, and how. The following meditations are indicative in the said sense: "Through the work of resurrection the human being—as a self-sovereign (*samobitnoe*), self-built (*samosozdanoe* [sic]) and free being—freely ties itself to God by love"⁸⁶. More boldly still, the final purpose of evolution is an immanent resurrection of all served by all: "We must conceive of the resurrection as a work still unfinished.

inter-connecting consciousness which humanizes and socializes matter) integrates and transforms the biospheric and geospheric systems of existence on Earth, thus "spiritualizing" them. (The technosphere, I venture to add, with the appearance of the Internet and World Wide Web herald the appearance of some of the necessary preconditions for the said process).

⁸⁴ Together with some notable others (e.g. Gacheva and, more recently, Knyazeva, Young, Simakova et alii), Svetlana Semenova insists on the awareness regarding the "active" aspect of evolution as one of the essential marks of the definition of Russian cosmism (FPhR, 13). Also cf. Svetlana G. Semenova, "Russian Cosmism", in S. G. Semenova and A. G. Gacheva (eds), *Russian Cosmism: An Anthology of Philosophical Thought* (Russ.), Pedagogika Press, Moscow 1993, 3-33: esp. pp. 4, 8, 14 et passim = abbr. RCO. For the relation between the modern theory of synergetically self-organizing systems and the main ideas of Russian cosmism: cf. Hellena Knyazeva, "The Russian Cosmism and the Modern Theory of Complexity: The Comparative Analysis", in A. T. Tymieniecka, A. Grandpierre (eds), *Astronomy and Civilization in the New Enlightenment. Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research*, 107 (2011) 229-235.

⁸⁵ One way to glean the transhumanistic "fecundity" of Fyodorovian precepts, as well as the mechanism of their transmission, is to look at those who came under his influence, albeit through a self-styled re-appropriation of his thought. For instance, such is the case of the previously mentioned thinker Valerian Muravyov. In his futuristic science tract *The Overcoming of Time* (1924) we read: "Closely tied with the organizing of symbolic sides of culture must be the organizing of its real manifestations. [...] it is obvious that living beings are the most complete products of culture. The cultural activity whose task is creativity of this kind we have named genetics. The organizing of the creation of living beings is therefore the organizing of genetics. Genetics has set its main goal to be the creation of the most perfect amongst beings that are known to us: namely, human beings. [...] There will be a time when, possibly, the birth process will be upgraded and moved to the laboratory. Eugenics and the science of production of people [sic] will master the formula of every being and will create them and educate them accordingly" (OTI200); or: "The (artificial BL) creation of a human being is the real overcoming of time inasmuch as it confirms the integrity of individuality against the corrosive forces of time" (OTI 201), etc.

⁸⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBKCW, I, 255.

[...] Christ is the beginning of it, through us it continued, and it continues until now. The resurrection is not a mere thought; it is also not a fact⁸⁷: it is a project...^{88,89}.

The historical task of human beings is to re-appropriate the event of God-manhood, as radically as possible: in their togetherness to become an instrument of universal resuscitation, when the Word of God becomes in ourselves the Deed of God”⁹⁰. This explains Fyodorov’s criticism of the vulgar linear conception of progress. “Biologically—progress consists in the swallowing up of the old by the young, in the displacing of the fathers by the sons; psychologically—it is a replacement of love for the fathers by a cold-hearted extolling over them [...]. Sociologically—progress is the achievement of the greatest possible individual freedom [...] but not the broadest participation of all in a common task. [...] the truly Divine, the truly human deed consists in the saving of the sacrificial victims of progress...”⁹¹. Therefore true progress entails yet another transformative reversal: “Insofar as progress is regarded as a movement from the worse to the better, it obviously requires that the shortcomings of blind nature be corrected by a nature which perceives these shortcomings—that is, by the combined power of the human race. It demands that improvement should arise not through struggle and mutual annihilation but by the return of the victims of this struggle”⁹².

This opens-up to view the main proposals of Fyodorov’s doctrine of Regulation, as it comes out of Supramoralism, and both out of the philosophy of the Common Task: “Resurrection is the transformation of the Universe from that chaos towards which it is moving into cosmos: into the greatness of incorruptibility and indestructibility”⁹³. This is what man was created for, claims the Russian. Namely, in the name of Christ’s Command⁹⁴ to introduce the

⁸⁷ Obviously, this is aimed not at Christ’ resurrection, but at the ensuing lack of its realization by humans in the domain of the socio-historical and natural life-worlds.

⁸⁸ Fyodorov refers to John 5:25: “. . .the hour is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live”. The verb “coming” (erchetai) in present indicative middle or passive is highlighted by the Russian thinker. The resurrection, to wit, is something which is coming to pass, presently.

⁸⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBKCW, 1,142.

⁹⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 87.

⁹¹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 51.

⁹² Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 53.

⁹³ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, A:CW, II, 131.

⁹⁴ Fyodorov claims that the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament, when understood in their Christian sense, are reducible to one: “Work in the name of the resurrection of all with all”! The other side of this is given by his emphasis on the Lords Command: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 18:19). Fyodorov takes the first Command to be the substantial content of the second (viz. Mk. 16:15 etc). Cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1,107, 111.

Trinitarian immortal life of loving communion and brotherly kinship into the inner and outer realms of mortalized creation. Strikingly, this is to be accelerated and mediated by science: one to be devised futuristically⁹⁵. Then, progress will mean the improvement of means (technology) as well as ends (philosophy and theology)⁹⁶. Expressly: “Resurrection is not mere progress: it requires actual improvement, true perfection...”⁹⁷.

“The action consists of: firstly, the transformation of the procreating force into a re-creating one and of the lethal into a vivifying one; secondly, the gathering of the scattered dust and its reconstitution into bodies, using radiation or outlines left by the waves caused by the vibration of molecules; thirdly, the regulation of the Earth: that is, the management of the Earth as a cemetery⁹⁸, a management comprising the consecutive resuscitation or re-creation of numerous generations, and the extension through them of the regulation of all the uninhabited worlds. Such a project is the full expression of Supramoralism, or the answer to the question, ‘What has Man been created for?’ It indicates that the human race, all the sons of man, through the regulation of the celestial worlds, will themselves become heavenly forces governing the worlds of the universe”⁹⁹.

2. Evaluation. The philosophemes laid-out by Fyodorov generate swarms of questions. I will select only the essential elements of criticism, and expound tersely. The criticism of the problematic sides may be presented within three interrelated domains: theological, philosophical and scientific.

(2.1) Theologically speaking, the main problem is the appearance of a trait, possibly, of semi-Pelagianism¹⁰⁰ (viz. Pelagius fl. 429-529) in Fyodorov’s religious philosophical interpretation of the Church’s dogmatic and biblical foundations. That is to say, the act of salvation by God in Christ tends to be pre-empted by human initiative: by scientific labour either securing

⁹⁵ In the year of Fyodorov’s death Tsiolkovsky published the “Exploration of Cosmic Space by Means of Reactive Devices (Rockets)”. That was the first time in recorded history that rocket space travel was considered as a realizable possibility, scientifically, with adequate mathematical formulas following suit.

⁹⁶ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 53.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, A: CW, II, 231.

⁹⁹ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, S: CW, I, 409. In this sense the Fyodorovian Valerian Muravyov anticipates the transition of “history into astronomy”, that is into cosmic history: cf. idem, OTI, 228.

¹⁰⁰ In a nutshell: “... while not denying the necessity of grace for salvation, it maintains that the *first** steps towards the Christian life were taken by the human will and that grace supervened only later”. (One might ask: When does this “later” come to pass: after, during or before the completion of the Common Task?). Cf. “Semi-Pelagianism”, in F. L. Cross (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, OUP, Oxford (1957) 1974, 1258.

grace or, rather, vouchsafing immortalist outcomes¹⁰¹. This is connected to a perilous possibility, perhaps a trait, of humanistic self-dependence in regard to the divine principle. The idea of Godmanhood tends to slide into an anthropocentric frame rather than a Christocentric one. This indicates a somewhat imbalanced Christology. One gains the impression that Fyodorov tends to take the following verse literally, in the anthropocentric sense: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12-13). Nevertheless, the following words of the Lord remain absolutely binding: “For apart from Me you can do *nothing*” (Jn. 15:5). Conjointly, the resurrection of Lazarus is understood as the final deed of Christ who, retreating “backstage”, lingers as a “role model” of sorts: “... the end (zavrshenie) of Christ’s service was the resurrection of Lazarus...”¹⁰² [sic]. Fyodorov fails to notice that the resurrection of Lazarus is performed with an explicit invoking of the Father’s “help” by his Son, Christ, thusly: “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me...” (Jn. 11:41-42). After all, even Lazarus died, *again*... The life-giving blood of Golgotha is not accounted for in fullness¹⁰³. The mystery and divine power of the Jesus’ Cross is rationalized and underestimated¹⁰⁴. Alongside, one needs to note that resurrection is not coequal to redemption (apolytrosis). The redemptive act is absolutely within the hand of Gods divine prerogative and final decision. No matter what we do, there are no guarantees. Even if we attain full resurrectional capacities and correspondent biotechnological skills, the final “amen” belongs to divine agency¹⁰⁵. Nor is resuscitative transformation of the created

¹⁰¹ In a certain sense, the price of Fyodorov’s optimism is the standpoint that the internal corruption of humanity is a matter to be dealt with by man’s native (in-born) will. It seems that the commitment of the Christian towards God (what John Cassian calls “initium fidei”; or, what Faustus of Riez calls “credulitatis affectus”) rests secured in his unassisted will (although repentance, conversion and confirmation are conditioned by the blessing of divine help). This moment of naturalistic self-reliance, as well, invokes the question of the status of unmerited grace in Fyodorov’s thought (viz. the “internal empowering graciously infused by God into man”). For, the Church teaches that “it is the divine will that takes the initiative by renewing and enabling the human will to accept or use the aid of grace offered” viz. the proffered salvation in Christ. Cf. M. D.; S. H. M., “Pelagius”, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 17, 1965, 448. Therefore, St Paul’s crucial remark needs to be heeded more seriously: “I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the Law, Christ died for nothing...” (Gal. 2:21).

¹⁰² Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, 1, 142.

¹⁰³ Actually, Fyodorov does underline the “life-giving Blood of the Saviour”. But this is somehow left on the verbal level. The sacramental and spiritual side of the Church’s activities, generally, are not elaborated fully. They are posited as referential indeed: yet, the transfigurative effects of the Orthodox spiritual life (viz. asceticism, prayer, denial of the fallen world: or, the spiritual communion of the inner man with God in Eucharistic communion, etc) are understated in Fyodorov’s system.

¹⁰⁴ “For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things [...] by making peace through the *blood of His cross** [...]. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy, unblemished, and blameless in His presence—if indeed you continue in your faith” (Col. 1:19-22).

¹⁰⁵ “... for all have sinned and *fall short** of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:23-24).

human being, be it psycho-physical or moral, coequal to spiritual transfiguration (metamorphosis) in the uncreated Light of Christ by the Spirit¹⁰⁶, received sacramentally or otherwise. Moreover, the mystery of human freedom as of the image of God (eikon) is rationalized to an extent. The radically evil will and sin-bearing proclivity¹⁰⁷ are viewed, generally, as effects of individual “ignorance” or lack of social-schooling “engagement”. This begs the question, as well, of addressing the unseen warfare (aoratos polemos¹⁰⁸) against the demonic “realms”¹⁰⁹. Analogously, the ascetic denial of the world’s fallenness (deeply related to spiritual death in Christ through the Cross¹¹⁰) tends to be supplanted by self-denying labour of the “people” (led by resurrection-friendly supramoralist scientists) working for the Good of mankind within a mandated neo-imperialism of the enlightened tsardom (samoderzhavie). Spiritually speaking, asceticism and industriousness are not identical. The presence of the spirit of French Enlightenment optimism, to a significant extent, permeates Fyodorov’s science-bound speculations. The power of uncreated spiritual light¹¹¹ (spirit) somehow recedes in the name of created natural light (reason): “enlightenment or death, knowledge or eternal perishing—there is no other outcome”¹¹². There appears to be a tendency of the external to overwhelm the internal in

¹⁰⁶ “There He was transfigured (metemorphothe) before them. His face shone like the sun (hos ho helios), and His clothes became as white as the light (hos to fos)” (Matt. 17:2). As the Orthodox fathers teach, deification (theosis) of humanity is conditioned by (a) the incarnation of Christ as well as by (b) the participation of human beings in the transfigured and glorified human nature of the God-man, Christ (2Pet. 1:3-4). This entails partaking in the uncreated energies of the God-man: on the condition that these are freely given, as grace, and freely received, as grace. The point is this: no scientific excellence (science being of the created order) can supplant this event of communion of the uncreated and created, in and of Christ (cf. 2Cor. 3:18), nor can scientific technological breakthroughs make Christ’s salvific blessing redundant.

¹⁰⁷ “Then Satan entered Judas [...]. And Judas went to [...] betray Jesus” (Lk. 22:3-4; 23:36-39).

¹⁰⁸ Epitomized in the work *Unseen Warfare* (Gk. 1796) by St Nicodemos the Athonite (c. 1749-1809). (Actually, this is a redatorial translation enterprise based on Lorenzo Cupoli’s *The Spiritual Combat* [Lat. 1599], but, with St Nikodemos’ personal and Orthodox spiritual-ascetic experience coming to bear significantly enough).

¹⁰⁹ “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world’s darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).

¹¹⁰ “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).

¹¹¹ The Church fathers speak of it profusely in an uninterrupted succession of the Philokalia and newer Philokalia tradition. (A classic example of this is given in: *Divine Eros: Hymns of Saint Symeon the New Theologian*, tr. Daniel K. Griggs, SVS Press, Yonkers NY 2010, 419 pp).

¹¹² His definition of enlightenment [prosveshchenie] is indicatively ambivalent: “Enlightenment, i.e. the turn of all rational beings into knowing ones, as the expression of the aspiration of nature itself to attain full comprehension and governance over itself in the fulfilment of the will of the God of the fathers...”; cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, S:CW, I, 435. As in many places in Fyodorov, such statements can be read both ways: enlightenment as of grace, spiritually, or, enlightenment as of reason itself, naturalistically, or, perhaps as best: both at once. Still, the unresolved relation of “natural” and “supernatural” lingers.

Fyodorov's thought¹¹³. Analogously, there is a symptom of tension between the augmentation of the outer person (viz. bionics and natural resuscitation¹¹⁴) and the transfiguration in and by the inner person (body and soul included): a symptom, perhaps, of regulation "taking over" the workings and powers of deification (theosis)¹¹⁵. In a word, the spiritual birth from "above" (Jn. 3:5-6), the birth in Christ by the Spirit¹¹⁶, is somewhat overcast by discourses dedicated to technologically executed bio-psychological restoration and re-design with significant transhumanistic leanings. As far as Fyodorov is concerned, these leanings are set (stabilized) within a generally Orthodox theistic mould. This in turn prevents the main tenets of Christian faith from being jeopardized: for instance, the principle of immutability of the human person (eikon) as such. Despite envisaging the most radically imaginable changes of human psychophysiology¹¹⁷, humankind will remain the image and likeness of Christ the Godman, who in turn is the image of his heavenly Father (Col. 1:15). Admittedly, all of this allows Fyodorov's thought to be exceptionally communicative with both Orthodox theology and transhumanistic philosophy, be it atheistic or theistic¹¹⁸. Still, in Fyodorov's work the spiritual is somehow

¹¹³ "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2Cor. 4:16).

¹¹⁴ Fyodorov envisages the elimination of the alimentary tract, addition of wings: generally, the self-growing of organs and the achievement of plant-like feeding on extraterrestrial energies, etc.

¹¹⁵ In principle deification is not conditioned by regulation, Fyodorovian or other. Of course, on the other hand, regulation can be aligned synergetically with deification goals and processes.

¹¹⁶ The Apostles teaching is adamant about the importance of the inner spiritual realm and of the importance of its interaction with the outer domains of creation: "... you have taken off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col. 3:9-10) or: "Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Rom. 13:14) or: "Though our outer self is wasting away, yet our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2Cor. 4:16).

¹¹⁷ For example, the envisioned overcoming of the cumbersome aspects of the human body, say, in favour of a semi-angelic state of telepathic ethereal existence of the soul (viz. psychocracy), etc. Arguably, though, even this presupposes an embodiedness of sorts. Otherwise, Fyodorov would have to face the Apolinarian temptation as much as the corrective given by Gregory of Nazianzus (as early as 380 or 381 AD): "What was not assumed was not healed" (cf. idem, *Letter* 101, in J. P Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 37, 181C).

¹¹⁸ This point is made well by Eugene Clay in: idem, "Transhumanism and the Orthodox Christian Tradition", in H. Tirosh-Samuelson and K. L. Mossman (eds.), *Building Better Humans? Refocusing the Debate on Transhumanism*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2011, 166-167,¹⁷³⁻¹⁷⁴ After a significant appraisal, Clay reviews the problematic aspects of Fyodorov's thought. His critique, however, is compressed in two prolonged sentences: "As for Fedorov, many of the criticisms levied against transhumanists can certainly be levied against him as well. Fedorov is often impractical, he is unable to provide specific information or guidance about how to go about resurrecting the dead; he ignores the laws of physics and wrongly imagines that it is possible to change them". As well, Clay strongly underlines Fyodorov's connection to St Maximus' spiritual, theological and ecclesial legacy. He concludes that "Both thinkers [Fyodorov and Maximus] offer an optimistic Christian moral framework for discussing the transformation of humanity" (op. cit, 174). Establishing the possibility of this connection is an invaluable contribution. Clay extrapolates the relation between St Maximus and Fyodorov in quite a mediate way: from both authors' allegiance to the results of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681), of which St Maximus (c. 580-662) was the harbinger and standing star. Especially in regard to the integrity of the two natures of Christ the Godman:

caught in the networks of the natural upon which it overly depends. Perhaps this is due to Fyodorov's fascination with the alluring promises of positive science and of technology as a sort of wonder-making extension of the hand of God.¹¹⁹ (This is not to say, as I shall soon indicate, that Fyodorov totally lacks a "critical" concept of technology).

(2.2) Philosophically speaking, the main problem of Fyodorov's doctrine of the Common Task is the formidable strain caused by two main contradictions: (a) on one hand, the attaining of mystical ends by positivist-rational means¹²⁰ and, on the other hand, (b) the duality of the religious-conservative and the revolutionary-progressive. As regards the first contradiction, we can ask the following: Can we, or should we, build a ladder to God scientifically *if* the price might be the acceptance of a religious naturalism and-or an apotheosis of technocentric science (with an add-on in terms of the supramoralistic meta-narrative)?¹²¹ Surely, that would conflate the human and divine in favour of human agency. Or, metaphorically speaking, should we conflate the DNA Double Helix with The Ladder of Jacob (Gen. 18:11-13). As regards the second contradiction, I offer only two from many problematic aspects: On one side we have the primacy of the religion of kinship and the cult of forefathers; on the other side we have the accentuation of the trans-racial universality of spiritual relationships imaging the Trinitarian model. This signals the danger of an unintentional possibility of re-paganizing Christian faith through a seeming cult of ancestors tied to land and blood (although, in positive terms, this may be taken as an attempt to "reset" the moral problem as such: by re-rooting the concept of debt within its origin, namely, that of our deceased yet life-giving forefathers¹²²). Or, on one side we

divine and human, united in one hypostasis: and, particularly in regard to the protection of human nature (physis), will (thelema) and operation (energeia) of Christ as the Godman (against the monothelite party). However, Fyodorov does not delve into Maximian theology per se. At least not in terms of substantially deposited textual evidence of suchlike explorations.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Excursus 1: An aside on Florovsky's criticism.

¹²⁰ This was well noted especially by Nikolai Berdyaev. Cf. *idem*, RRR, 76-101. (However, one should here repeat that Fyodorov does speak of the improvement of both the ends and the means. This implies the spiritualization of not only the goals of the collective efforts of humanity [elevated, ideally, from historic-materialistic ones to spiritual Christian ones], but it also implies the spiritualization of the means as well [transformed, ideally, according to a subtilization and a boost in efficiency of tools and technology]. This would allow us to view the latter, hypothetically, as "ethereal" or "angelic". Nevertheless, it is extremely sensitive to attempt any kind of objectivization of grace in or through [let alone as] technology. And, it seems that there is a tendency in Fyodorov to attempt that or at least to leave it as a non-excluded possibility. I would still have to say that the only "technology of grace" [a mystical one indeed] is the Eucharist itself.

¹²¹ This is certainly the case with some more materialistically inclined Fyodorovians.

¹²² That is why the institution of genealogy (Lk. 3:23-38; Matt. 1:1-18), according to Fyodorov, represents not only the instrument of knowing (soznanie) one's past but, phenomenologically, it is regarded as the condition for the appearance of conscience (sovest). For, what is truly moral, ultimately, is reflected in and as the face(s) of our (deceased) others: viz. forefathers and foremothers.

have the reversal of the birth-giving natal (bio-erotic) energy in favour of the (spiritual) energy for resurrectional activities of the sons; on the other side, however, the resurrectors of the ancestors re-affirm what they purport to overcome: namely, “seeds of corruption”¹²³—i.e. the new humanity remains sin-bearing in its roots¹²⁴, hence it is due to die again (Rom. 6:23). In a word, the main philosophical problem is this: Fyodorov’s vision allows an oscillation between God and technology within a religious naturalism. That is why some Fyodorovians subscribe to a technological “God” or to even to technological self-divinization. All of this, for Fyodorov at least, was set within a pastoral idealization of the 19th Century Russian countryside, not without Slavophile nostalgia. (The melody of this nostalgia, the pastoral elegiac tones, nor the manifold paradoxes, shouldn’t veil the incredible radicalism and dazzling spiritual-ethical excellence of Fyodorov’s philosophical visions: exploding out of his impossibly possible desire: that of resurrection for all from all—now! a revolutionary re-evolution).

(2.3) Scientifically speaking, Fyodorov’s attempt to retrieve the past state of being through scientific reconstruction (like an ontological “restaurateur”) meets the problem of the impossibility of re-capturing the past fully. Logically speaking, this is related to the following questions: (a) Can the past relate to the future in a literal physical sense: and, can finite systems (reasoning brains) describe and understand infinite systems which they are part of (even if they were given the basic laws, which they are not) ? (b) Can we restore the spiritual foundations of personal identity through technical manipulation of the natural psycho-physical reality? As concerns the first question, I add: the scale of human and natural history is so immense—more than gigantic¹²⁵—that replication and replaying (of otherwise unique events!) are not realistically conceivable¹²⁶. (The same holds true for futurative inferences). Without such replay and

¹²³ Cf. Rom. 7:18-2.0; 1Pet. 1:13 (ek sporas phthartes); Gal. 6:7-8.

¹²⁴ We here needn’t prescribe to the notion of inherited guilt or sin. It suffices to acknowledge that we inherit human nature: ipso facto, we inherit a disposition or proclivity to sin. No moral advancement in itself can deal with that, unless *Christ* gives us the final remission of our sinfulness. On top of that, Fyodorov is confident that the procreative activities are sin-bearing, in one way or the other. But, eliminating these does not eliminate the sin-bearing disposition of fallen human nature as such (e.g. 2Pet. 1:4 “en epithymia phthoras”).

¹²⁵ David Kornreich is an astronomer assistant professor at Ithaca College in New York State, and associate at Cornell University. According to his specialist opinion a rough estimate, one which is probably an underestimation, is that there are circa 10 trillion galaxies in the universe (10 million millions = 10×10^{12}). If the Milky Way galaxy contains an estimated 100 billion (100×10^9) stars, then the overall result is 1^{24} stars = 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 in the perceivable universe.

¹²⁶ Cf. Joel E. Cohen, “How does the past relate to the future?”, *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences Annual Report*, (31 Aug 1982) 71. (Of course, putting up models of re-construction of evolutionary processes and computing possibilities is necessary as much as welcome).

replication there are no grounds for precise experimental testing and analysis, for anticipative modelling and for ascertaining regularity patterns—such that they reveal to us the fundamental laws governing relations between *all* past events and *all* future outcomes. As regards the second question I add: atomic particles are interchangeable and information may be lost¹²⁷. The attempt to re-synthesise (resuscitate or resurrect) a concrete individual, even if it were realistically possible, say through retrieval technologies manipulating genetic-hereditary blood maps and blood deposits (“remains”), would encounter the problem of the so called identical twin or clone. This can be formulated as follows: Can the reconstructed pattern of information that characterized the person be regarded as the full presence of that *person*? Let us here voice the parallel theological question: What if divine will is in principle against such a procedure? Furthermore, in regard to Fyodorovian scientific futurism connected to cryonics (time) and trans-solar astronautics (space), or genetic cloning re-manipulation of the organism (life) one can ask this as well: Is perpetual psycho-physical existence in a fallen world in accordance with God’s plan for mankind? Is infinitely extended time, or control over time and body processes, commensurate to spiritual transfiguration and re-creation in Christ (viz. *kaine ktisis*¹²⁸)?

Nevertheless, we need to recognize that Fyodorov’s philosophy carries positive visionary perspectives and aspects. Many of these are inspiring and need to be acknowledged accordingly. Some have a lasting value. Only a selected few contributions are in order due to limitations of space and time.

(2.4) Theologically speaking, next to the positive sides introduced thus far (especially in regard to viewing the whole cosmos in liturgical terms), Fyodorov’s idea about immanent resurrection has at least two lastingly invaluable aspects. Both affirm the freedom and the responsibility of the human being before God, humankind and nature. Firstly, Fyodorov’s teaching on “immanent” resurrection annihilates every quietist leaning in the understanding of the potentials of human nature, which it affirms exceptionally. As is obvious in the following statement: “General resurrection could not immediately follow that of Christ because it has to be the conscious work¹²⁹ (*trud*) of the human race uniting the length and breadth of the globe:

¹²⁷ This critical remark was made by R. Michael Perry, in Ed Tandy, revised by R. Michael Perry (2003), “N. F. Fedorov, Russian Come-Upist”, *Venturist Voice* (originally published: Summer 1986).

¹²⁸ “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (*kaine ktisis*). The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come! *All this is from God**, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ” (2Cor. 5:17-18).

¹²⁹ The category of labour [*trud*], together with those derived from it (deed [*delo*] etc), is amongst the most important in Fyodorov’s philosophy. It brings him into a notable vicinity of the theory of Karl Marx on the constitutive role of

indeed, the field of action is not limited to planet Earth”¹³⁰. Admittedly, Fyodorov would concede that saving grace cannot be “earned” by means of any calculating merit. But, he also knows that it cannot be taken for granted. (This somewhat alleviates the objection in regard to his crypto-Pelagian streak). Secondly, Fyodorov’s anthropocentric resurrection activism (set within the frame of God-manhood) has one more astonishing outcome. Namely, it leads to the teaching about the conditional (sic) nature of apocalyptic prophecies: “... the Resurrection of Christ is the beginning of general resurrection, and the consequent history is the continuation of it”¹³¹. According to Fyodorov’s suggestion, the Dread Last Judgment needn’t be a predetermined dead-line (chronologically, historically). As well, it needn’t be a pre-determined eternal damnation into Hell (spiritually, existentially). The outcome and timing of the Last Judgment depend on the activity and decisions of mankind as well¹³². This entails a free interiorization of the eschaton. And yes, Fyodorov does know that transformation within the Common Task demands a massive moral and spiritual effort by humanity, each person included.

(2.5) Philosophically speaking, Fyodorov posits the foundations for a non-formalist (or “meta-adequationist”) theory of truth. It endeavours to address the question of being as the question of un-covering (Gk. *aletheia*) what truly is—or, rather, of un-forgetting what truly should be the case with *being*. In other words, Fyodorov accepts something as true (of being) only if, ultimately, it works towards or enables the unconcealing and-or remembering of a possibly non-mortalizable mode of being. A notion of truth, then, may be taken as “adequate” to its object if and only if it facilitates the recovery and re-discovery of being’s non-mortal possibilities (viz. *me-ontology*¹³³: i.e. an ontology of being-yet-to-be: an ontology of being-not-

labour in the historical phylogenesis of mankind. “The purpose of humanity is to change all that is natural, i.e. given by nature, into what is created by labour...” (Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1,2.55). Yet, the distance between the two thinkers is equally great. Fyodorov sees labour as a divinely instituted capacity with a divine finality attached to it, accordingly. In virtue of being the image of God, man is the co-regulator of creation. This means that reason needs to be re-introduced into chaotic or blindly spontaneous nature. Consequently, labour is the function of finality since labour enables the re-introduction of purposiveness into creation, synergetically with God. Rational labour spells-out the grammar of nature’s purposes. Interestingly, the same understanding of labour applies in resurrection work and in nature work, viz. the positive sciences.

¹³⁰ Nikolai R Fyodorov, PBK:CW, 1,146.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² In the opposite case, transcendent resurrection (saving the elect only) might come about as divine punishment for abandoning labour dedicated to the immanent resurrection, i.e. the Common Task. Here we glean a creatively reinterpreted apocatastatic trait in Fyodorov (viz. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa).

¹³³ There is a “meontological” critique of classical onto(theo)logy to be observed in Fyodorov’s opus. See more in the invaluable study by Myroslav Feodosijevic Hryschko, “Fyodorov’s Meontology”, *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 2. (2009) 157-179. “Using the contemporary speculative anti-humanism of Badiou, Brassier, Grant, Meillassoux, etc., and the anthropic-transcendental lineage of Kant and Heidegger as points of both accession and tension, the

yet-there [Gk. me-on]). Then and only then such a notion “corresponds” to something that may prove to be substantially true, as of the proper way of being. Truth is ontologized, and projected dynamically into a pragmatistically realizable reality¹³⁴. In Fyodorov’s thinking on truth several aspects of the concept of truth emerge: (a) the ontological (what is?), (b) the gnoseological (how is it known?), the (c) the pragmatic (how does it work?) and (d) the ethical (what is the state of the ‘isness’ of what ‘is’: good or bad, alive or dead etc? and, what should it be or become?). These aspects are closely interrelated and cannot be separated. In a nutshell, for Fyodorov, truth is understood to be an act of un-forgetting (a-letheia) being: moreover, an act of retrieving concrete beings from the grasp of death, darkness, hiddenness (Gk. lanthano) i.e. an act of resuscitation of being. Full truth as notion and action is opened within a horizon of substantial being-resurrecting memory (Russ, vechnaya pamyat: Gk. aionia he mneme: memory eternal). Therefore, on Fyodorov’s terms, resurrection praxis would be the ultimate realization of a notion of what is adequate to truth. The pragmatic aspect is thus connected to the ontological and gnoseological aspects, all of which are united within the ethical dimension, viz. resurrection. Fyodorov’s philosophy of truth as memory (pamyat) thus elucidates the absolute debt that we, as sons and daughters, owe to our ancestors. It echoes in philosophical terms the meaning of their calling (vyzov): a calling of us into re-membrance of a humanity restored, resurrected and reunited: a calling to meet, again, face to face¹³⁵: being to being—beyond and against death, darkness, oblivion.

As well, he grounds a philosophy of personhood. His personology understands the face to face encounter, both ontologically and existentially, as *the* primary horizon of meaning (inasmuch, this anticipates E. Levinas)¹³⁶. What is more, the question of the meaning of being (ti) is articulated by looking at the way of being (pos): which is currently a being-towards-death (inasmuch, this anticipates M. Heidegger). Importantly, the question of being is simultaneously reversed into the question of being-towards-resurrection. Indeed, there is a pertinent critique of classical ontology to be observed in his opus (v. n. 133).

possibility of resurrection and immortality coupled with the death of being suggests the excision of any constancy or necessity to ontology, to both Being or beings, thus entailing the rudiments of such a meontology” (idem, op. cit., 157). In more concrete terms, Fyodorov’s reflection on being is posited in terms of a being-not-yet-in existence (me on): a resurrected being, to wit, which is here (Lazarus, Christ) but not yet (humankind).

¹³⁴ We now understand that Fyodorov wishes to supervene this type of theory of truth over other more local and objectivised, instrumental, types of truth theories and-or truth practices.

¹³⁵ Cf. Excursus 2: Reflection on the influence of Fyodorov’s notion of truth on Paul Florensky.

¹³⁶ Cf. Excursus 3: Reflection on a possible influence path from Fyodorov via Dostoevsky to Levinas.

Fyodorov's radicalization of Kant's practical philosophy in regard to the categorical imperative is another important contribution. It posits a deep reformulation of the categories of absolute debt (of sons to forefathers): of duty and responsibility, such that they have significant ethical and social as much as ecological and cosmic repercussions: reaching out to the past and to the future in terms of a resuscitative restoration of beings. Let me explain by returning to Fyodorov's discussion of Kant.

As was said, Kant's understanding of morality is articulated through the doctrine of the categorical imperative which is the basis for the evaluation of motifs for moral conduct. It is posited in *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). This work offers four formulations of the categorical imperative¹³⁷. These formulations presuppose each other. Let us cite the Second formulation: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end"¹³⁸. Now, Fyodorov may be dubbed the fiercest "anti-Kantian Kantian"¹³⁹ (the latter adjective can be allowed because of the absolute primacy of ethical duty in Fyodorov's philosophy). Interestingly though, Fyodorov would endorse Kant's formulation of the obligatory moral law. But, he would do so under one condition (a condition which in fact changes everything). Namely, it must be broadened and deepened, radically. Treating humankind always as an end must include absolute moral respect not only in regard to those who are presently alive. In a deepest inversion and simultaneous expansion of the categorical imperative, Fyodorov claims that the categorical imperative, viz. moral Law, must include absolute moral respect

¹³⁷ I. Formula of the Law of Nature (universality): "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature" II. Formula of the End Itself (humanity): "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" III. Formula of Autonomy (self-legislation): "So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxims" IV. Formula of the Kingdom of Ends: "So act as if you were through your maxims a law-making member of a kingdom of ends"

¹³⁸ Cf. Kant's second formulation of the Categorical imperative in idem, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, Riga 1785.

¹³⁹ Let this suffice to illustrate how irreconcilably Fyodorov departs from Kant: "The world is my representation of it—the latest word of the collegiate of the learned [viz. Kantian criticism BL]. The reduction of the world to its representation is the outcome of inactivity and individualism [...]; it is the child of idleness—mother of all vices—and of solipsism (egotism)—father of all crimes": cf. Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK: CW, I, 46. I leave aside the fact that in Kant both the conscious experience (empirical consciousness of the self as the object of particular representations) as well as the conscious self-experience (consciousness of the self attained by apperceptive acts) are conceptualized as predetermined by the transcendental ego which, note, executes an a priori spontaneous activity of synthesizing the unity and identity of consciousness, as well as re-representing the necessary condition for it: All this, in fact and thusly, implies a notion of both freedom and activity—even a specific kind of labour (admittedly, in an idealistic mode).

towards the deceased: however, not in terms of mere piety nor mere pity towards persons who have perished (who have “departed” and have been “dis-membered” from the community of the living). If they, too, are to be included as ends (if we are serious about treating persons as ends in themselves), then we ought to (must) treat them as resurrected, by working for the Common Task, supramoralistically. The same follows suit for nature (Rom. 8:20-23). Thereby the deep past of being itself (not mere representations of it) must be integrated into moral action. Ethics is no longer focused exclusively on the present and-or the future in the abstract, but on substantial action. In other terms, ethics need to integrate a power of being-changing effectiveness. That would make ethics effective on an ontological level: “... without universal resurrection it is impossible to affirm the triumph of spirit over bodiness (plot); without universal resurrection this triumph remains perfectly ineffective, and, in that case, what is left of that meaningless (nelepo) autonomy of morality in regard to such a powerless being as is man...?”¹⁴⁰ This of course takes us back to Fyodorov’s critique of formal descriptive ontology which, as he protests, remains divorced from ethics, and vice versa. Anticipating the primacy of the ethical or even ethics as first philosophy (viz. Levinas, again) Fyodorov demands the following: “If ontology as the science of being would be not only reflected about (mislimaya) but also felt¹⁴¹ (chuvstvuyema), then it would be impossible to separate it from deontology, i.e., it would be impossible to separate what is from what that which needs to be”¹⁴².

(2.6) Scientifically speaking, many of Fyodorovs futuristic intuitions regarding the integration of mankind and science are becoming a reality, as we speak. As well, it is not entirely fair to take Fyodorov’s claims verbally or, even worse, to caricaturize them. This makes it easier to dismiss them in an unwarranted way, i.e. at face value. It could be said that Fyodorov is clear that resuscitation is not necessarily to be envisioned as a mere physical 1:1 replication of a past physical form: for instance, of people who have lived in the past and have populated distant eras and spaces¹⁴³. As such, they were moral and rational types of existences. Yet, some or many

¹⁴⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 122.

¹⁴¹ This not intoned in the romantic emotionalist sense. Rather, it signifies the sense of feeling (and then legislating) the absolute duty to care for being: to cater to and resuscitate being, actively, not to merely “think” about it nor to merely “improve” our knowledge about it.

¹⁴² Nikolai R Fyodorov, PBK:CW, I, 106.

¹⁴³ On the other hand, the physical retrieval of bodies-souls of the dead is part of Fyodorovs proposal and, as such, brings along formidable technical, scientific and metaphysical problems (as noted previously). Again, many of Fyodorov s ideas are ambivalent-edged and can be interpreted in more than one way, even in opposite and mutually excluding ways.

were egotistic, exploitative, extremely self-centered, and generally not enlightened. Therefore, one has to take into account Fyodorov's idea of the collective enlightenment of mankind over time: intended projectively and retrojectively. Inasmuch it is legitimate to keep the following as a regulative *ideal*, regarded in terms of a spiritual (re)evolution: namely, mankind is a self-creating and freely self-governing body of integrated persons and, as such, needs to master the technologies capable of infinite renewal: with physical augmentation oriented by moral augmentation. Let this be stated by the Fyodorovian cosmist, Valerian Muravyov:

“Together with the transformation of organisms and creation of new ones, the resurrection of what was valuable in the old ones will also become part of practice. [...]. Needless to say, the physical transformation still isn't everything. It is only a condition for the transformation of man in which he will be reborn and transformed in an integral way. Nevertheless, the obstacles for his spiritual perfecting, those placed by the material conditions of our existence, will no longer exist”¹⁴⁴

As regards his philosophical influence on science, it seems to have gone from science fiction to science fact. The following ideas have populated the field of Russian scientific futurism and cosmism¹⁴⁵. They may be attributed to the fertilizing influence of Fyodorov's genius, in one way or the other. (1) immortalism: indefinite extension of the length of human life (anticipation of cryonics or longevity projects [Kuprevich]); (2) resurrectionism: resuscitative healing of decaying and dead organisms (anticipation of genetic engineering, molecular biology, cloning, organ implant-transplant surgery, bionic extensions of human capacity, self-development and body and soul re-design etc); (3) regulationism: harnessing natural forces on a cosmic level through the intervention of purposive consciousness and technology (anticipations of climatology, ecology, astrobiology and astrobotics, as well as astroenergetics and astrotellurgy etc [Chizhevsky et alii]); (4) astronautics; space travel control [Tsiolkovsky, Korolev et alii]; (5) chrononautics: control over time and the production of time [Muravyov]; (6) esotericism: willed changes of body, soul and spirit morphology (autotrophy) and capacity (anticipation of experiments in telekinetics, remote viewing and telepathy: anticipations of invisibility projects, as well as those creating a noosphere to interact with the biosphere and geosphere: humanity will have the ability to transmute the physical elements due to its conscious mastery of nuclear processes [Vernadsky et alii]); and (7) fringe science: some of Fyodorov's

¹⁴⁴ Valerian Muravyov, COF in OTI, 268.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Semenova's listing of the branches of Russian cosmist thought, including Fyodorov. She lists both natural and spiritual-humanistic scientists and thinkers: Svetlana G. Semenova, ROC, 3-4.

ideas anticipate explorations of the effects of quantum physics realities on the understanding of the functioning of consciousness, the reasoning brain and the psycho-physical reality of the human being; or, the influence of meditation and prayer on consciousness and psycho-somatic capacities. Let the following synthetic narrative illustrate the transhumanist fecundity of Fyodorovian cosmist philosophy:

“Maybe in the future new elements will be discovered, totally devoid of the negative sides of current organic matter. New bodies will be created which possess incomparably greater plasticity, strength, solidity, mobility. They will move with exceptional speed without external devices, they will feed directly of light and will not be susceptible to the action of the law of gravity [...]. At the same time, they will think, feel, perceive, and act at a distance. [...] the contemporary body will be removed and only an electronic body will be left over...”¹⁴⁶

It should be added that Fyodorov's thought opens a space for a critique of the technocratic understanding of technology, encased as it is within instrumental scientific rationality. This should be underlined as well. Precisely because Fyodorov does nurture the highest hope¹⁴⁷ that science and technology may bring about a turnover of the lamentable state of the human condition. By calling for the transformation of both “means” and “ends” (and this includes technology and social behaviour ethically regarded in respect to final goals) Fyodorov posits a departure point in relation to a naive (as well as vulgar) conception of technology. He allows us to understand that technologies are not mere tools, morally neutral in themselves. His project of the Common Task, especially viz. regulation, in fact presupposes a recognition that technologies are, and need to be, self-consciously crafted social products which can and do change human behaviour, radically. Technologies are always already social-ethical “statements”, imbued with the social-cultural value-system. In themselves they are incarnations of behaviour codes and suchlike directives implanted by the overall social grid: knotted by power, interests, desires, and the dominant ideological imaginary. Technologies serve either progressive or degenerative purposes and, therefore, they significantly impact the historic and natural realities of human existence. Fyodorov actually works for what may be called the “angelic” transmutation, i.e. “spiritualization”, of science and technology. He is aware that the technical side of social laws

¹⁴⁶ Valerian Muravyov, COF in OTI, 267.

¹⁴⁷ Of course, as I've indicated earlier, at the same time, precisely by nursing seemingly unlimited grand expectations regarding science-technology, Fyodorov comes to the brink of a specific kind of re-objectification of technology (“idolizing” would be an overly harsh and misplaced word, though). Perhaps we should acknowledge that there might be things that technology and technical tools cannot achieve, including the victory over death.

and the social side of laws governing technology can be, and should be, evaluated and judged: that they need to change, if and when they are not adequate to the highest of goals (those stated in his supramoralist vision). Contemporary attempts to produce nature-friendly and society-friendly technologies, as well as the criticism of the massive impact of modern technology on the life-world of globalized humanity (especially in the sphere of biotechnology, IT and the world wide web [Internet] etc) may be connected to some of Fyodorov's ideas voiced in this regard.

3. Results and legacy: It is now expedient to recapitulate the main positive contributions of the religious philosophy of Nikolai Fyodorov, especially with regard to our thematic. According to the lasting and obligatory insights of Fyodorov: (1) technology should be the extension of the service to divine-human spiritual and ethical goals and practices: only that justifies it, ultimately; (2) because the essential Past must have a future, the Future will not become a mere “past”: and, the past’s future lies in the Deed (leiturgia) of resurrecting our deceased fathers and mothers: in fact, that is the essential condition of and for the future; (3) philosophy is the project of the Common Task: the spiritual corrective of godless scientism-industrialism-consumerism: a cure against manifold fragmentation, and of disintegration of mankind into the living “and” the dead; lastly, (4) with regard to the question of death positioned at the cross-road of the relations of past-future and theology-technology, I propose the following:

Reflecting on Fyodorov’s thought Vladimir N. Ilyin (1891-1974) says rightly: “In the centre of liturgies and technics, as a unifying instance, stands the Resurrection—the Festivity of the Pascha, the main solution of which is determined by the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ”. Importantly, he adds: “Therein lays the Achilles heel of Fyodorov’s teaching. The thing is that it was an organic part of the person of the author of the Philosophy of the Common Task, and, outside his person it was unavoidably threatened by ruin, parody, sectarianism, even by heresy”¹⁴⁸. Equally just and respectful, perhaps less sentimental, is Vasily Zenkovsky (1881-1962). Whilst reflecting on the utopian proclivity of Russian thought in general¹⁴⁹, the one-time professor of philosophy at Belgrade’s Faculty of Orthodox Theology (1921-1923), Fr Vasily Zenkovsky, concludes on Fyodorov by indicating the main—limital—problem of the Project as a whole: “Fyodorov’s utopianism is an evidence not of weakness of his philosophical talent, but,

¹⁴⁸ Vladimir N. Ilyin, “On the Religious and Philosophical Worldview of N. F. Fodorov” (Russ.), *The Euroasian Collection*, vol. VI, Prague 1919, 17-23.

¹⁴⁹ Vasily V. Zenkovsky, *Der Geist der Utopie im russischen Denken, Orient und Occident*, XVI (1934) 23-31.

for the time being, of the insurmountable difficulty to re-unite into one the ideal with history, the all-universal' salvation with the living reality of our being"¹⁵⁰.

I am fully aware of the reasons backing Zenkovsky's understandable "realism". However, I am compelled to add that the said "difficulty" even if "insurmountable", doesn't justify resignation. It shouldn't serve as an alibi for abandoning history in the sense of struggle, hope and explorative imagination in regard to overcoming social-cultural alienation, including the alienation par excellence: death. Nor should it be a pretext to abandon the striving to reach unity in what is True, Good and Beautiful. Marina Simakova captures the moment of Fyodorovian and Russian cosmist resilience, if not defiance in the face of pessimistic realism or cynical reticence to strive for the realization of ideals:

"Declaring the 'cosmic growth of humankind' its goal, cosmism was, of course, a modernist project, but it was the project of an alternative modernity. It experienced the tremendous impact of scientific theory, becoming its esoteric extension. The dream of human immortality was not a romantic fantasy, but an integral system of viewpoints that grew out of a principled refusal to view the world through the eyes of the lonely and selfish individual, that is, through the eyes of the nihilist. Immortality implied an unwillingness to separate the human of the present from the human of the past, as well as the destruction of all obstacles standing between people [...]. Progress, in this instance, was neither an end in itself nor a harbinger of the revolutionary rupture (although the idea of a mandatory period of active evolution did resemble the inevitable dictatorship of the proletariat on the road to communism), but a natural necessity and measure of morality"¹⁵¹

As regards Fyodorov's solution to the problem of death, theologically, one can state the following (albeit, in full acknowledgement of the liturgical core of his teaching): Technology and science cannot in themselves supplant the Eucharistic resuscitation (nor the resurrection-transfiguration promise implied therein) given by the Son of God Christ by the Spirit. They cannot do so even if the mastery over matter, space and time were to become absolute. The goal of Christian life is not the infinite life-span in itself, nor augmentation of psycho-somatic or other human capacities in themselves. The goal of the Christian life is not only the remission of sins. The goal is to attain transfigured living in communion with the living God, in the community of transfiguration, the Church. The Christian notion of immortality doesn't automatically translate to the realizability of infinite possibility and-or omnipotence. Rather, true immortality is revealed

¹⁵⁰ Vasily V. Zenkovsky, HRF, 147.

¹⁵¹ Marina Simakova, op. cit.

as the non-severable unity and incomparable dynamic peace¹⁵² forged with God in Christ by the Spirit. The fore fruits of this gift are Eucharistic, and the consummation of it will ever remain Eucharistic, as of the mystery of Christ. The fathers of the Church know this well. For instance, Symeon the New Theologian ([949-1022] speaking of St Paul's ineffable experience of the goods prepared by God for those who love Him [1Cor 2:9]), states that "together with the good things stored up in heaven, these are the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which we see every day and eat and drink [...] outside of these, you will not be able to find one of those things spoken of, even if you [...] traverse the whole creation"¹⁵³. In similar spirit, Ignatius of Antioch (C.35-C.107) describes the Eucharist as *pharmakon athanasias*: the medicine of immortality, and the antidote which wards off death and yields continuous life in union with Jesus Christ"¹⁵⁴. Could we, metaphorically, speak of the Eucharistic resuscitation as the most sublime kind of "technology": a mystical technology (*techne*) administered in and by the act of Eucharistic communion by God in Christ's Spirit? However, philosophically and scientifically speaking, it is not absurd to envisage that mankind, on the condition of collective repentance before God, might experience a hitherto unknown blessing, a part of which could be an unprecedented advancement of the capabilities of technology to alleviate death-inducing psycho-physical processes, including the harmonization of cosmic nature. These two lines, the spiritual-theological and the philosophical-scientific, in that case, can and should converge. In doing so, they could (possibly) make a future for the "past" as well (say, in terms of a "release" or re-embodiment of souls awaiting the fullness of life eternal in the "bosom of Abraham" as of Christ himself ? [Lk. 16:22-23]). And, who is to say that this will not, somehow, coincide with or prepare the Second arrival of our Lord: *ho on kai ho en kai ho erchomenos* (Rev. 1:4).

3.1. A pioneering proposal. *Therefore-*. Fyodorov lays-out a foundation for the following proposal: (1) a sustainable framework for the integration of the languages of religion and science should be devised¹⁵⁵; (2) we need a common super-value for the orientation of humankind:

¹⁵² "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding (*he hyperechousa panta noun*), will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

¹⁵³ St Symeon the New Theologian, *On the Mystical Life: The Ethical Discourses* (Vol. 1: Third Ethical Discourse), tr. A. Golitzin, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood – NY 1995, 130-131.

¹⁵⁴ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to Ephesians*, 20:2.

¹⁵⁵ This needn't be understood literally: for instance, as a quest for the total mutual interchangeability or fusion of the two languages. Rather, it should be understood as an encouragement for finding a dynamic equivalence between the two languages, respectively, in accord with an agreed common framework of symbols, ideas, dialogue protocols, values and goals.

preferably, a supramoralistic ethics¹⁵⁶ which unconditionally demands the resurrection of beings through the Common Task of all for all (leiturgia) \n. whereby Fyodorov in fact postulates a holistic-integrational, dynamic-relational, and personalistic-communional ontology¹⁵⁷ as a possible mediating code (or “interpreter”) in the dialogue of religion and science]; and (3) cosmology¹⁵⁸ may be the meeting focal point for both religion and science. The said triune proposal is formulated memorably in the following statement:

“For man as the consciousness of nature, the natural problem, the problem of nature as a force which procreates and kills, constitutes his natural task because it solves the problem of hunger, epidemics and sickness in general: that is, of old age and death. Both believers and unbelievers¹⁵⁹ can unite in this natural task, and by uniting and carrying out the task they will attain oneness of mind. In taking part in this task the believers will not oppose Gods will, but carry it into effect, while for unbelievers it will be their liberation from enslavement to the blind force, and submission to the will of God, instead of that persistent denial of divine will on which philosophy squanders its powers”¹⁶⁰.

The tenets of Nikolai Fyodorov represent a lasting contribution to the ideal of synergy of religion and science, past and future, and to the struggle to understand and overcome death. The sage from Moscow seems to advise us to keep moving forward by looking “backward” (remembering dead persons [= the essence of the deep past]): and conversely, to keep moving “backward” by looking forward (anticipating resurrected persons [= the essence of the fullness of future]). This is not a vicious circle. Rather, it is an arrow aimed at immortality¹⁶¹. Alongside, he

¹⁵⁶ Let us not forget the integrative, relational and communional aspects of supramoralism: the “all-universal synthesis” as Fyodorov himself dubs it.

¹⁵⁷ Let us remember that in Fyodorov ontology is “ethicized” in personalist terms and, conversely, that ethics are “ontologized”

¹⁵⁸ The importance of cosmology for the meeting of religion and science was insightfully noted by Vladimir Medenica (inspired by analogous reflections of John D. Zizioulas): cf. idem, “Nikolai Fyodorov” (Serb.), in R. Bordevic (ed.), *The Contemporariness of Russian Religious Philosophy*, Gutenberg’s Galaxy, Belgrade 2002, 83.

¹⁵⁹ The stance of faith doesn’t exclude the attainment of scientific excellence: on the contrary. Max Planck rightly recognized the common purpose of science and faith: “Religion and science are fighting a joint battle [...] against skepticism and against dogmatism, against disbelief and against superstition, and the rallying cry [...] has always been, and always will be: ‘On to God!’ [...] Natural science wants us to learn, religion wants us to act!”: cf. Max Planck, *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*, tr. F. Gaynor, Williams and Norgate Ltd., London 1950, 184. BL

¹⁶⁰ Nikolai F. Fyodorov, S: CW, I, 394.

¹⁶¹ The trajectory of this arrow of desire resembles the Russian khorovod folk dance, of which Fyodorov speaks enthusiastically. In the Serbian folk tradition the analogue is the so called kolo. In this primordial folk event all dance together in a circle. They hold hands in a criss-cross manner and, by looking at each other’s faces, celebrate the gift of unity in life and in common community goals (parohija, selo, opshtina, okrug). As well, let me underline strongly, the Little and Great entrance of the Orthodox Church’s Liturgy (i.e. the circular movements of clergy

seems to advise that there is a role for science in religion, and a role for religion in science as long as they remain interconnected. But, I'd wish to add, care needs to be taken not to confuse their specific domains and functions (viz. their autonomy). In the meanwhile declarative postulations of the integration of theological-liturgical and scientific-technological means and powers are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the true immersion of technology into grace: and, more explanatory work needs to be done on how exactly, where and when such a supramoralistic all-unifying synthesis may come to pass.

Afterword: visions of relatedness and related visions. Dostoevsky introduced Fyodorov's notion of "all are responsible for all" in his *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-1880). Tellingly, in 1877 Dostoevsky reveals the following to Fyodorov's follower Nikolai Peterson¹⁶²: "Let me tell you that essentially I am in complete agreement with these ideas. I read them as if they were my own. Today I read them (anonymously) to Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov, our young philosopher. [...]... Solovyov and I at least, believe in a real, literal, personal resurrection and one that will come to pass on earth"¹⁶³. Still, it is Vladimir Solovyev who vocalized the most emphatic words of acknowledgment as regards the impact of Fyodorov's resurrection-oriented thought. For sure, it is not difficult to discern Fyodorov's ideas in the underpinnings of Solovyov's *Lectures on Godmanhood* (1877-1881). Writing to the son of Prince Pavel Gagarin (that is, to Fyodorov), Solovyov confides: "Your 'project' I accept unconditionally and without any objections... Since the time of the appearance of Christianity, Your 'project' is the first movement forward of the human spirit on the path to Christ. From my end, I must acknowledge You as my teacher and spiritual father"¹⁶⁴.

One of the first two occupants of the MIR space station (sent aloft on 13 Mar 1986 aboard a Soyuz T spacecraft) was Vladimir Alekseyevich Solovyov (*1946). Twenty-five years

around the altar and through the nave of the church [mali vhod, veliki vhod]) are actually types of khorovod or kolo. And vice versa, the kolo dance is an extension of the celebration of the Liturgy itself. Even presently in many Orthodox traditions this happens on major feast days: thusly, all remain intertwined and united, both in heaven and in earth, in time and space. Cf. *The Mountain Wreath of P. P. Nyegosh Prince-Bishop of Montenegro*, tr. J. Wiles, George Allen & Unwin, London 1930 (Serbian original published as: Petar Petrovic Njegosh, *Gorski vijenac*, Beč¹1847).

¹⁶² Previously Dostoevsky published excerpts from Fyodorov's teaching which Peterson sent to him. Cf. "Isolated Phenomena" A. *Writer's Diary*, II:4 March 1876.

¹⁶³ Fyodor M. Dostoevsky, *Letters* (Russ.), vol. IV, Moscow 1959, 9 (cf. cit. FPhR, 5).

¹⁶⁴ Vasily V. Zenkovsky, HRF, 133 (Also cf. E. L. Radlov [ed.], *Letters of Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov* [Russ.], Obshchestvenaya Polza, Sankt Petersburg 1909, 345 [cit. acc. FPhR, 5]).

earlier, on 12 Apr 1961, a man named Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin (1934-1968) became the first human being to enter cosmic space. Neither is Vladimir Alekseyevich related to Solovyov the philosopher; nor is Yuri Alekseyevich directly related to Fyodorov (Pavel Gagarin's son). Yet, they are related within the spirit of Russian philosophical cosmism as well as within Russian cosmic science. Speaking in Fyodorovian terms, the two astronauts have established brotherly and kindred relations with the two philosophers in a Common Task, within the astronautic side of a spiritual-philosophical journey. And conversely, the two philosophers have reaffirmed their "relatedness" to the two astronauts, not necessarily in blood, but from within the very philosophical roots of Russia's cosmic voyage. Is it likely that this Common Task will eventually overlap exactly with the Common Task that Fyodorov had in mind, and in heart? The answer to this question necessarily remains a mystery locked in the unfathomable depths of the dialogue of Divine Wisdom with mankind.

Excursus

[1. An aside on Florovsky's criticism of Fyodorov. "... until the present the most merciless criticisms of Fyodorov, advancing in the name of Orthodox official thinking (pravoslavnoy ortodoksii), as by rule, have been only variations of [Florovsky's BL] evaluation" (Semenova, FPhR, 6). Svetlana Semenova is right to voice reserve towards Florovsky's critique of Fyodorov (Florovsky, WRT, 322-330). One cannot accept some of his misplaced disqualifications of Fyodorov. Especially not those which view his thought as symptomatic of "necromancy" (sic?!), or, as indicative of a "magical" (sic!?) approach to technology, or, as an underestimation of the problem of personhood (sic!?), or, as conducted without "any" reference to transcendence i.e. grace (sic!?) [this was subsequently corrected by V. Zenkovsky]: or, as generally overshadowed by "phantasizing", etc. Such disqualifications are not hermeneutically and theoretically valid. Simply, they are not true and are thus unacceptable. However, some other critical reserves proffered by Florovsky (and not only Florovsky) in regard to Fyodorov's proposals are still relevant, and do deserve consideration. Especially those criticising Fyodorov's tendency to close the workings of spirit naturalistically; or the deficits of Christological and-or sacramental realism in Fyodorovian theology connected, as they are, to anthropocentric or humanistic over-reliance on the ideas of modern Aufklärung; or certain errings in Fyodorov's biblical exegesis: that is,

interpretative wilfulness and-or literalism, etc. Nevertheless, again, Florovsky's mannerism of criticism of (non-Florovskyian) Russian religious philosophical and-or theological thought, by rule in stiff sweeps en bloc, certainly has serious shortcomings (Cf. an early and rather forgotten, pertinent and well informed, counter-reaction in relation to Florovsky's WRT that came from within the fold of Russian Christian emigre intelligentsia: Evgeny Spektorsky, "A New Book About Russian Theology" (Serb.), *Hriscanska misao*, 111:6-7 [1937] 84-87). All things said, it should also be noted that Orthodox philosophical-theological reflection on Fyodorov (and in general on Russian religious philosophical thinking) is not co-equal to a "remorseless" critique à la Florovsky; nor are all theological attempts to consider Fyodorov critically "by rule" mere "variations" of Florovsky's "decisive dismissal of Fyodorov from the fold of Christianity" (FPhR, 6). Vasily Zenkovsky's critical reflection on Fyodorov is a fine example of quite the opposite of that. And, Zenkovsky was as officially "Orthodox" as was Florovsky. (Although, Fr Vasily Zenkovsky was far more "inclusive" than was Fr George Florovsky, staunchly inset [as he was] within his conception of the "neo-patristic" synthesis, coupled with his purist rigorism [Semenova places Zenkovsky within the broader wing of Russian philosophers, together with Florensky, Berdyaev and Frank, all of whom have offered a far more positive, laudatory, appraisal of Fyodorov: yet, not without a diagnosis of some non-trivial neuralgia]). Actually, at least to my mind, it was a "non-official" religious philosophical mind, Nikolai Berdyaev, who gave the most satisfyingly comprehensive (both measured and insightful) philosophical-theological critique of Fyodorov (Berdyaev, RRR, 76-102). What is more, and surprisingly, in this study Berdyaev is more "conventionally" Orthodox than he himself ever will be. In his study, Berdyaev is much more analytically and theologically balanced, creative, in regard to Fyodorov than is Florovsky in his *The Ways of Russian Theology...* Interestingly, Berdyaev wrote his study 22 years before Florovsky's criticism in *The Ways of Russian Theology* (Russ.), YMCA-Press, Paris 1937 = abbr. WRT]

[2. Reflection on the influence of Fyodorov's notion of truth on Paul Florensky. In respect to viewing truth not merely as a recursive formalism of static concepts-definitions vis-a-vis static-reified objects (which conceal [Gk. *lanthano*] deeper ontological, gnoseological and ethical possibilities), it can be said that Fyodorov anticipates Paul Florensky (1882-1937) by some 36 years, and, in a qualified and conditional sense, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) by some 50 years. — As regards Florensky let me remind that his analysis of truth was expounded in his

Pillar and Bulwark of Truth (Stolp i utverzhdeniye Istiny, Moscow 1914, esp. 15-50 = abbr. SUI). Florensky's brilliant discussion on truth is opened-up by a markedly non-trivial as much as complex etymological analysis of the term. However, he draws philosophical insights regarding the notion of truth, not merely philological or linguistic ones. He underlines the multidimensional character of the term, concept, notion and usage of "truth". The young Florensky views truth as deeply rooted in the experience of cognizing reality, and, as ultimately affirmed in a special type of certitude. He lays-out the meanings of the term within four historical-cultural traditions of forging truth: the Russian (Slavic), the ancient Greek, the Latin and the Hebrew (Semitic) traditions. Part of his result is given in his proposal to always keep in mind that the notion of truth is polyvalent. Accordingly, we need to acknowledge that four dimensions of it prevail, according to the following criteria: that is, the relation of truth and reality may be (§1) immediate (cognized by the individual) or (§2) mediate (cognized by the collective), (§3) expressive of the formal side or (§4) expressive of the contentual side. Consequently, the Russian notion is closer to §1+§4; the Greek to §1+§3; the Latin to §2+§3; and the Hebrew to §2+§4. Now let us backtrack to Fyodorov in relation to Florensky's analysis of truth. Aside from a plethora of astounding reflections and insights regarding the notion and theory of truth, both Fyodorov and Florensky highlight the ontological sense of the notion of truth. That is, they delve into the deepest recesses of truth as the event of encountering *being*. The point is this: what Florensky has to say in particular about the Russian Slavonic and Greek Hellenic understandings of truth, actually, is anticipated, posited and already opened to view by Fyodorov's philosophy. I shall extract two relevant and highly illustrative segments from Florensky's dazzling analysis. As we read, we shall immediately see the parallels, namely: the Fyodorovian traces ("vine-creepers") in Florensky. As regards the Slavonic notion of truth (*istina*): "... in its *Russian* understanding, we could say: truth—is a 'state of being';—it is 'alive', 'a living being'¹⁶⁵, 'one that breathes', i.e. possesses the essential condition of life and existence. Truth as a being which is above all else alive,—such is the understanding that the Russian people have in respect to it". Florensky concludes by adding that: "... it is precisely such an understanding of truth which represents a self-specific and self-constitutive characteristic of *Russian philosophy*:" (SUI17 [tr. from Russ. BL]). As regards the Greek notion of truth (*aletheia*), Florensky draws out two chief senses: firstly, the adequational sense viz.

¹⁶⁵ Here the substantial-contentual aspect of truth surfaces, as said above (§4).

correspondence of what is claimed (word, concept, statement etc) in relation to reality (the objective ‘thatness’ of what is there), and, secondly, the memorial sense. It is the latter sense which exposes again the possibly Fyodorovian inspiration of Florensky at this junction: “Quite another side [to that of the Slavonic Russian notion BL] is underlined by the ancient *Hellene*. Truth—says he—is aletheia. But what is it [...] ? The word alethe(s) ia [...]—*true*, aletheuo—*Im truthful, I correspond to truth*¹⁶⁶ and others is formed from the negative particle ‘a’ (*Wprivativum*) and *lethos*, the Doric *lathos*. The latter word [...] is of the same root as the verb *latho*, Ionic *letho* and *lanthano*—*I pass, I slip away, remain unnoticed and unknown-*, in neuter this verb receives the meaning *memoria labor, I drop from memory* [...] *I lose, I forget*. In connection to the latter nuance of the root *lath* [...] stands *lethargy*. The ancient representation of death as a transition into an illusory state of being, almost into a self-forgetting and unconsciousness [...] is symbolically reflected in the image in which shadows drink of the subterranean waters of the river of Forgetting¹⁶⁷, ‘Lethe’.

The vivid representation of the *river of forgetfulness* [...] gives clear evidence that in the Hellenic conception *forgetfulness wasn't* a state of mere *absence* of memory, but a special *act* [sic BL] of destruction of a part of consciousness, the fading-out in consciousness of a part

of the reality of that which is being forgotten—in other words, not an absence of memory, but the *power* of oblivion. [...]. Truth in the conception of the *Hellenes* is a-letheia, i.e. something which is capable to stand against the flows of oblivion, in Lethe’s currents of the sensual world, something which transcends time [...], something eternally remembered. Truth is the *eternal memory* (*vechnaya pamyat*) kept by a certain Consciousness; truth is a value, worthy of memory eternal and capable of it” (SUI17-19). — As regards Heidegger, I’d here wish (albeit quickly) to add that he, too, for reasons which differ from Florensky’s, conducts a breath-taking philosophical-philological analysis of the term “truth” (aletheia), as discovered in the legacy of classical Greece. However, analogously to Florensky he, too, discovers the “ontological” dimension of the primordial experience of truth—the fact itself of the “revealedness” of being (a-letheia): a dimension which, phenomenologically regarded, precedes fundamentally the “logical” dimension as of rational judgment, prepositional logic and-or discursive language: “... because

¹⁶⁶ Here the formal-logical aspect of truth surfaces, as said above (§3).

¹⁶⁷ Or, the river of Oblivion. BL

the logos is a letting-something-be-seen, it can *therefore* be true or false. But here everything depends on our steering clear of any conception of truth which is construed in the sense of 'agreement' ['Übereinstimmung': conformance, correspondence, adequation BL]. This idea is by no means [sic BL] the primary one in the concept of aletheia. The 'Being-true' of the logos as aletheuein means that in legein [speaking, announcing, pronouncing BL] as apophainesthai [revealing, disclosing BL] the entities *of which* one is talking must be taken out of hiddenness [Verborgenheit]; one must let them be seen as something unhidden (alethes); that is, they must be *discovered* [entdecken]"; cf. Martin Heidegger, "The phenomenological method of investigation [B. The concept of the logos], in idem, *Being and Time*, tr. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Basil Blackwell, Oxford (*1962) 8;987,56-57 (= idem, *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen [*1927] 1967, 33). Lastly, when the priest-to-be, Paul Florensky, in stark Fyodorovian terms, continues to add that it is something "*unforgettably existent* [nezabvennoe sushche] that consciousness desires..." (SUI 19), both, in fact, presuppose (and draw inspiration from, philosophically) the ultimate time-stopping, disintegration-stopping, and oblivion-stopping institutions of the Church's *memorial* services, especially the Liturgie rite of the proskomidia and the funeral service rites (e.g. nekrosimos akolouthia [posledovanie mertvennoe; otpevanie]), including the subsequent mnemosynon (panakhida). A part of the Orthodox funeral rite reads as follows:

- “Choir: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy; Lord have mercy. Father, give the blessing.
- Priest: May Christ our true God, Who rose from the dead, have mercy on us; He Who as Immortal King has authority over both the dead and the living. Through the intercessions of His spotless, pure, and holy Mother; of His holy and just friend Lazarus, who lay in the grave four days; of the holy and glorious forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; may He give rest to our brother (Nikolai), who has departed from us, and number him among the just and holy, through His goodness and compassion, as our merciful God. Everlasting be your memory, O our brother (Nikolai), who are worthy of blessedness and eternal memory (aionia he mneme; vechnaya payat)”

// I wish to voice my gratitude for Robert Slesinski's study *Pavel Florensky: A Metaphysics of Love* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood NY 1984, esp. 79-85). Acquainting this book (in 1991) made me aware of Florensky's in-depth reading of the term and notion of aletheia, as well as of the fact that he reached certain incisive insights (viz. the concept of truth) which were to be discovered by Heidegger, too, interpreted in his unique way, but 13 years later, yet

independently. Accordingly, one is called to read Florensky in the light of Heidegger and conversely]

[3. Reflection on a possible influence path from Fyodorov via Dostoevsky to Levinas. Here I venture to point out that Fyodorov's philosophemes (especially the ones on the Common Task and Supramoralism) anticipate certain structures of Emmanuel Levinas' (1905-1995) philosophy of the Other, as revealed in the absolute imperative of responsibility handed out in and through the other's face which "orders" and "ordains" us in virtue of its living personal presence (viz. the rapport de face à face). Levinas' philosophy is to be taken neither as a classical ethics (deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics) nor as a classical Aristotelian metaphysics (logical description of being, first cause, highest being etc, viz. onto[theo]logy). Rather, as Bettina Bergo says well (drawing on John Drabinski's explorations of Levinas): "It is an interpretive, phenomenological description of the rise and repetition of the face-to-face encounter, or the intersubjective relation at its precognitive core; viz., being called by another and responding to that other. If precognitive experience, that is, human sensibility, can be characterized conceptually, then it must be described in what is most characteristic to it: a continuum of sensibility and affectivity, in other words, sentience and emotion in their interconnection". By answering Phillippe Nemo's question Levinas clarifies a foundational thought of his philosophy (as expounded in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* [1974]). Asked about his understanding of the concept of responsibility, Levinas reveals the following: "I speak of responsibility as the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity. For I describe subjectivity in ethical terms. Ethics, here, does not supplement a preceding existential base; the very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility. I understand responsibility as responsibility for the Other, thus as responsibility for what is not my deed..." (El 95). These thoughts bear a striking affinity with the main trusts of Fyodorov's philosophy. What is more, Levinas then goes on to comment on his work *Totality and Infinity* (1961). And, note, he explicitly concedes his debt to—Dostoyevsky, thusly: "... the intersubjective relation is a non-symmetrical relation. [...] I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. [...]. I am subject essentially in this sense. It is I who supports all. You know that sentence in Dostoyevsky: 'We are all guilty of all and for all men before all, and I more than others'" (El 98). However, to the best of my knowledge, neither Levinas, nor those who walk in his paths (interpreters) acknowledge (or know) that Dostoyevsky received the quoted regulative

idea of unconditional all-responsibility from—Fyodorov! It was famously applied throughout his *The Brothers Karamazov* (in *Russkiy Vestnik*, 1879-1880). See more on this in Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer*, 1877. Also cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, tr. R. A. Cohen, Pittsburgh, PA (*1985) 2006, 95, 98,119 = abbr. EI; Bettina Bergo, "Emmanuel Levinas", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, zon (substantial revision of 2006 entry: <https://plato.stanford.edu/>). See also Levinas' reflections on "Infinity and Time", in idem, *Totality and Infinity* (I quote according the Serbian edition: *Totalitet i beskonačno*, tr. S. Cuzulan, Jasen, Beograd 1006, 256): e.g. "Death and resurrection constitute time. But, such a formal structure presupposes the relating of the I towards the Other..." Lastly, in this context I'd wish to shed light on Muravyov's variation of Fyodorov's ("Dostoevsky's") dictum "all are responsible for all": "The highest formula is this: 'we resurrect each one of us'. All the other formulas of dynamism do not include the fullness of world truth. [...]. But resurrection is not enough, since mutual help and love are needed—that is how the idea of resurrecting comes into being. 'Each one of us' underlines the preservation of the catholicity (sobornost) of all individuals": cf. idem, "Aphorisms and Thoughts", OTI, 291]