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Philosophy of Faith:
Lev Shestov and Apophatic Deconstruction of Reason*

Hereby we present *selected* but integrated *results* of our critical exploration of the religious philosophy of Lev Isaakovich Shestov (1866-1938). In other words we offer segmented[1] but hopefully coherent *summary* insights into *some* important aspects of our study on Shestov: *Lev Shestov: Philosophy of Faith and Apophatic Deconstruction of Reason. A Contribution to the reflection on conditions of possibility of Religious Philosophy*, Belgrade 2010 (= abbr. PFA). Lev Isaakovich Shestov (1866-1938) is doubtlessly a major Judeo-Russian and European thinker: pioneering in his religious philosophical existentialism, deconstructive hermeneutic of meaning and sui generis developer of the tradition of apophatic experience and thought. We shall expound the following:

I. introductory *overview* of his philosophy according to our method of approach
II. his *phenomenology* of groundlessness
III. his *methodology* of groundlessness
IV. his *philosophy* of groundlessness in summa, finally his
V. 'deathbed' words: from *groundlessness* to the *Groundless One*

I. Shestov's philosophy — introductory remarks on our method of approach

The goal of our study is a special explication of *Shestov's philosophy*. Commencing from *within* Shestov's *text* (methodologically aided by bio-bibliography, historical-philosophical analysis of dialogue with others [especially ranging from Kant to Nietzsche]) *and* reconstruction of systemic determinants of his thought – attention is given to *theistic* philosophical existentialism in its inaugural phase through Shestov. His thought is also posited in view of its polemical relation to atheistic types of philosophical existentialism and other types of philosophy in general. We undertake to

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* The asterisk sign (*) in quotes is signification of *our* italic emphasis.
[1] In our study itself = PFA (500 pp) these segments (I – V) are distributed in *specific* expository contexts which are *not* coextensive in the linear sense (and are distributed chapters apart, not next to each other as given here [also, they are furnished with profuse footnotal commentary which is here reduced as much as possible: in number and space]). However, due to strictness of structure and method (attempted in PFA) they may, exceptionally, be integrated in above proposed fashion. Here they are bound together with intention to present a general introduction into Shestov's contribution to existential phenomenology and deconstructive hermeneutic of meaning. Hence there is some overlapping (unavoidable in this type of presentation). Our *variations* of Shestov's ideas and thought-structures are purposeful and should be distinguished for mere 'overlapping'. Also to be noted is that we presuppose terms, ideas, arguments and topoi introduced and developed in chapters, sections and passages of our study on Shestov = abbr. PFA.

augment further the reception of *Russian* 'existential' philosophy into the Serbian intellectual environment, keeping in mind that the process has not been 'finalised' in the West either, where much remains to be done as well.

Shestov reaches his respective position of *religious* philosophy through an immanent critique of *philosophy* (and theology later on, post-1911/14). However, this is conducted and achieved *before* – not only after – his fideistic 'turn'. This is rarely noticed and very exceptionally taken seriously by commentators and explorers of his thought. Furthermore, in virtue of such insight, and keeping accord with Shestov, we argue that religious philosophy is a possibility of philosophy *itself* (rejecting the reductive model of philosophy taken as autarchic autonomy of reflexive-analytical and naturalized reasoning). That too is underlined as an important characteristic of his thought, and our exploration respectively. In *that* sense we demonstrate his pioneering contribution to positing *deconstruction* as method of criticism. Of course, we do acknowledge that *initiating* elements of deconstruction reach his mind through the philosophy of Nietzsche *and* the literature of Dostoevsky, both of which he develops idiosyncratically.

The generative methodological nucleus of his philosophy, in fact, is given by an original triune complex of (a) *hermeneutics* of doubt (deconstruction), (b) existential *phenomenology* and (c) *pragmatism* – under the sign of *apophatic* orientation. All of that, let us add, is geared towards deconstructing the logocentric episteme in the name of a fideist *re*-conceptualization of *forgetting death* (death taken as non-selfreflected function/effect *of* ratiocracy in human knowledge). The influx of phenomenologically projected existential elements is explainable through the vicinity of Edmund Husserl (and Martin Heidegger) with whom he debates. The presence of pragmatist elements (mainly unobserved by main stream interpretation) is explainable through a high resolution readings of his relation to William James[2].

Shestov's constitution of *conditions of possibility* for religious philosophy is illuminated through our *explication* of (an otherwise implicit) existential phenomenology of *de-founding* substrata of consciousness and experience. Precisely these, it is here shown, serve as conditions of possibility of new possibilities of thought. The complexity, coherence and integrity of this phenomenological *pre-conditional* 'web' of substrata has been bypassed by reception criticism, even as such (as far as we know). The development of these de-founding conditions of 'new consciousness' (or apophatic subjectivity) guides the thought-drama of Shestov from initial anthropocentric nihilism to final theocentric fideism (via several intermediary phases). Shestov *does* manage to establish a 'model' of religious philosophy, let us stress again, in his *pre*-fideist period: not only in his fideist period (as commonly taken for granted by 'main stream' interpretation). However, the establishment of the religious philosophy model is not accomplished without inner self-resistance, retreat and ambivalence. Acknowlegment of this also is to be regarded as a meaningful contribution of our study, hopefully.

II. Phenomenology of groundlessness — de-foundments

A. Apophatic-groundlessnal symbolizations – 'porousness' of 'reality' – philosophy of groundlessness, reality and the Real – absurdist irrealism as *demystifica-*

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[2] Due to limitations of space and aim, we shall presuppose our in-depth analysis and emphasis on the influence of James on Shestov (as is given in our study = PFA). Nevertheless, we shall refer to Jamesean elements in Shestov as occasion warrants.

tion of realism. Suffering, shock, horrors, sacrifices – the sudden sink-crevices of earth, loss of bearings and ground, debalancement, rumble and rubble of 'thisworldliness', homelessness — dark endlessness, abyssality, unreachability – that is: the mesmerizinglly irresistible and simultaneously horrifying beauty of groundlessness.... It is through these strings of terms that one may gather expressions of the *apophatic symbolization of groundlessness* (беспочвенность) in Shestov's opus. All of these terms (throughout Shestov's writings), in fact, signify *empty places* or, better still, places of a specific sort of emptiness – an 'evacuatedness' (we may subsume these terms under the following: namely, all of them are 'vacuoles' or, let us innovate, 'lacuoles' of consciousness, self-consciousness, reality [M.Eng. *lac*(k) = deficiency, to be without, not having etc]). These significations of empty places, such signifying of *emptiness* (taken as essential lack or lack of essence), note, indicate abyssal 'holes' in the place of which – prior to the *strike of groundlessness* – 'stood' metaphysical 'rivets' (затычки[3] TN 241) *of* rationalization: 'rivets' in guise of unquestionable *pre*suppositions of *established* (self)consciousness: presuppositions

„... 'based on nothing', because they seem to derive from common assumption of the reasonableness of human existence, which assumption surely is the child of our desires, and probably a bastard at that... "[4].

The ratiocratic presupposition of ontological *identity* of reason, reality and reasoned meaning (realism), argues Shestov, should be exposed as both ground*less* and mind*less* (unreasonable). The agency exposing such a presupposition is the *mind*less counter-presupposition of the sui generis meaning of *ground*lessness itself (*ir*realism and-or *anti*realism[5]). What Shestov views as surrogate experiences of reality, namely rationalistic objectifications *of* reality, are overturned by means of 'real' experiences – to wit, from the side of the *Real*. We have ascertained (elsewhere in PFA) that the groundless, in Shestov, functions as a 'double' (doppelganger) of the other or Real (and he does not state that there is something 'behind' it, apart from infinite possibility and-or mystery). This meaning may be analogically transferred to semantic (and) symbolic expressions or, conditionally speaking, 'categories' of groundlessness. The category of groundlessness *differentiates* two types of reality: the *authentic* and *non-authentic*[6]. Only the first type of reality (and categories adequate to it) takes account of groundlessness proper and allows meditation (in-depth thinking) of the 'other' or 'Real': and the later two, further on, prevent closure of mind and life within the thesis of realism.

„In the arts, in the sciences (even in the social and historical sciences), reality is worked

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[3] In his study on Tolstoy (*The Good in the Teaching of Tolstoy and Nietzsche: Philosophy and Preaching*, St Petersburg 1900) Shestov refers to metaphysical constructs (or such like premises) in Kant as to – metaphysical 'rivets' or metaphysical 'plugs' = 'затычки'. Vide: Лев Шестов, *Добро в учении гр. Толстого и Ницще: философия и проповедь*, Водолей, Томск 1996, 241 = abbr. TN.

[4] This is given in the first part of a series of aphorisms offered in his study *Apotheosis of Groundlessness: An attempt of adogmatic thinking*, St Petersburg 1905 = Лев Шестов, *Апофеоз беспочвенности. Опыт адогматического мышления*, Водолей, Томск 1996, 85 = abbr. A.

[5] As we know, the positions of anti-realism and irrealism are not identical. Nevertheless, both may be put together via their resistance to the position of realism. For the promotion of newer irrealism, v. Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., Indianapolis 1978. — Peter McCormick (уред.), *Starmaking: Realism, Anti-Realism and Irrealism*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1996.

[6] Hereby we bring to consciousness the ontological and epistemological basis of the main operative distinction of Shestov's philosophy: namely, the basis of the distinction *authentic* :: *non*-authentic, which we have formally determined as the difference between the other/different :: self-same/first. Is it necessary to underline that Shestov ties his philosophy to the former of the two aspects or bases (baselessnesses) of reality?

over in such a way that it *always** renderes testimony to the glory of human reason, which in Germany to this day[7] is proud of its a priori" (TN 218).

It is for these reasons that the philosophy of groundlessness, also, may be termed as *philosophy of the Real*. The categories mentioned, that is semantic expressions which apophatically symbolize groundlessness, *namely* reality and the Real, furthermore, function as inscribers of *irreducibility of meaning*, as much as of *irreducibility of reality*, and they = reality and the Real ('real reality') retroactively and meaningfully energize those categories, being manifested through them – through them *also*.

„The real has come to us we know not wherefrom, it is wholly surrounded by eternal mystery giving birth to unlimited and perfectly capricious alterations, and in this mysterious changeability of the real lies all importance, allurement and fascination of life. But no science – admits Husserl himself – will ever come to ends with capricious and vacillating reality"[8].

The philosophy of groundlessness, therefore, aims to show the *irreducibility of meaning* as *the real meaning* of unclosability of the Real into realist-objectivist construals of reason (which was not passé at the fin de siècle time, if it ever was). This it achieves by action of *invasive differentiation* of seemingly founded elements of established philosophy *from* someone or something *groundless* (*and*) *other within* them and-or co-adjacent to them. Thereby *in-scription* of groundless experiences (via existential thinking of experiences of groundlessness) coinheres with *resistance to ex-scription* ('writing-off') of meta-reasonal, meta-logical or mysteriological meaning – and simultaneously coresponds to affirming *anti-realism* in opposition to realism. Such resistance functions in favour of emancipating human spirit from rationalistically founded epistemocracy which, *argues* Shestov, barrs the approach to meaning 'on the other side' of reason: meaning which is not thereby necessarily meaningless. Of course, all of what we have said should apply to the philosophy of groundlessness *itself*, *if* it is not to fall prey to the 'first-selfsame'. In the following statement the Russian philosopher states he is aware of the unsettling displacement of resistance which groundless subjectivity gives to *all* objectification in principle:

„...Finally, can I at least be sure that I myself will never renounce my truths as long as I live? I am very much afraid of losing all authority in the eyes of my readers, but nevertheless I answer: no, I do not have this assurance" (PC 114).

Did Shestov manage in consequent fashion to apply this regulative precaution to *himself*? Is this possible as such, if yes then to what extent? We shall attempt answering this as we proceed. — Be that as it may, the Real for Shestov is *meta-real* ('more-than-everyday-real'): in addition, it is *irreal* but also *surreal*. This discloses one of the theoretical reasons his flanking disciple, Benjamen Fondane, drew closer to the *surrealist* movement (B. Fondane ↔ T. Tzara ↔ A. Adamov and others) – Shestov himself, moreover, becoming a considerable force of attraction for members of the *absurdist* movement (L. Chestov :: A. Camus[9] ↔ E. Ionesco[10] and others[11]). Shestov decisively

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[7] Published in 1900.

[8] Lev Shestov, 'Memento mori' in idem, *Potestas Clavium*, Berlin 1923 = Лев Шестов, 'Memento mori' in idem *Potestas clavium*, Сочинения в двух томах (т. 1), Наука, Москва 1993, 225 = abbr. PC.

[9] The Frenchman speaks favourably of Shestov in his essay on „Absurd Walls" = Alber Kami, „Apsurdni zidovi", in idem, *Mit o Sizifu*, Svijetlost, Sarajevo 1973, 15-35 = Alber Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Gallimard, Paris 1942.

[10] Eugène Ionesco, „Chestov nous ramène à l'essentiel", Le Monde (18.05.1967).

[11] Emil Cioran speaks with gratitude and respect of Shestov (v. idem, *Ouvres*, Gallimard, Paris 1995, 1745), also of Fondane (v. idem, „Benjamin Fondane", in idem, *Anathemas and Admirations*, Quartet, London 1992).

aided the process of *philosophically recognizing* the *absurdity* of 'reality'. Through his philosophy of the absurd (primarily addressing absurd dimensions of pestilent 'groundlessness'), let us add, he commences not only de(con)struction of the order of *rationalist* and-or *realist illusion*. Moreover, by the same token he commences a specific de(con)struction of the order of *meaning as such*[12]. In truth, however, Shestov does not fully endorse a position identical, for instance, to the attitude of absurdists like Sammuel Beckett (1906-1989)[13]. For the Irish playwright in his *Endgame* suggests that „to mean nothing becomes the only meaning“[14]. What we are saying is the following: Beckettean awaiting for Godot (*En attendant Godot*) is not identical[15] – although it is part of the *transition* – to Shestovean awaiting for (or running from) Groundlessness or even the Groundless One (let us say: *En attendant déracinement*).

Despite its surreal or irreal character the Real simultaneously remains *experience-open* ('experiencable') and *meaning-open* ('meanable'). However, it remains irreducible. It remains experience-open for it is *event*, it remains meaning-open for suspension (or destruction) of the order of meaning attracts the question of the meaning *of* meaning as such: leading to the threshold of *other* meaning, but also to something other *from* ('ordinary') meaning... Reality of the Real (which Shestov terms as *Deistvitelnoe* = *Действительное*), therefore, is not to be understood as empirical 'for-handedness' or intellectual object-ness, nor as metaphysical reality of rationalistically conceptualized essence = object-ness of higher order. Reality is 'left over' as *mystery* (mystery-like). *However*, this is so in virtue of the fact *that* the mode of groundlessness (this double of the other and-or Real) makes reality *irreducible* – not reducible to any safe and rationally known or thus securable 'ground'. This does not mean, again, that mystery is to be found 'outside' the world of *this* 'reality'. To the contrary, *all* we see *already* is mystery, according to Lev Shestov. To this service (serving such insight) the work of philosophy of *groundlessness* is dedicated: that is, the work through which the

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[12] The movement of *reflexion of the absurd* may be included into the second phase of nihilism (following the first, that is romanticism – enlightenment of the 19th century). Whilst the first phase is witness to the destruction of *illusion*, the second witnesses destruction of the order of *meaning* (v. Jean Baudliard, *Simulakrumi i simulacija*, tr. F. Filipović, Svetovi, Novi Sad 1991, 156 = Jean Baudliard, *Simulacres et Simulation*, Galilée, Paris 1985).

[13] Next to A. Camus as absurdists stricto sensu we may include E. Ionesco 1909-1994 (= *La Cantatrice Chauve* 1950), S. Beckett 1906-1989 (= *En attendant Godot* 1948-1949), A. Adamov (= *Le Professeur Taranne* 1953), J. Genet (= *Le Balcon* 1956). The last four figure as founders of the so called *Le Théâtre de l'Absurde* defined by M. J. Esslin (1918-2002) in such a manner that the determination, in fact, corresponds to *one of* the major aims of Shestov's philosophy: The theatre of the absurd „strives to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive though“ (v. Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd*, Doubleday, New York 1961).

[14] Samuel Beckett, *Fin de partie*, 1957 = idem, *Endgame*, 1958.

[15] It is not advisable to overemphasize the difference of the thinkers mentioned (Ionesco, Beckett, Genet, Adamov) vis-à-vis representatives of *Dadaism* and *surrealism* who share the same passion towards destruction of established paradigms of meaning, as well as an allergic reaction to commonsense. It is neither advisable to reservelessly identify *absurdists* (Dadaist and surrealists included) with existentialism, even less so with the philosophy of existentialism. For absurdists may posses *some* characteristics common with *existentialists*, however *no more than that*. The main difference is that absurdists rest with a *description* of the world (sobering in itself) while existentialists tend to add 'medicine' based on *prescription* or recipes of philosophy. Beckett displays the failure of man and *nothing else*, Sartre additionally offers a way *out*, similarly does Shestov. Counter-distinctively to die hard absurdists, the *absurdist* Judeo-Russian, Shestov, offers an *existential* recipe – and something more than that, from the world of *spirit*...

horizon of such insight is opened, at the same time opening itself as expression of *subjectivity* (not of the Kartesian-Kantian Cogito-Subject). Such work of philosophy introduces the *other* into the self-same from *within*, inscribes difference into the self-same from *within*, allows the otherworldly into thisworldly from *within*. In a word, such activity is nothing else than the work, or method of *deconstruction* (in more detail spoken of elsewhere in PFA).

Since we have understood *that* deconstructivity in Shestov, as by rule, displays a *mysteriological effect* now, further on, we understand not only how and why, but also in which form of mode. Therefore, (1) mystery is not 'behind' reality [being] *and* (2) reality [being] is *released from mystification* by virtue of differentiation of the Real from ratiocratic objectification: both of these instances are consequences of reality itself, any reality, being read as groundlessness (explicit or implicit: admitted or proscribed). The 'mysteriology' of the philosophy of groundlessness, thus, is not mystification but the 'opposite': *demystification* of reality (by rule fixed in webs [control grids, or nets] of questionless self-evident logic of truths of reason – that spider of Moira, as Shestov would suggest).

> „The irrational residue of being, which has disquieted philosophers from the earliest times of the awakening of human thought and which men have striven so passionately and so fruitlessly to 'apprehend' i.e. to resolve into elements congruous to our reason – must that really be the cause of so much fear, so much hostility and hatred? *Reality cannot be deduced from reason**, reality is greater, much greater than reason – is that such a misfortune?“[16].

The irreducibility of the Real to *objectification* of reality is precisely the *apophatizing* effect intended by registers[17] of groundless symbols ('categories') *and* by corresponding deconstructions Shestov executes from the plane of spirituality and-or ontology. Hence *reality* invades object–ivity, the *metarational* invades reason, the *unclear* invades the clear and distinct, the *enigmatic* invades the certain and evident, *muteness* invades paroles of reason's speech, *hearing* invades speeches of conceptual articulations, *silence* as tidal wave permeates the noise of the givens of everyday(ness) thinking. Expressions such as: 'mystery', 'abyss', 'darkness' or: 'riddle', 'depth', 'unexplorable', therefore, advance as *equally* and *synchronically* groundless *and* apophatic. *Every* expression tied to an event or experience (опыт = opit) of groundlessness has an apophatic and *apophatizing* dimension and function. And also, *every* expression that reaches into an apophatic ('therefore'[18] meta-positive and meta-reasonal[19]) event of meaning has a potentially groundless and *groundlessing* dimension. These sets of expressions, consequently, are not only folded over each other, but also *woven* in and through each other: interwoven and strewn through the text of the Shestoviana.

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[16] Lev Shestov, *In Job's Balance*, Paris 1929 = Лев Шестов, „'Иррациональный остаток' бытия“, in idem, *На весах Иова: странствования по душам*, Сочинения в двух томах (т. 2), Наука, Москва 1993, 229 = abbr. JB.

[17] In our study, i.e. in PFA, we give a pin-point catalogization of terminological and conceptual loci in Shestov's opus which textually corroborate our views brought to view here.

[18] We cannot here develop our view that apophatic experience and thinking do have a 'positivity' and 'rationale' of their specific own, namely, what we call the sui generis *cataphaticity of apophaticity* ('apokataphatics' so to spek).

[19] We distinguish between 'meta-rational' and 'meta-reasonal' since Shestov is aware that a meta-*reason*al approach does not necessarily destroy rationality. He views 'what is left over' as an 'other dimension' *of thought*, although he leaves the residue in rather fuzzy contours...

B. Structure of philosophy of groundlessness 1: web of substrata as meta-synthesis of the experience of groundlessness: anthropology, gnoseology, ontology. From previous expositions several things follow. First and foremost we perceive *another* substrate[20] of experience of groundlessness. However, this is now perceived from the spiritual-ontological plane. This substrate is the third layer of the *phenomenological* structure of the philosophy of groundlessness. With two previous ones it forges an unbreakable unity in the phenomenological sense. Concretely speaking, *with* anthropological substrata of •suffering–loneliness–death (synthetically connected by the *concentratum*[21] of facticity) *and with* gnoseological substrata of •unknowing–absurdity–irrealism (synthetically connected by the concentratum of *temporality*) — we now *join* the ontological substrata of the 'structure' of experience of groundlessness, observed in the existential-phenomenological sense. This means that the existential side of groundlessness has an *in-depth phenomenological triune-layer*. This triune-layer is articulable into three planes wherefrom come forth originary *experiences* of existence: namely, the manifestations of groundless existence (= subjectivity) as they are *before reasoned reflexion*, and, as they are before 'ratiodicy' (rationalization of the thesis of realism as apology of all that is). Those experiences ('existential phaenomena') are not (as) arbitrary, nor are they of marginal importance *for consciousness of subjectivity* – since they give *orientation towards the exit* from the subject's enslavement to rationalistic objectifications of meaning. This *third* string of substrata is synthetically connected by the concentratum of (what we call) *hyper-bathicality* (Gk. bathos = depth) or *transcendness* of what is.

As in the case of previous two concentrata (facticity/endness and temporality/timeness), to this concentratum *too*, belongs a 'triadic' string of *referential* substratic experiences: •undergroundness–abyssality–unfathomabilty, *or* •depth–bottomlessness–darkness. The experience of groundlessness: groundlessness of the experience of reality, hence, in Shestov, phenomenologically manifests a threefold in-depth structure, in form of substrata – concentrata: (a) *facticity* **FCT** (b) *temporality* **TMP** and (c) *hyper-bathicality* **HBT**. Hyper-bathicality we bind to a term dear to Shestov, namely to depth of the *abyss* (bathos) – and this corresponds to the '-less' in the expression ground*less* (hence, we need to qualify this).

What is at hand is not (only) the 'over-flowing' of what *is* in name of something else 'outside' (it). For this abyssal aspect of groundlessness is not a depth *to which* the world of the evidently given is as surface. Rather, Shestov speaks about the depth of the *surface itself*: about the self-overflowness of reality 'itself' hic et nunc (although this seems non-selfevident). Moreover, the suffix '-less' is not a signification referring to an abstract emptiness (thus the emptiness we spoke of, in fact, is not exclusively tuned to vibrate nihilistically). That suffixal signification, the '-less' in 'ground-*less*-ness' (despite its effect of suggesting release from objectifications at the locus of the Real: hence an allusion to vacuum), actually, refers to a *fullness* (Gk. pleroma) of *new* albeit terrifying as much as fecund *possibilities* (As we saw, Shestov speaks explicitly of a meta-rational 'residue' = „'иррациональный остаток' бытия" [JB 229] which

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[20] The previous substrata (to wit, the *anthropological* and *gnoseological* matrices and-or layers of Shestov's lines of thinking) were dealth with elsewhere in PFA, and are here presupposed.

[21] This is to be understood closer to a metaphoric sense of 'concentrate' in chemistry, than as psychology of 'concentrated thinking', although the later meaning is not excluded either.

reason is incapable of cognizing nor accepting: moreover, reason symbolically deletes possibilities of that creative 'no-thing'). Experience of groundlessness in Shestov, therefore, is of the same kind as *throwness*[22] or *hyperbolicity*[23] of man and the world of what 'is'. This is no(t) throwness 'into' the world: rather, it is throwness into the world as a kind of throwness of the world itself. Transcendence of throwness is in the immanence itself of that throwness of man and world (and 'in' both). That is the finer, simultaneously the main meaning of the concentratum of *hyper-bathicality* or *transcendness* or 'over-flowedness'. Man is always already *overflown – and overthrown – by his own groundlessness*: out of the whirlpool-like (virovite) and whimsical-like (hirovite) hyper-depth[24] = hyper-bathicality (ὑπερβάθος) of this groundlessness he tries to resurface by means of the raft of theoretical rationalization, foundationization and identification.

> „But if you must question, then be ready beforehand to reconcile yourself with something like solipsism or modern realism. Thought is in a dilemma, and dare not take the leap to get out. We laugh at philosophy, and, as long as possible, avoid evil. But nearly all men feel the intolerable cramp of such a situation, and each at his risk ventures to swim to shore on some more or less witty theory. A few courageous ones speak the truth…" (A 2, 14).

C. *De*-foundations – fluid web of reality – conditions of possibility of new thought of philosophy – *de*-ontotheologization. The aforementioned *substrata*, as shown, we have synthesized in the form of *concentrata* of groundlessness, covering multiple triune strings of existential-phenomenological experiences of groundlessness) To all the substrata we now give a special name – *de-fundamentals* (in Serb. transliteration = obestemeljiali, obestemeljištastva, obespočvenoštastva[25]) – or simply *de-*foundments (Serb. defundamenti). We do so in order to distance them from *and* approximate them to the 'Existenzial' of Martin Heidegger[26]. We do this not without suggestion that *here already* – in Shestov, in a nutshell and in a way – are contained certain important insights of the critique of metaphysics offered by Heidegger (in 1927, 22 years later![27]) through his idea of criticising philosophy *as* ontotheology[28].

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[22] Our Heideggerean note is noticeable and purposeful. However, let it be noted, we have shown (elsewhere in PFA) that Shestov reaches *analogous* insights before the German thinker, and something *more* as well.

[23] The rhetorical term hyperbola, i.e. Gk. *hyperbolē* = *over*thrown/thrown*over* (as quantitative enlargement of one of the characteristics of an object, condition and the like) we here use as qualitative 'enlargement', 'excess' or 'mutation' of characteristics of the condition of being (however, without calling upon something else 'outside' it[self]).

[24] In Aeschylus 'bathos' signifies *depth*: ταρτάρου βάθη (Aeschyl, *Prometheus*, 1029), whilst in Euripides it signifies *height*: αἰθέρος βάθος (Euripides, *Medea*, 1297). In Christian post-platonic metaphysics the prefix 'hyper' is added (ὑπερ) in order to signify the meta-ontical character of depth or height of the Divine Godhead as *Other*.

[25] We propose to translate the Latinized 'defoundments' into English as – *groundlessences* (pl.). Thereby we initiate the play of terms 'groundlessessence' :: 'essence'. That is, groundlessness suggests as certain essencelessness of existence (of what is), *although* positing 'groundlessences' does suggest a paradoxical return of 'essences': *but!*, these are essences of a wholly non-essentialist character and order – therefore, forms of *existential* events of groundlessness.

[26] The terms 'Existenziell' and 'Existenzial' Heidegger uses in order to distinguish between everyday decisions the individual here-being (Germ. Dasein) makes – from 'a priori' structures and modes of authentic existence.

[27] Our hermeneutical and phenomenological description of these structures in the philosophy of Shestov are (mostly) based on the following studies: *The Good in the Teaching of Tolstoy and Nietzsche: Philosophy and Preaching*, St Petersburg 1900. — *Apotheosis of Groundlessness: An attempt of adogmatic thinking*, St Petersburg 1905. — *Great Vigils*, St Petersburg 1911…

The intertwining of planes of experience of groundlessness (*via* substrata, concentrata and de-foundments) should be connected to the fact that strategems of Shestov, which (commencing from 1900) point at the *weaknesses* (infirmaria[29]) of reason, disclose not only the aspect of cognitive but also of anthropological and spiritual weakness of human nature (infirmus homo natura). The weakness of reason (despite powers of its universalistic pretences) is warped into the weakness of *man* of reason, and *vice versa* (this is not without a note which shall resonate in the theological anthropology of Karl Barth [much later, during the early 20-ies Shestov is in direct contact with the circle gathered around Barth's Zwischen den Zeiten magazine for Wort-Gottes-Theologie, the leading figures being: F. Gogarten (1887-1967), E. Thurneysen (1888-1977) and Rudolf Bultman (1884-1976)]).

Let us remember that Shestov resolutely refuses to separate founding premises of the *subject of thought* (cogito = I think) from psychological and spiritual experiences of the *subject of existence* (sum = I am), that is from *man* as integral being. It is his viewpoint that the cogito gravely reduces the *sum* which, nevertheless, overrides it (the cogito) in principle (being the principle of all principles). Thus de-foundments as manifestations of what is Being or the Real, let us say, *defund* the fundations of the Subject, preventing the 'cash of existence' flowing to it or from it. Here it is in order to stress: Shestov does not confuse 'psychologism' with *psychological genealogy of knowledge* (which he supports by his anthropology of rationalizations and derationalizations of psychological motives and affects of cognition, resting at the core center of man: „The root of all our philosophies lies, not in our objective observations, but in the demands of our own *heart**, in the subjective, moral *will**...“ [A 1, 118]). For this reason the plane of anthropology (and psychology) chiasmatically intertwine with the plane of epistemology and ontology (as an intertwinement [interweavement] more and play of more intertwining [interweaving]). Viewed structurally, this is achieved through interlocking chains of substrata of groundlessness.

Therefrom follows the next. First, de-foundments = the substrate 'structure' of groundlessness (= **GRL**) of the world of existent being (invading foundations of being through registers of facticity, temporality and hyper-bathicality) may now be presented in a formula: **GRLSTRUCTURE = FCT ⇆ TMP ⇆ HBT**. Every combination of de-foundments (by means of cross-sections of levels-planes of three substrata-concentrata) *ruptures* foundedness (and *interrupts* [better: in-terra-ruptus] the wor[l]d of founding, like a burp during lofty thinking [A2, 26]). For instance: suffering·FCT $\rightarrow$ unknowing·TMP $\rightarrow$ undergroundness·HBT = crisis of foundations, or: loneliness·FCT $\rightarrow$ absurdity·TMP $\rightarrow$ abyssality·HBT = crisis of foundations, or: toward-death-being·FCT $\rightarrow$ irreality·TMP $\rightarrow$ unfathomability·HBT = crisis of foundations/foundments. Second, we now discover de-foundments as implicit *phenomenological web of reality* – that is, as a web of *groundless* dimensions of our ground, or 'reality'. Although levels-planes of the substrata, that is concentrata seduce us to envisage a hierarchical representation,

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[28] Of course, we wish not to portray Heidegger as a crypto-Shestovean, nor is it our intent to portray Shestov as crypto-Heideggerean. What is at hand is the 'simmering' of the Zeitgeist in which 'similarly dissimilar' authors cross pathways in philosophy, or in highland forests of the 'non'-beingness of being itself... It is indicative Shestov was allured by the Alps, Heidegger by the Swartzwald.

[29] This Latin expression (in root connected to the expression 'firmness': also meaning solid establishment = 'firm') signifies medieval asylum homes for the sick, weak and helpless, usually situated in monasteries of that pre-modern age.

the webs of de-foundments are not hierarchical. They are *non-hierarchical* and non-hierarchable in principle – both in ontological and axiological sense. This means that there is no 'lesser' or 'greater', 'worthless' or 'valuable' groundlessness. Is not the de-foundment of mortality as equally important as the de-foundment of abyssality? *For* they mirror each other, albeit in distorted manner. Are they not two sides of the same Möbiusean para-surface of groundlessness?

In relation to the aforementioned we add two more points. In the thought of Lev Shestov this existential-phenomenological web is not explicated as such. Therefore, we now do precisely that (en passant: as far as we know, so far there has been no sustained effort in this direction on behalf of interpretators). This then confirms our view that Shestov's thought has a more *systematic* and *stricter* (Strenge) structure than seems prima facie (as we suggested earlier through an analogous viewpoint of James M. McLachlan on Berdyaev[30] [elsewhere in PFA]). This serves as reason to discard touchingly easy remarks dropped by some critics, for instance those who, like Robert L. Strong, say for Shestov that the style of his thought is „... rambling, non-rigorous and impressionistic, although with aesthetic strenght...“[31].

Furthermore, if *de-foundments* are regarded as phenomenological 'carriers' (let us say not 'grounding-points') of existential thought, then (no matter how fluid and unstable they might be) they may be envisaged as — *conditions of possibility of philosophy of groundlessness*, which make *possible* an other thinking and an *other philosophy* (remaining, nevertheless, within stringency worthy of *philosophical* effort). We speak reservedly and carefully at this point of turn. For it is to be expected that Shestov would be the first to protest against our conceptual *stabilization* of philosophy of groundlessness (even if he were not to suspect our intervention as new rational-terminological *objectification* of his de-objectivizing point – that *piquer* point of philosophy of groundlessness). Nevertheless, we dare to proceed so. The reason being not only our insight into the fact that Shestov himself did not evade a certain re-objectification (as is shown later in PFA [where we give in extenso criticism of Shestov's weaker points]), but because we simply *see* our point as corresponding to what Shestov *does* in the performative sense (in virtue of hermeneutical analytics of his text as a whole).

One of the *de*foundments, one of *such* 'conditions of possibility', let us anticipate, is 'unnormality' in the sense of alternative or transmuted states of consciousness (e.g. μανία, πνευματιάω...) which usher possibilities of other truths:

„Unnormality (ненормальность) [...] appears as the *condition** of possibility (условием постижения) of most important and most significant truths“[32].

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[30] The following words of McLachlan – mutatis mutandis – might apply to Shestov: „... but within the meandering paths of Berdyaev's [Shestov's BL] thought lays one of the most complete and original metaphysical systems offered by a religious existentialist. Indeed, for all Berdyaev's rage against system there emerges from within the existentialist dialectic of his thought a metaphysical system of freedom as complete and profound as that of the German Idealists“ (Shestov *would* nevertheless 'cringe' if he saw us associate himself with the term 'dialectic'and 'system' in any sense of the word, but still...; v. James M. McLachlan, *The Desire to be God: Freedom and the Other in Sartre and Berdyaev*, Studies in Phenomenological Theology, ed. S. Laycock, vol. 1, Peter Lang, New York, 1992, 112.

[31] Robert L. Strong, „Review of: L. Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche* (Introduction by B. Martin, xxx), Ohio University Press, Athens – Ohio 1970“, Russian Review 30:3 (1971) 314.

[32] Lev Shestov, „Logic of Religious Creativity: in memory of William James“, in idem, *Great Vigils*, St Petersburg 1911 = Лев Шестов, „Логика религиозного творчества. Памяти В. Джемса“, у исти, *Великие кануны*, Томск 1996, 440 = abbr. GV.

Although identifiable with no-thing: nor with nothing – *groundlessness may be tentatively structured*[33] and stabilised (not necessarily ratiocentrically grounded) by means of the existential-phenomenological web, to wit, through the non-hierarchical web of *de-foundments*. This means that the philosophy of groundlessness of our Russian (again paradoxically) contains potential for a certain *groundless ontology of possibility* – if not modal *ontology of groundlessness* (which may correspond to the pluriverse and alterverse idea Shestov has on 'multitudes of worlds'[34] = non-universality of 'uni'-verse).

D. Structure of philosophy of groundlessness 2: experience as event – thought as question – existential phenomenology and deconstructive hermeneutic – non-objectifying structure of groundlessness. Let us clarify a key aspect connected to the aforementioned. It may be put this way: if substrata = concentrata of groundlessness are formal dimensions of *experience* (iskustva) of groundlessness: experience that targets and opens existence, if de-foundments (taken in plurality of their possible manifestations) are expressions of polyvalent and multitudinal *experiences* (opiti) – if these are experiences taken *as* events and *not concepts* or reflexions, how are we *then*, if at all, to call them 'structures' of (philosophy of) *groundlessness* (for structure suggests foundation and ground, at least stabilisation)? That is to say: groundlessness invades consciousness through experience of the order of *event* (doživljajno iskustvo). And this experience *simultaneously* indicates towards meta-rational and meta-positive sedimentations of meaning: towards the doublefold of the groundless and apophatical, that is towards the interwoven doublefold of phenomenological dimensions of groundlessness *and* existential dimensions of apophaticity. This means that groundlessness, it seems, cannot be induced through speculative reasoning. From speculative explanations, based on reasons of reason, groundlessness differs as much as life does from its own objectification. For it represents the happening of being, and of our beings in it. Shestov does not take this as excuse for passivity (his passivity [as demonstrated elsewhere in PFA] is of a different order), neither does he take this as alibi for a capitulation of *thought*. To the contrary: the happening of groundlessness he takes as instigation for active reflection on *effects* of that *event* which is – paradoxically – also *in front* of us, not only behind us. *However*, the matter is not to be grasped in terms of existential experience of groundlessness giving phenomenological 'material' 'for' thinking (even less a ready made 'structure' 'for' grounding a new philosopheme):

„Why and for *what** need should he (who truly philosophises BL) ask himself, before he begins to think: 'What can I think about, what are the limits of thought?'" (A 2, 17).

The *point* is this: *non*-mediated and *pre*-reflexive existential experiences – swarms of de-foundments – are in the phenomenological sense *carriers-manifestors of the act itself of existential philosophy* as questioning particularity of thought, aftermath 'reflexion' included. In other words, the experiences (opiti) of groundlessness *hand-out the question*: the *question of existence*, therefore – the *condition of existential philosophy* (uslov, Bedingung). It is for this reason we might speak of the existential-

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[33] Rather as a vibrating and 'quantum'-pulsive non-hierarchized web of fluxes: not as steel grid nor as ladder (although philosophy of groundlessness allows for meditation and ascent into the Deep).

[34] On a careful read one might notice Shestovean 'logoi' in Nelson Goodman's thesis on world-making capacity *of* world versions of the world (although Goodman and Shestov are far apart). For a fine contextualization of Goodman's ideas, v. Ayesha Ramachandran, *Worldmaking in Early Modern Europe: Global Imaginations from Montaigne to Milton* [Dissertation], Yale University 2008.

phenomenological *structure* of groundlessness, and of a structurable philosophy of groundlessness. *But* a disclaimer is necessary, for this is a *non-objectifying structure: a pre-reflexive and meta-reasonal condition of meaning – existential meaning in apophatic key*. And more: some of those experiences *suspend the questions themselves* – if and inasmuch queries are founded in a dialectic of reasoned (ratio) search for a synthesis of answer, explanation or justification.

Groundlessness *precedes* groundedness, we could say instead of Shestov, allusively in relation to Sartre (l'existence précède l'essence[35]). However, Lev Isaakovich expresses this thought in potentia *before* Sartre. Of course, he does this in a different context. For this reason the immediacy of strike-out groundlessness (taken in *non-naïve* manner by Shestov) should be differentiated from mediatedness: both from reflected unravelling of enigmas of being, and from self-reflexive unravelling of the snares of (self)reflexion. It is here, in this 'place' (topos), that Shestov *nonetheless* ensnares himself into the central aporetic knot of his own thought: into (non-avoidable?) reflecting the non-reflected (non-reflectable?), or, into mediating the non-mediated (non-mediable?), into identification of the different (non-identifiable?). This is the *limit* of metaphysics of groundless absurdity *inasmuch* as it does (and Shestov concedes that it *does*) reach for explanations, even if they be of a different order. Still, de-foundments phenomenologically carry-over the questioning *act* of existential thought and *simultaneously detach man from the position of subject* into *subjectivity*. In this sense *thought becomes* what Shestov wants it to be: 'non-backward-looking' (i.e. thought that does not look back [оглядка, Zurückblicken[36]]: that does not re-re-re-flect [Besinnung] in seeking shelter in reason's ground – thus becoming lifeless like the wife of Lot who turned around becoming a pillar of salt [Gen 19, 26]). What disappears in the same instance is speculative-reflexive, backward-looking *objectification of thought* as subjectum (and) ratio. This is an auxiliary yet only exit from this aporetic topos, if there is any exit here...

III. Methodology of groundlessness — functions

A. Connections of modes of thematization of groundlessness: experience, methodology and functions of ground*lessing* – philosophical functions of the figure of interweavement – meta-synthesis – determinations of philosophy. The question and problem of groundlessness, apart from its thematization in mode of (a) *experience* of groundlessness, Shestov also thematizes in modes which may (as we said elsewhere in PFA) be determined as (b) *methodology* of ground*lessing* and (c) *functions* of ground-

[35] It is not tactless to here repeat the formula of Sartre on existence that 'precedes' essence: 'l'existence précède l'essence' (cf. J. P. Sartre, *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme*, Paris 1946). We do this giving credit to Shestov for pioneering insights in this direction (however, we identify not the two philosophers, we do not analogize them either). Elsewhere in PFA we threw light on Shestov's possible Dostoevskian influence on young Sartre via studies such as: Leon Chestov, „Dostoïevsky et la lutte contre les evidences", Nouvelle Revue Française 101 (1922) 134-158.

[36] It is our opinion that Shestov develops this idea independently. Still, it is very possible he was instigated by its Nietzschean overtone *as well*, e.g.: „Man is a rope (Seil) stretched between the animal and the Superman – a rope over an abyss (Abgrund). A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back (Zurückblicken), a dangerous trembling and halting". Note also the analogy between the abgrund-ungrund (Kabbalistic?-Boehmean?-Nietzschean) speculative terms and Shestovean ground*lessness*. For the Nietzsche locus v. *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* [*Prologue* §4], in idem, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe* (KSA: Bd. 4, 16), Berlin 1980.

lessing (obestemeljivanja). The pre-reflexive yet meta-reasonal meaning introduced by experiences of groundlessness discloses groundlessness as a potential *apophatic sui generis*. Hence: a *reflexion on that* may be implemented through a *methodology* of philosophy of groundlessness *which* – further on – executes certain *apophatizing functions* of philosophy according Shestov's vision of it (philosophia). In virtue of that, clearer becomes the meaning of *chiasmatic interweavement of deconstructively-hermeneutically* attuned categories *with* — *apophatically-groundlessly* attuned categories – *within* the thinking of groundlessness (беспочвенность). As we have said, under deconstructive-like categories (as introduced by Shestov) we subsume *de*-constructive relations of first :: second (subdued second), self-same :: different, one :: many, reasonal :: meta-reasonal, limited :: trans-limital and others; whilst under apophatic-like categories (also introduced by Shestov) we subsume concepts of the under-ground, deepness, darkness, unfathomable, ineffable... (and others) – opened by bracketing what is of the earth and ground, surface(ing), (day)light, comprehensible, utterable... (and others respectively).

Now we ascertain the following: the combination of acts *of* (1) *deconstruction* of ratiotropic (constructive) elements of thought, on one hand, and (2) acts of *apophatizing* kataphatic (positive) construals of thought, on the other hand, *together* by way of intertwining-interweaving (chiasma = χίασμα) give the *main method* of philosophy of groundlessness of Lev Shestov. Besides, this philosophy, as such, stands closer to a 'method' of searching than to a complete or completable 'position'. Those and such combinations give the *methodology of groundlessing* which, as we know, is introduced and 'metabolised' by the all-pervasive experience of existential *tragedism*. It is not unimportant, when *existential* (eminently personal-experiential) identity of Shestov's philosophy is concerned, that the *tragic as traumatic trace* is inscribed into methodology of ground*lessing*: both in its deconstructive and apophatic aspects (carrying its with cognitive and *therapeutic* potential).

In such manner deconstruction (**DEC**) releases *apophatic* (**APO**) effects of meaning, *and these* apophatic effects generate the *deconstructively* overcoded domain of apophaticism itself – all *induced* ('*caused*') *by the tragic experience of life*[37] (**TRAG**[38]). This leads to transition from speculative justification to existential self-questionedness (upitanost) in relation to what 'is', or 'is' not. Therefore, apophatical thematizations of problems and concordant semantic and categorical registers in Shestov of that period (1900-1914), and later, have their gripping-points in deconstructive acts (postupcima) with which they share 'accordance'. To put it in a nutshell: the *style* of Shestovean apophatics is conducted by his sui generis deconstruction. Let us elucidate giving a formal example: the invasion of the different 'into' the self-same (and from within it!) has the (a) effect of suspending the absolutism of the self-same *and* the (b) effect of re-working objectivity of the positive into acomodating (becoming hospitable to) negativity of the difference (razlike) and by means of it (the negative, the differeing). For these reasons

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[37] Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo, *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida*, 1913 = idem, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, tr. P. Heath, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1954. On the spiritual context of the times (Zeitgeist) tying-up Unamuno and Shestov, v. S. K. Bjorneboe, *Eksistens og revolt: Unamuno – Berdjajev – Sjestov*, Aschehoug, Oslo 1976.

[38] In Serbian both tragedy (tragedija) and trace (trag) have the same root – 'trag': of course, the word tragedy in Serbian is derived from the Greek for (sacrificial) lamb = tragos, hence the etymological likeness of the two expressions is nominal.

the invasion itself of the different-other introduces the effect of apophatization and gives driving fuel to negative critique, but in deconstructive key.

According to the philosophical teaching of Shestov the 'formula' of the methodology of ground*lessing* may be given as follows: **GRLMETHOD = DEC ⇆ APO / TRAG**. The previously stated now becomes clearer: experiences of groundlessness – in form of substrata-concentrata (de-foundments) of existential phenomenology – bring forth the act itself of the questioning mode of philosophy (of subjectivity) — *before and over* objectified thought (of subject-object reason) and against it. This explains the *meta-synthesis* of (a) existential phenomenology and deconstructive hermeneutics of meaning – in Shestov – *with* the (b) effect of ground*lessing* grounds ('defunding funds' of established Grundlegung philosophy) in the sense of conscious apophatizing ('methodical' negation of positivities of reason, and established principles of grounding thought [trying to destroy the core roots even of laws of logic]). Main *determinations of philosophy* follow this que. Let us view one of the seminal determinations of the *goals* of philosophy as conceived by Lev:

„... philosophy must give up her attempt at finding the veritates aeternae. The business of philosophy is to teach man to live in *uncertainty** – man who is supremely afraid of uncertainty, and who is forever hiding himself behind this or the other dogma (of the first selfsame BL). More briefly, the business of philosophy is not to reassure people but to *upset** them (смущать)" (A 1, 11). From the outset Shestov declares that „comforting is not her deed" (indeed non-comforting are deeds of truth of the underground or underground truths)[39].

'Uncertainty' therefore apophatization; 'disturbance' therefore deconstruction. From what has been said, furthermore, follows that methodology of ground*lessing* may be projected through *functions of groundlessing* too. The basic function of groundless*ing* is *inscription of surplus* meaning – meaning out of reach and unreachable to reduction. This function has a *biunal* aspect. First: what is at hand is a *meta-rationalist symbolization* of *the Real* or Groundless – despite attempts of ratiocratic closure into realism, moralism, idealism or positivism. Second: what is at hand is making the *non-transparent become transparent*, inexpressible expressible, inaudible audible, that is – note – making the *apophatic become kataphatic*[40]. And this entails an *expansive transformation* of the concept of 'evidence' as much as gazing into the new – or something *other*: we are being tought to acknowledge an *other* type of 'evidence': non-naturalistic in root.

B. Discourse of the non-discursive – limit of limit: expansions – essential limit. The difference between meta-discursive symbolizations of the Real *and* discourse (both in the framework of methodic and functional acts of ground*lessing*), let us explain, lays in the fact that the later approach does not utilise symbols or metaphoric suggestions, but runs through a conceptual argumentation which *capitalizes effects* of meta-rationalistic symbolization. But *still*, the over-turning *invention of groundlessing by the other-different* – at least inasmuch – is caught-up by the 'work' of the old, that is by the *toil of concept* 'or' *first-selfsame* (in favour of the order of grounding, based on

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[39] Lev Shestov, *Dostoevsky and Nietzsche: the Philosophy of Tragedy*, St Petersburg 1903 = Лев Шестов, *Достоевски и Ницще: философия трагедии*, in idem, *Сочинения в двух томах* (т. 1), Водолей, Томск 1996, 375 = abbr. DN.

[40] The term 'kataphatical' (katafatičko) – in PFA – we distinguish from the term 'kataphaticist' (katafatično). The first we conceptualize as an act of *reaching* and *touching* apophatic layers of meaning (hence kataphatizing them in that manner); the second we envisage as the ideology of closure of the apophatic into positivity = kataphatization, kataphaticity.

reason and logic in philosophy). Resistance tends to be pacified and other established, ordered that is. It is necessary to here once more emphasise, and note, this 'coagulation' of 'resistance to resistance' – *Shestov himself* notwithstanding. In any case, ground*lessing* the field of philosophy (through synchronic scription of surplus ['residue' JB 229] or the Real) rehabilitates the *deficit* of insight into the unsurpassable importance of meta-reasonal domains of spirit and being. In virtue of that, Shestov builds his difference between event-experience and concept, existence and essence, absurdity and reason, groundlessness and groundment, metaphysics of the absurd and metaphysics of commonsense, objectification and reality.

The methodology of ground*lessing*, moreover, attempts to rehabilitate the *constitutive* role of metarational and irrational – more precisely: *limital* planes of meaning for this new philosophy. It is precisely this role that is served by de-foundments (defundamenti) – de-foundments as 'markers' of *limital experiences* and *limital ways* of reality (tropoi hyparxeos). However, 'limits' (borders, Grenzen) of reason, on one hand, and limits discovered through the 'other dimension of thought' (второе измерение мышления), on the other hand, do *differ*. The former introduce themselves as necessary (in terms of realist or essentialist pretence to be absolute standards of what is and is not existent – although in essence this they are *not* (Shestov argues they are ontical *for* they relate not to what *is* real = *Действительное*). Other limits are not a necessity (nor are they necessary) either, argues he, but for other reasons it is so. That is to say, they come forth from a domain not subsumable to dictates of logical and-or ontological necessity, they are supra-ontical to say the least. In fact, these are *essential* limits (Wesensgrenzen) *for* they relate to what *is really existent* = *Действительное*. The Shestovean 'other dimension of thought', in fact, unravels (a) the mono-diemnsionality of reason = seeming limits as well, and (b) *other than that too* = essential limits – surging in and through limits of seeming limits. In a word, limits of determining and determined reason (viz Spinoza et alii) are not the limits of possibility of human spirit, even less so are they limits of being, thinks Shestov:

„Is the limit accidental, *that is* naturally explainable, *or**...“ (JB 152).

C. From implications to applications – from groundlessness to ground*lessing* – facing the dream *of* awakedness – on 'self-evidence' of truths of reason. Efforts towards puncturing natural-reasonal limits, furthermore, advance on behalf of a philosophy which refrains not from integrating the tragic experience of passion (страст [passion] = suffering), including reflexion of absurd consequences of grounding *truth* exclusively on foundations of natural-reasonal rationality. This later type of rationality, let us add, Shestov envisages as a kind of rationally legitimized *dream-reverie** (where the mirror of naturalized reason self-evidently 'is' *all* reality of what any nature possibly is as truth).

Therefore —— in order to escape that, in oreder to *wake up* from naturalist daydreamings of reason (sometimes through ubnormal pathways and events):

„*Philosophy should** live by sarcasm, irony, unrest, struggles, dubitation, despair, great expectations – allowing itself contemplation (созерцание) and tranquillity only from time to time, for respite's sake. And then, perhaps *parallel to realist daydreamings**, it shall succeed to create *daydreamings of an entirely other* (иного) *order**; these would in advance have the value of demonstrating that *generally accepted daydreamings are not the only ones possible**. 'For what goal' someone might ask? [...] Whoever poses this (question) shows that he needs not an answer, nor does he need *such** a philosophy. And the one who

does need them will not pose such a query, but shall go on patiently to await *events**: a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius, an epileptic fit or something of that sort that alleviates the tiresome goal of *searching**..." (GV 294).

Despite the quietist-godotean suggestion of 'waiting' for event, an event sketched in macabre fashion, the Russian philosopher – nevertheless – takes hold of *implications* of his existential phenomenology of groundlessness. These implications are modelled through series of deconstructive *applications* ('wanderings' = 'странст-вования') – hence even *creating the event* he gives witness to ('preaches' about?). These and such applications, note, offer explanation of the Shestovean methodology of 'wanderings through souls' (странствования по душам: from Plato to Husserl). In light of what has been said so far it is not surprising that Shestov, with particular fervour, turns toward the thinker of limits par excellence – *Kant*. Besides (as was demonstrated elsewhere and previously in PFA), Shestov approaches *Tolstoy because* he discernes him as a *Kantian* (albeit in old fashion Russian format: thereby we also acknowledge that Shestov's thought is 'self-coherent' from that aspect of things too – all thinkers are suspected of the crime of allying reason/necessity/morality with resignation before death as unsurmountable 'limit'). The debate with Kant, taken as *application* of philosophy of groundlessnes, therefore, *upgrades* the debate with what we named as the 'first-selfsame Tolstoy': moreover, this debate *intensifies* the dispute with the first-selfsame of philosophy per se (*n.* however, purposes of this *selection and overview* of PFA lead us tosummarize conclusions and results of our study as such, hence we skip the Chapter on Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and the ones on Kant and James).

IV. Philosophy of groundlessness – in summa: transformation of philosophy – post-metaphysical metaphysics of faith — fidements

A. Synthesis of interweavements and cross-sections (χίασματα) of Shestov's philosophy: annunciation of things to come – pioneer of the new or scout in name of the old, perhaps both? Before embarking on in extenso criticism of Shestov (executed elsewhere in PFA) we must summarize *so far* accomplished results of our investigation. The philosophy of *groundlessness* represents a particular type of philosophy of *tragedy*. What makes it special is the fact that such a philosophy of tragedy, in its core, is an expression of existential philosophy, more precisely philosophy of groundless existence of the individual as person.

Inasmuch the philosophy of groundlessness is a sui generis synthesis of philosophy of tragedy and philosophy of existence. Shestov conceptualizes existence through groundless *subjectivity*. Groundless subjectivity marks the *distancing* from philosophy of the 'strong' Cogito: grounded in autarchic self-reflexion of the autonomous subject, which seeks (and does find) a realist alliance of the law of consciousness with nature under the sign of necessary, universal and all-obligatory authority of Reason. In order to manifest this distancing as overcoming of the subject by subjectivity, Shestov – in fact – develops a special *phenomenology* of groundless subjectivity. To that end his thought develops a very intricate expression expounded in forms of the phenomenology of *de-foundments*. Shestov conceives de-foundments as *phenomenological events* which, in the pre-reflexive and meta-reasonal sense, as experiences, precede the intellectual constitution of consciousness and conscience. For these reasons they are irreducible and relevant (particularly in the era of Shestov's life span) for criticism of self-

sufficiency of reason, knowledge (epistēme) and morality. 'Forms' of de-foundments he tends to express via substrata which we recognised and synthesised under the sign of concentrata:

(1) facticity (contingent concreteness of being),

(2) temporality (in-timeness of being) and

(3) transcendence (being over-reaching itself as being).

All substrata point at radical and non-bypassable *contingency* and *non-definability* of the world of existence. Shestov never gives up on these two characteristics: for reasons of criticism of meta-narrative teleology of the grand design of history of philosophy, and-or philosophy of history, natural history notwithstanding.

This is why we confirmed the philosophy of groundlessness as expression of *phenomenology of existential states of the individual*. All three planes of groundlessness:

(1) anthropological,

(2) gnoseological and

(3) ontological, therefrom, gain proper expression via the relation they have towards *death* as main enemy of man and, by extension, adversary of philosophy (inasmuch as traditional philosophy, in an eternal stoicism of sorts, resigns before the feet of thanatos in gesture of moralistic acceptance). *Mortality* (smrtnost) is no common defoundment (defundamental), for it is the 'de-foundment of all de-foundments'. That is to say, mortality is the *horizon* which inscribes groundlessness as such, but it *also* inscribes the possibility of realizing authentic subjectivity. This is paradoxical but it is not meaningless. The phenomenology of groundlessness – the structuring of defoundments – therefore does have an *existential* effect. Shestov utilizes it in order to suspend and de-mask negative consequences of ignoring the challenge of death, or covering-up of questions that death directs *at* philosophical thought. Inasmuch the substrata-concentrata of *de*-foundedness (facticity, temporality, transcendence) are carriers of (a potentially conceptual) *reply of revolt* to — idealization of human life and human capacity (anthropology), as well as to — moralization and resignation before death (gnoseology and ethics), and finally to — *introduction* of death itself by the agency of man himself: Thales as 'philosophical Adam' – Adam as 'foregoing Thales' (philosophy of history)[41]. Shestov interprets death as direct *consequence* of ratiocratic and epistemocratic logocentricity of being, positing itself at the cost of primordial pluriversal life in creative freedom or arbitrariness (произвол) – where 'all things are possible', including the *impossible* (ontology and spirituality). The struggle against reason, hence, folds over into *struggle for life*. Philosophy of groundlessness thus betrays counter-logocentric concordance with philosophies of life – concord, however, with neo-metaphysical maximalism too (in key of a certain brand utopianism, or, rather, something else?).

„In order to awake from life the ancients advanced toward *death**. In order not to awake the modern flee from death, making sure it is not mentioned. Who is more 'practical'? Those who equate earthly life with a dream awaiting the miracle of awakening, or those who see in death a visionless dream, a dream perfect, consoling themselves with 'reasonable' and 'natural' explanations? That is the basic question of *philosophy** – who steers away from it, steers away from philosophy itself" (JB 161).

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[41] On the sin-bearing fall of *Thales* – who gave praise to the abstract One, not to the particular and concrete *someone*, v. Shestov's exegesis and hermeneutic in „Logic of Religious Creativity. In Memory of William James", in idem, *Great Vigils*, 444.

The struggle for life commences with struggle for new consciousness. This is done by means of critical assaults of philosophy *other than* reason against philosophy *of* reason and-or philosophy of speculative mind (which Shestov, contrary to Hegel, regards as a kind of *somnambulism*). It is through such method that Shestov aspires to *awaken* speculative-ratiocratic thought (sleeping whilst awake, for what is reality is conflated with reason identified as true nature of things and reality). *This is why* in significance gain alternative states of consciousness, as well as alternative – limital kinds of truth: truths of the Other and Real. The philosophy of Shestov is thus to be seen as a philosophy of *awakeness for other dimensions of thought.* Deaths to wit *dying*, sufferings, misfortunes, horrors, pauseless dread, absurdity, anxiousness, disappointments, unexplainable chance and accident, infirmities, shock... – in form of the non-hierarchable and non-controllable *flux* of groundlessness (a flux suppressed from field of vision by optimistic ideologies of reason and knowledge) – manifest themselves as boundary-pointers of the idea of groundlessness (moments of beauty partake of this flux, moments of intensive bliss, elevations and similar too, but dark colours dominate, often a hair length away from something of the order of macabre and-or bizarre experience). With these ends in mind the existential phenomenology of groundlessness acts through two wide planes. These are the plane of *constitution* and plan of *methodology* – in favour of ascertaining *new possibilities* for de-founding (in fact, a re-founding sui generis of) the work of *philosophy*. The plane of constitution advances via 'theory' of de-foundments. And de-foundments are nothing else but *conditions of possibility* (Bedingungen der Möglichkeit) *of new conditions* of philosophy. De-foundments (defundamenti) are formal – albeit 'vacillating' – places for manifestation of non-formal contents of the other, the non-normal and events radically differing from what is posited by *reason*. Hence we discover de-foundments as *limital states* of consciousness and, simultaneously, as *limital truths.* They are unwoven (unlaced) away from the intellectualist criterion of adequational theory of truth justification, and, simultaneously, interweaven into a *pragmatic* criterion of plausible-hypothetical theory of truth justification (as trace of Jamesean influence): in *one* word, de-foundements are *useful* for orientation and usher awakenings from naturalist and realist slumber, hence the are a function of something *true for us...*

All de-foundments (thematizied during Shestov's *nihilist* phase, whilst experiencing his la noche oscura del alma[42] [cf. PC 73-74]), moreover, may be characterized by means of four features which Shestov (in different places and in variation) ascribes to alternative consciousness (not without reference to mystical context). *Note*: within square brackets we offer four analogous features which William James uses in his masterpiece *Varieties of Religious Experience...* (1902, 1916) to qualify alternative states of consciousness induced by mystical experience („I [...] propose to you four marks which, when an experience has them, may justify us in calling it mystical"[43] — Shestov would modify thus: „... may justify us in calling it groundless").

That is to say: all ground*less* (Boden*losigkeit*) states of consciousness – and correspondent experiences, facts, truths – bear a *quadruple* character under a sign of the *apophatical-mystical*. These are:

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[42] For an elaboration v. Kaye P. McKee, *When God Walks Away: A Companion to the Dark Night of the Soul*, Crossroads Publishing, 2006.

[43] William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience...*, Lectures XVI and XVII: „Mysticism", Longmans, Green, New York (1902) 1916, 380 et passim.

(1) *incomprehensibility* and-or *meta-reasonality* (with the qualification that despite this – or in virtue of this – they procure new and other meaning [Ineffability]),

(2) *noeticality* and-or *meta-conceptuality* (both remain immanently tied to the act of cogniscence, but by manner of cogniscence is of another order to procedures of the logic of reason[Noetic quality]),

(3) *transitorines* and-or *contingency* (meaning that the cognitive content is not deducible from our consciousness by some natural or logical necessity, and that this content does not 'have to' be of such appearance, and it might not appear at all; this also means that this cognitive content cannot be grasped ['grabbed'], one-sidedly, by an act of intellectual I-will thus gaining mastery over it a priori: meaning that possession of such an cognitive experience [and concordant truth] is not entirely – if at all – in our hands; and if be it it in our hands, then the time-lapse of it is not guaranteed in advance [Transiency]) and

(4) *unconditionedness* and-or *unpredictability* (the reflecting activity of the subject of knowledge is not sufficient, and at times neither is it necessary reason-condition for the event of encounter with limital experience or limital 'fact' [Passivity]).

The apophatic 'aura' of de-foundments may be clearly gleaned from the following proposition: „The basic difference between 'average' (серединные истины[44]) truths of reason and absolute truths (последние истины) is that absolute truths are absolutely incomprehensible (непонятны). I repeat: *incomprehensible but not unapproachable** (недоступны)" (GV 291).

New conditions of possibility imply a *new orientation* of philosophy. This orientation allows thought to cross toward the world of *existence* – through the horrifying mystery of death *and* by de-masking the alliance ('covenant') of consciousness with epistemic dictums of knowledge, necessity and reason under the sign of moralistic resignation before death. This allows us to conclude not only that this orientation is a type of *philosophy of existence* but, moreover, that it is effected through an intensive *spiritual and conceptual struggle against death*. Such a philosopheme, therefore, potentializes spiritual experience of the *person*, on the other side of objectification of the subject :: object archetype, in search of new possibilities of solving the 'damned' problems. These ends precisely are served by Shestov's 'turn' to sui generis *empiricism* (experiencism, rather) and *pragmatism* backed up by simultaneous discarding of positivism and idealism. From what has been said we now understand why the plane of *constitution* in Shestov is simultaneously the plane of *de-constitution* of philosophy: philosophy taken *as* confidence in results and values of autonomous self-reflexion of moralist and naturalist reason (ratio, intellectus): for which death remains *outside* 'since' 'explained' (away) – that is, *suppressed and-or accepted*.

This throws light on the other plane, namely onto the plane of *methodology* of philosophy of groundlessness. This can be so because de-constitution follows forth from *de-construction*. That is, the phenomenology of de-foundments introduces the *other of* foundments (foundations) of reason (reason as foundation par excellence) — *out of reason itself*, but *also over and against it*. It is for this reason that we argued that

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[44] Consequent to his tireless scepticism Shestov picks at truths of reason or 'average' (that is medium, middle) truths, for he suspects that neither they are wholly intelligible or clear: „Strictly speaking middle truths too are incomprehensible. Who shall dare proclaim he understands light, pain, pride, joy, humiliation?" (BK 291).

the hermeneutical critique of constitution of reason, in Shestov, may be regarded as *deconstructive hermeneutics of doubt* – in colour ranges of anarchism, pessimism and nihilism (gushing forth from ground*lessing* effects of thinking [on] death). The plane of methodology, therefore, is the plane of deconstructive scepticism – directed toward knowledge and reason. In this context major importance is given to the apophatizing function of *deconstruction* and deconstructive function of *apophatizing*. That is to say, de-composing ratiocratic constructs revealed layers of *meaning* which cannot be rationalistically positivized (kataphaticised), whilst *that* meaning (not subsumable to objectivization or positivization) appears as *the powering fuel of de-composition* (de-construction) — *as the force posing questions from the event of death and happening of mortality* (from the other even of death and mortality!) — these being pre-eminent apophatic realities. For these reasons, by these paths also, death (and after-deathness) becomes the focal point of thinking existence, groundlessness, deconstruction and apophatics in the textual corpus of Shestov. Death, to wit as loss of unsubstitutable person, more importantly – *struggle against it* through *bringing to consciousness reasons and conditions of in-deathness* (and reasons of allying with it) enlighten this in-depth overturn in conceptualizing conditions of possibility of new (non-conditionable by reason) conditions for philosophy: *philosophy of struggle for life*.

For these reasons deconstructive hermeneutics of doubt – that is, the groundlessing critique, in Shestov, receive three modes of application:

(1) destructive (nihilism),

(2) deconstructive (scepticism) and

(3) constructive (pragmatism).

In fact we hear a *triune tone* of the deconstructive attitude of Shestov towards history of ideas, culture and civilisation. As he says himself: „... so it happens in philosophy: c'est le ton qui fait la musique*“ (GV 438). Furthermore, we ascertained that these three modes of application of groundlessing deconstruction correspond to *three phases* of Shestov's life struggle for meaning:

(1) *hopelessness* due to an exitless world (cul-de-sac),

(2) *doubt* in established exits and

(3) *hope* in finding an exit.

Recently Michaela Willeke proclaimed a result analogous to ours. Phases of maturation of Shestov's originary intuition she characterizes as path-markings (Wegmarken) which lead from the Nothing (Nichts) through Being (Sein) to Pleroma (Fülle)[45]. In that sense the gradual or phasing pathway (and pathways = Unterwegs) of Shestov's philosophy, further on, are determined by apophatic bracketing (aided by negativity of groundlessness) of what is rejected, rather than kataphatic movement toward what is positively known and sought for. Negative ('negational') discourse thus sheds light of *orientation* in darkness of destruction and during uncertainness of deconstruction of positive 'certainties' of what seemingly 'is'. Speaking in manner of Bataille[46], we could say that Lev's philosopheme is an *un*finishable non*system* of quali-

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* In translation from French: „Music depends on tone“.

[45] Michaela Willeke, *Lev Sestov: Unterwegs vom Nichts durch das Sein zur Fülle: Russisch-jüdische Wegmarken zu Philosophie und Religion*, Fundamentaltheologische studien Bd. 37, Lit Verlag, Berlin 2006.

[46] Georges Bataille, *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge*, tr. Stuart et Michelle Kendall, University of Minnesota Press (¹2001) ²2004.

fied *non*knowledge. The third note of the tonality of Shestov's deconstructive strategy, the *tone of hope* (previously deleted by his early saying: „… hope has vanished *forever*, yet life remains" [DN 369] – but also reinstated by his saying: „We need to *seek* God" [TN 316]), couples his existential phenomenology of groundlessness with *pragmatism*.

This is commensurate to the words of Jeff Jordan on James: „… James's argument is that when evidence is silent, our passions and preferences can speak. James's (*and Shestov's** BL) argument can be seen as supporting the propriety of allowing *hope** to influence certain deliberations and decisions"[47] (PW 185-186). By doing so, however, Shestov carries his philosophy over the threshold of blind faith into the fold of *argued* faith (no matter how much he insists on 'wild', 'pure' or 'fool-for-God' faith *as* faith). It remains true, however, that *even such* will for faith (argued and expounded through pragmatic justification) is determined by the figure of the meta-reasonal *leap* in to the unknown.

Since Shestov *coincides* to the *negative* result of Kant's critique of *traditional* metaphysics (intellectualist and essentialist ontotheology of Leibniz-Wolffean type) we cannot name his turn towards *pragmatics of faith* as 'metaphysical'. *Since* the thought of Shestov does not coincide to the positive result of Kant's critique of *traditional* metaphysics (restricting religion within the limits of reason = practical reason) *and since* Lev demands merciless warfare against reason and knowledge be *continued* in name of a domain other and different from the world of positive phaenomena given through the empirical plane of reason, then – still – we acknowledge that the turn towards *pragmatics of groundlessing faith* produces a certain *post-metaphysical metaphysics* of groundlessness, or faith (en passant, this is what Kurabcev names 'radical metaphysics'[48]).

Out of *roots* of things (rhizomata, корней вещей) themselves gushes forth groundlessness — groundlessness of *man* as 'eminent' (by 'privilege' overly suffering) 'mediator' of ground*lessing* possibilities of the Real. This is the reason Shestov *continues* to insist on audi altera pars relations towards *metaphysics* as potential path-finder to *meaning* of the Real. One should perhaps 'fear' *such* metaphysics, for it ushers unpleasant truths. However, neither should one be ashamed of it, like philosophers impressed by 'sciencehood', cringing from the 'stigma of metaphysics'[49] (J. Cottingham). It suffices to accuse someone of metaphysics, and this will make him „turn pale in horror", thinking all is lost – sarcastically states Shestov in his dispute with the optimism of *post*-metaphysics or, more precisely, *anti*-metaphysics (PC 78). Moreover, and at the same time, he pleads for a *non-disqualifying* divorce of metaphysics from scinetistic oppression over its irreducible being, domain and goals:

> „In metaphysics, *that is** in the domain where for us most curious and most important truths (истины) are hidden, the case is *different**" (A 2, 39).

Destructions and deconstructions of established philosophy of the moral-et-ratio alliance with everydayness of necessity and death, nevertheless, *have not* (certainly not in his *pre*-fideist phase) led to a proclamation of new religion (or new religiosity), not even a declaration of a new religious philosophy. *Nonetheless*, Shestov's series of apo-

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[47] Jeff Jordan, *Pascal's Wager: Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God*, Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York 2006, 185-186.

[48] Василий Курабцев, „Ведение", in idem, *Миры свободы и чудес Льва Шестова* (*Жизнь мыслителя*, „странствования по душам", *философия*), Российское гуманистическое общество, Москва 2005.

[49] For a rather sympathetic remarks on metaphysics, v. John Cottingham, *The Spiritual Dimension: Religion, Philosophy and Human Value*, CUP, Cambridge 2005, espec. 102-105.

phatic de(con)structions of reason *have led* to *construction of conditions of possibility* – but only of *possibility* – for an alternative orientation of philosophy. Hence we read Shestov's philosophy, not only in his early period, as a spiritual-intellectual practice of *multiplying possibilities* (… as that too…). In such a philosophy religious meaning – as possibility for philosophy – remains in play: hence the play too of *religious* philosophy *as* conceptual kerugma (revelational discourse) sui generis. That is to say: the thought of Shestov – taking as its point of departure *the* experience of groundlessness (also *the* essentially groundless experience of faith), taking into account *pre*-suppositions concordant *to that*, formulates philosophically relevant judgments and viewpoints directed at burning issues, and it is in *that* sense Shestovean thought allows itself to be modelled as 'religious philosophy'.

Subsequent to the question of identity of Lev Shestov's philosophy, the following problem needs to be faced. One must ask:

(1) does Shestov *reach* faith (which in his early period he – allegedly – does not have, but then appropriates by virtue of philosophic-religious investigations),

(2) or he *presupposes faith from the outset* and then *re-appropriates faith by re-confirming it* (through 'authentication' of faith by virtue of philosophically acquiring the lost right and lost will to and for faith[50]),

(3) or he *never reaches* faith (let alone 'real' faith).

Our answer stands with the second of these three options. The price of such an answer is the concession to somewhat relativise the *pre-fideist* phase of his spiritual-intellectual development *as* 'pre'-fideist. In other words, the division between *ante*–fide and *post*–fide phases of his thought, it must be admitted, is more osmotic and fuzzy than is usually considered (although this need not lead us to conclude that the philosophy of Shestov 'hence' loses power and credibility, for it is – allegedly – betrayed by implicit faith from its beginnings). Although it is not possible to wipe away the contour of this *distinction*, nevertheless, note, both sides of the distinction need to be *relativised*: the side of pre-fideism and the side of fideism. In other words, de-foundments of the pre-fideist phase (as conditions of possibility of other philosophy [philosophy of hope in the name of hopelessly and helplessly groundless individuals]) coincide, on one hand, with criticising morals, knowledge and reason (which are of no help in struggle against death, except through 'consolation') and, on the other, they coninicide with affirming the astonishing *choice to have the impossible be possible*. For instance: to affirm free willed but argued *death of belief in reason*, morals and knowledge – precisely that – as token of a turning to the other of reason: a turning conducted through the *argument of the will to believe that* what is impossible for reason nonetheless is *possible* – possible for 'reasonless' (not spiritless) *faith* (no matter how 'impossible' this might seem to the ratio-intellectus construct).

For these *reasons* apophatic deconstruction *of* reason constitutes not only the conditions of possibility of religious philosophy, but also allows conditional usage *of* 'short' *religious ideas*. Shestov discovers these ideas in the fold of Lutheran *Protestantism* which he deems closer to the Bible than other Judeo-Christian confessions, and the *Bible* seems to him as closer to the revelation of God to man than historical ecclesial institutions (i.e. 'objectifications') of that revelation. In connection to *that* question

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[50] „The worse part of me does not believe", Shestov says.

too, the philosophy of groundlessness reflecs the *decision* to choose an authentic *option of the theistic tone of existentialism*. Witness to what has just been said is given by the following *confession*: an almost éclatante *confessio fidei* of Lev's in 1909. (several years *before* writing his *Sola fide...*):

„... listen to Luther himself: 'God' – he says – 'is God of the humble (смиренных), miserable, oppressed, despairing, humiliated ones; his essence (сущность) is to inspire (вдохновлять) the humble, feed the hungry, return sight to the blind, console the ones who mourn, resurrect the dead, save the deceased and those who have lost *hope** (надежды)...'"[51].

The locus quoted displays *interweavement* of de-foundments, existential subjectivity *and* pragmatism of faith – by virtue of which Lev overcomes nihilistic tendencies (of his spirit and mind). It is of importance to indicate at yet another unusual effect of Shestov's conceptualization of *philosophy of faith*. That effect leads us back to the work of doubt(ing) in his thinking. Two things follow in connection to this.

First: the explicit scepticism of Shestov is annulled by his implicit fideism (with which it forges a paradoxical relation form the start), and, by equal reversal force, the gradual explication of fideism *rejuvenates his scepticism* (albeit transformed in kind). Thus appears the figure of *fideist scepticism* and-or *sceptical fideism*. This is seemingly paradoxical. However is does remain critically instigative. Namely, Shestovean faith *integrates scepticism from within* and then, following suit, it externalizes it as critique of everything regarded as non-authentic: in both (a) theological sedimentations of Judeo-Christianity, and (b) strata of rationalist philosophical culture of the secular age[52].

Second: it is this precisely that allows us to consider the de-fundamentals (i.e. *de*-founding *de*-foundments) and conceptualize them as existential and phenomenological tokens of — *fidementals* or *fidements*! ('fideing fidements'), which conspicuously take over the burdens of Shestov's philosophy of the second period. For example: the de-foundment of mortality – by paradoxy of faith – may become the fidement of vitality, that is fidement of hope in overcoming death, or a fidement eternalizing vitality. Of course, this is possible under condition of implementing the turn of pragmatics of faith and 'will to believe' argument (explicated in extenso elsewhere in PFA). In relation to this let us remember the following: „The more you consider yourself dead the more you become precisely that believer who is *already* saved by virtue of Christ's sacrifice. This doctrine Luther brought out of his own experience" (GV 329). In nuce: via the pragmatics of justification of faith, de-foundments become fidements, that is — *new foundments* (new foundations: neo-foundments or meta-foundments).

It must be added that neo-foundments in mode of fidements also *continue to de-found* reason-knowledge: both reason in philosophy and reason in theology. This is why Shestov's religious philosophy should not be conflated with theology, nor should

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[51] Lev Shestov, „The one who Composes and Destroys Worlds. On occasion of the 80th jubilee of Tolstoy", in idem, *Great Vigils*, St Petersburg 1911 = Лев Шестов, „Разрушающий и созидающий миры. По поводу 80-летнего юбилея Толстого", in idem, *Великие кануны*, Томск 1996, 328 = abbr. GV.

[52] Kurabcev rightly remarks: „... in [Shestov] we find two interrelated theses – the sceptical and religious". — *But*, if this relation is seen not as relation *within the mode itself of his faith* (as is explicitely the case in the third, fideist period of his thought) then, although necessary, it is not sufficient to state the existence of 'interrelatedness of theses'; further v. Vasilii L. Kurabcev, „Shestov", in M. Maslin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Russian Philosophy*, Ukronia – Logos Ortodos, Belgrade 2009 = Василије Л. Курабцев, „Шестов", in М. Маслин (ed.), *Енциклопедија руске философије*, Београд 2009, 988.

we regard it as philosophy of religion. That is to say, his philosophy 'of' faith is a thought from *witin* faith, hence it is closest to *religious philosophy* – a special one indeed. Lutheran insight into 'nothingness' of the mortalized and forlorn unfortunates, through Shestovean intervention, as we said, becomes a de-foundment that functions in mode of *fidement*. Shestov's struggle with foundationism in epistemology, therefrom, displays itself as *not as* neo-fundationism. It is better regarded *as* founding something *other from* what is allowed by the model of rationalist foundation of thought and being, *and* as carrying out an entirely and radically new *way* of 'founding' things... This is paradoxical but, let us repeat, it is not meaningless. To the contrary: it is a contribution to novel ways of attaining meaning in tackling the so called damned questions – or, better still, it is a contribution to rights of the 'damned' not only *to* think, but to think *better* and more effectively than us (albeit, also through us).

His existential phenomenology by virtue of its deconstructive character shows Shestov to be a 'forefather' of *post-modern* sensibility in philosophy. It also shows him to be a 'patron' of *neo-existentialism*. For these reasons it is beneficial to consider naming his anti-rationalist *metaphysics* of faith *also as post*-metaphysical thinking. In other words, Shestov's thought on groundlessness should be viewed within the framework of the debate on *overcoming metaphysics* (Überwindung der Metaphysik[53]). Namely, *transgressions* (hybris) of the 'post-metaphysical metaphysics' of groundlessness coincide with the inauguration of philosophical relevance of the atypical reality of groundless subjectivity (which claims that meta-reasonal experience legitimizes *possibility of the impossible*, that too – which reason finds *impossible*). In that sense the philosophy of Lev Shestov remains *metaphysical* and takes semblance to a specific kind of conceptualized *spiritual* experience (for it affirms new fields of 'knowing', new modes and capacities of 'knowing' in and through 'other dimension' of spirit, as he likes to state). But it also figures as *post-metaphysical* (for it manages to indicate at limits, and errings, of the logocentric metaphysics in ontothe[le]ological code – *but, neither* does it wish to tie the fate of possible insights, and events, to the logic of rational-scientific principles, nor to the logic of propositions grounded in positive fact of the naturalised evidence of senses).

B. After metaphysics – metaphysics, or something else? – between de-mythologization and re-mythologization – towards *post*-metaphysical metaphysics. The term 'post-metaphysical', by the way, is markedly utilised by Jürgen Habermas. Nevertheless, similarity with the approach of Shestov is mostly nominal (although Shestov too claims transcendence to be *already an innerwordly matter*, although he too rejects traditional metaphysics and its conceptual language) – *for* Lev (on the other side of Habermasian 'methodical atheism') does posit, in the end, biblical faith as sovereign and over-determinant principle for (all) thought and action (although he does not at-

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[53] Since Kant this problem was significantly addressed by, for instance: Rudolf Carnap (*Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse des Sprache*, Vienna 1931), Ludwig Wittgenstein (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London 1921) and Martin Heidegger (*Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, Bonn 1929; *Was is das Metaphysik?* Bonn 1929). It would be fruitful to contextualise the propositions of Shestov inside and between those two – conditionally speaking: analytical and hermeneutical – currents of debate on metaphysics (although he does work on providing for a 'third' pathway, if not current). For contemporary discussions on the (im)possibility of metaphysics, placed in a analytically orientated perspective, v. e. g. E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics*, OUP, Oxford 2002. — M. J. Loux, D. W. Zimmerman (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, OUP, Oxford 2003.

tempt an outright negation of science as such, he, nevertheless, allows autonomy of science, if and only if it does not neglect the value and pertinence of revealed truth). According to Habermas, the meaning of the term Nachmetaphysisches Denken[54] signifies *giving up* the pretension to grasp final truth on what, how and why things 'really' are (in that too Shestov would agree). Transcendence does remain a possibility. But transcendence, further on, is *not* a metaphysical reality *outside* this world which – as Habermas states, calling upon Danish radical theologian[55] Glebe-Møller – no longer can be metaphysically legitimized. It is not as if there is no thinking on God, nor is it the case that thought on God is purged of all content. Something other is at stake. The trajectory of history has brought us to a point where the *language of metaphysics* has lost coherence and cohesion, becoming fragmented and demythologized – hence: it must *either* confirm its truth-claims, *or* accept a replacement in form of *post*-metaphysical ways and ends of thinking[56].

In a contrast to that, somewhat unexpectedly, Shestov holds that the language of metaphysics need be *re-mythologized* – and, this need be aided by parallel *deconstruction of mythology of reason itself*[57]: reason taken *as* myth sui generis, but *without a return to old metaphysics*. This consequently leads also to *de-mythologization of intellectualistic metaphysics*. For Shestov holds that it has, from Aristotle[58] via Aquinas

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[54] Jürgen Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken: Philosophische Aufsatze*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1988 = idem, *Postmetaphysical Thinking (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)*, превод: Hohengarten, Polity Press, Cambridge 1992.

[55] Describing *methodical* atheism as a procedure which *still* is compulsory, Habermas refers to Glebe-Möller in Jürgen Habermas, *Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity* (E. Mendieta уред.), MIT Press, Cambridge 2002, 78, 80. According to Glebe-Möller the post-metaphysical perspective still may incorporate a certain 'transcendence'. For explication of these points v. M. R. Michau, „A Discourse Ethics of Liberation? Dialectical and Analectical Transcendence in Habermas and Dussel", y M. P. Banchetti-Robino, C. R. Headley (ed.), *Shifting the Geography of Reason: Proceedings of the 1st Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Philosophical Association*, Cambridge Scholars Press, London – in press. Also v. Jens Glebe Møller, *Jesus and Theology: Critique of a Tradition*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1989.

[56] Jürgen Habermas, „Transcendenz von innen, Transcendenz ins Diesseits", y исти, *Texte und Contexte*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1991 = „Transcendence from Within. Transcendence in the World" = y исти, *Religion and Rationality...*, Cambridge 2002. — In all truth, Habermas has made a series of statements in the recent period by which he advances in a very indicative way towards *integrating* the Judeo-Christian legacy of civilisation into his philosophy of social-communicative action (Handlung) and rationality in and for the horizon of public responsibility. Of course, this is far away from a 'theological turn' in Habermas (who insists on post-metaphysically situating theology too). Still, reassessed inclusion of religious meaning and value, as he argues, is necessary for proper advancement of contemporary European societies – which is a new moment in the project of dialectics of Enlightenment (which, in a unexpected move of 'dialectic', returns to reappropriate what it discarded in its earlier phases). Cf. J. Habermas, „Conversation about God and the World", in idem, *Time of Transitions*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2006, 150-151; also v. his discussion with pope Benedict XVI (J. Ratzinger): *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, Ignatius Press, 2007.

[57] 'Re-mythologizing' the language and ideas of metaphysics, of course, is not the same as de-mythologizing reason: but, these are two immanently connected movements of the spirit of thought of our Judeo-Russian thinker. Re-mythologization of the language and ideas of metaphysics, let us anticipate, inter alia, asks for a new *actualization* – and justification of *meaningfulness* – of the irreducible value of mythological levels and functions of human consciousness.

[58] This is an opportunity to show a virtually 'programmatic' loyalty of Shestov to the line of anti-Hellenic attitudes of the rabbinic theologians through the centuries. For example, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman = Ramban in his commentaries on the Torah – *Bi'ur = Perush 'al ha-Torah* – comes down vehemently on Hellenic philosophers, especially upon Aristotle – similarly does Shestov, seven centuries later. (Incidentally, Ramban construes his 'second' name by acronimically 'Cabbalising' = **Rabbi Moshe ben Nach**man – whilst Shestov takes to the method of symbolically 'Cabbalising' his name = **Шварцман-Ест-Иов** = **Schwarzmann-Est-Job**).

to Husserl, complied in 'fatal' alliances with reason-intellectus, which, as we know, the Judeo-Russian suspects to be a *mythological construal*. Thus the locus itself of the crisis of metaphysics (= the battleground pro et contra autarchic autonomy of brain-reasonal thinking) is viewed *as* inauguration of *strife amongst types of mythologies*: *pre*-Enlightenment, *En*-lightenment and *post*-Enlightenment ones. Shestov deems such conceptualization acceptable. The reason being that he deconstructively reads the ratiologocratic discourse of philosophy as *myth sui generis legitimized through will for power of the first-selfsame*. It is out of those reasons that he finds it possible to suggest Thales is mythologist of the 'One' and philosopher ratiologocrator – *at once*[59]. Contrarily, the 'real' philosopher must be on the side of limitless freedom, plurality of possibilities and the irreducibly concrete, particular and individual. That is why Shestov sees Thales, or Anaximander, as *miso*sophoi (= philoi of ratiologocracy and monism [henotism]), whilst the true *philo*sophoi are seen as *enemies* of ratiologocracy (in a counterturn vis-à-vis Plato who takes the 'misosophoi' to designate enemies of logos).

> „...individual life is in its essence impiety, and for the same reason carries within it the doom of supreme punishment, of death. Thus taught the first Greek philosopher, Anaximander. Thus also taught the last great philosopher of antiquity, Plotinus: ἀρχὴ μὲν τοῦ κακοῦ ἡ τόλμα καὶ ἡ γένεσις (*Enn.* V, 1, 1) (the beginning of evil is audacity and birth, i.e. the appearance of the individual being). The same [...] is the teaching of modern philosophy. When Hegel says that the individual belongs to the Universal Spirit (and here 'concept' is not more but *less** clear than 'representation', and to such extent is it *mythological** that I without end write the word Spirit in capital letters), he is only *repeating Anaximander's* words. For the sake of completeness I will add that Anaximander's legend was not invented by himself, nor by the Greeks at all. It came to the Hellenic world from the East, the home of all legends and myths, *on which the West, although it will not admit it, has always lived and still lives*"[60].

Therefore are we (or are we not?) to take as bizarre his *allegorical* qualification of metaphysics of reason as a special kind of mythological *narrative*? — All philosophema based on systematic presuppositions of metaphysics of Reason are decoded by Lev Isaakovich as *narratives* woven from a *mythical* clew (a clew commonly 'left' in unconscious depths of the mind: mind not having a *clue* of existence of such a *clew*). The weaving of such narratives he allegorically[61] illustrates by referring to the *folk-tail* of the axle-pin stew (щи из топора; klin čorba). What is suggested, and this is year

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[59] Thereby he joins – or leads – the re-questioning of Hellenic philosophical 'disqualification' of myth (to wit Eliade's insight: „If in all European languages 'myth' means 'fiction', the reason for this is that the Greeks named it so 25 centuries ago", v. Mirča Elijade, *Mit i zbilja*, tr. M. Cvitan и Lj. Mifka, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb 1970, 135 = cit. acc. to Bogoljub Šijaković, *Mythos, Physis, Psyche*, Jasen, Beograd – Nikšić 2002, 108 [in Cyrillic Serbian]). Shestov rehabilitates the importance of such mythological layers or such structural aspects-functions of consciousness. And more: the premises of his thought tend to *puncture* the objectified and commonly non-reflected border between myth-o-*making* and myth-o-*logizing*. That is to say (ask): is not ground*lessing* an act with a biunal effect — on one hand, the mysterial reality of groundlessness is made or 'allowed' to happen (non only acknowledged in thought) and, on the other hand, a new myth is inaugurated – myth on the Groundless (as well as mythologizing, and-or specific reasoning about it).

[60] Lev Shestov, „Sons and Stepsons of Time: Historical Destiny of Spinoza", in idem, *In Job's Balance*, Paris 1929 = Лев Шестов, „Сыновья и пасынки времени. Исторический жребий Спинозы", in idem, *На весах Иова: странствования по душам*, Сочинения в двух томах (т. 2), Наука, Москва 1993, 259 = abbr. JB.

[61] Introducing irony and allegory is characteristic of Shestov's attempt to relativize and deconstruct ideological strictures of absolutized logic of reasonal inference in philosophy; also, this tends to confirm his fore-postmodern avantguard status.

1905, is that borders between unscientific stories and stories of science or philosophy are not as insurmountable as seems prima facie. However, he does concede that these borders remain mutually non-identifiable (i.e. not wholly reducible one to another). This helps us en passant to discover Hose L. Borges (1899-1986) as a spirit of significant congeniality to Shestov. Besides, was it not Borges (friend of Benjamen's benefactor, Victoria Occampo, whom he calls 'most argentinian women'[62]) who wrote „They judge that metaphysics is a branch of fantastic literature[63]". Shestov *would* dare to, almost Dadaistically, rephrase that sentence – remaining faithful to the spirit of its intent, by stating: „They judge that science (scientific philosophy) is a branch of fantastic literature".

Most of us are familiar with the axle-pin stew tail. The explanation is given by Shestov himself (in context of his polemic with Merezhkovsky on religion and God in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, v. „Under the Power of Ideas" in *Apotheosis...*). The salient point is that the main (central) idea of a novel or philosopheme is *not necessarily the main (central) thing*. The main things are seemingly *marginal yet concrete contents...* That is to say, for Shestov 'synthesis' (in terms of the construed all-uniting One) is an *external*[64] matter: not only in the sense of instrument of composition, but, more importantly, it is a matter external to the *thing itself* (which *eludes* synthesis, systematization, unification, all cleverness of dialectic).

> „... synthesis has only external, an all-uniting, formal meaning [...] the general idea in a book always has the role that the axle-pin (топор) in the soldier's stew. No matter how much we try to attend to it (ни возись), it shall remain uncooked (недоваренной). Most importantly, the book shall suffer nothing from the fact: only if it contains (as Shestov's works do) all the other ingredients necessary for making spiritual food of man" (A 155).

This may be generalised. The point is that Reason, *that is* – the main idea of a system or the system itself bear semblance to the axle-pin around which are cooked – or woven – the *other* ingredients of the stew of philosophy and philosophical narrative. In fact, there is *no* axle-pin (there is no bobbin inside the clew): the main ingredient of the stew is never prepared, for the 'central' ingredient is nothing but an alluring phantasm. It is inedible since it is, in fact, an 'existent non-existent', like any *phantasm*. The axel-pin of the philosophical stew, Shestov would agree, is nothing else than the *axle-pin of reason* or monistic generalisation which, naturalistically and deterministically, is being hammered into tissues of the concrete groundless individual, thus shedding blood of existential suffering and absurdity of existence. „All my personal memories as a reader spoke to me that what is most burdensome and unpleasant in a book is its general idea [...] by itself it strangulates all other contents..." (A 5). — *Does this not hold for the idea of groundlessness itself*!? (*n.* we do thematize this question, but elsewhere in PFA, i.e. in the Chapter dedicated to rigorous criticism of Shestov's ideas and thought techniques).

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[62] It was she who saved scripts of Benjamen Fondan during the Holocaust. Of special worth are Fondan's *Recontres avec Leon Chestov*. On Ocampo, the editor of famous Sur, v. Doris Meyer, *Victoria Ocampo: Against the Wind and the Tide*, George Brazillier, New York 1978.

[63] Jorge Luis Borges, *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, у исти, *Collected Fictions*, превод: A. Hurley, Penguin Books, New York 1999, 74 — cit. acc. to Evgenia V. Cherkasova, „Philosophy as Side-Shadowing: The Philosophical, the Literary, and the Fantastic", у H. Carel and D. Gamez (уред.), *What Philosophy IS*, Continuum, London – New York 2004, 200.

[64] On the relation of thought on externality and externality of thought, in Shestov's opus, reflects P. Jamet, „Pensée du dehors et dehors de la pensée", The Lev Shestov Journal 1 (Autumn 1997).

By the term 'post-metaphysical metaphysics', let us continue, we signify that Shestov's thought is *not naïve* in a pre-Kantian sense. In a turn, he takes Kantian types of metaphysics to be specifically *naïve*. More precisely, Shestov accuses Kant too for *turning-back* toward the first-and/or-selfsame: he complains against the incriminated 'оглядка', 'Zurückblicken' or 'Besinnungen'. Kant miosses out on seeing the metaphysic of reason itself as sometning very unscientific, points out Shestov. It is here that we find one of the major reasons which explain why Shestov *turns his back* to rational system building, advancing acrooss thresholds of *systematic anti-systemic thinking.* Reason is the great magician of taming and Security the great hypnotizer of life instinct and of man's freedom. Awareness of the fundamental loneliness of man (which no philosophy succeeds to definitely 'cure' or silence its painful preence), thinking death itself and brave experiments in the other meta-empirical plane – for that reason – serve to emancipate the spirit of man from such taming and behaviourist conditioning by reason. The following example illustrates Shestov's critique of 'reason' as system for conditioning the spirit to capitulate before the one-and-selfsame, that is, it illustrates his critique of the system of domination of metaphysics of reason and-or positivism in philosophy.

Great Vigils (великие кануны) – focused efforts of a special type of *attention* – are necessary in order to see that rationalist-scientific criticism of metaphysics is *itself an expression of metaphysical conditioning,* analogous to the syndrome of conditioned reflex action. Whilst deliberating on possible methods for a *post*-metaphysical metaphysics ('neo-metaphysics', if we like), Shestov takes over the results of an experiment conducted on a 'pike'. He *alegorizes* this experiment. His aim is to thus illustrate the allegedly fatal *anti-metaphysical* turning-back *towards* the 'idol' *of* objective, natural, self-evident certainty of logical and-or empirical truth, so proudly expounded by philosophy of positive rational science (the 'new' science, not without a barb, Shestov names as a kind of *apologetic,* that is as metaphysics sui generis [GV Theory of knowledge as apologetics 284-289]). The pike-experiment was conducted in Pavlovean manner (in a sense and to a degree, it is correspondent to Shestov's reading of James's essay „Reflex Action and Theism"[65]). The result was the following: if a transparent partition is posited between a pike and other fish, after a series of collisions with the glass, the predator (щука) *stops trying* to approach its prey. Half-way in the pool it *turns back* (to Kant?, let us add askingly). The point is that the pike *continued* to turn back, even *after* the partition was *removed*. Shestov capitalises on this by allegorizing. That is, he takes the transcendental difference between things 'in themselves' (metaphysical truth) and things 'for us' (objective truth) to be precisely such a partition, and the philosopher to be such a pike:

> „Does not the same happen with us? Perhaps the limits between 'this world' and 'the other world' are also essentially of an experimental origin (опытного происхождения), neither rooted in the nature of things (as was thought before Kant) nor in the nature of our reason (as is thought after Kant). Perhaps indeed a partition (перегородка) does exist, and makes meaningless all attempts to cross over (перебраться) certain domains of knowing. But perhaps there comes a *moment** when the partition is *already removed**. In our minds, however, the conviction is firmly rooted that it is impossible to pass certain limits, and painful to try: a conviction founded on experience (A 2, 3).

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[65] Let as remark: Shestov did read through James's essay „Reflex Action and Theism" (in idem, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* [¹1897]).

Now we understand why detrimental effects of the partition posited on spirit by naturalized reason – and fastened by generalising techniques of unification, systematization and synthesis – are illustrated by analogy with negative effects of conditioned reflexes. Before and after Kant metaphysicians are similar to *that* pike, the Königsbergean in particular… In other words, according to Lev Shestov, the Kantian partition between the world of phaenomena and world of noumena – maybe? – is nothing else but a transparent partition *already* removed from the aquarium of metaphysics, or it *may* be removed. The absolutised metaphysical border is a mere function of intellectual conditioning. That is, as long as the partition is unquestionable, as long as we turn our backs on effort, uncertainty and groundlessness, we remain deprived of what is *most important* — an authentic *philosophy of possibilities* (incidentally, Plotinus's attribution of philosophy as the 'most important' [τὶ οὖν ἡ φιλοσοφία; τὸ τιμιώτατον; *Enn.* I, 3, 5] Shestov takes as one of its 'most important' determinations [PC 117 and many other loci]). By virtue of groundless thinking – theoretical 'ground*lessing*', say – such philosophy at least perseveres on the way towards what is 'most important' (τὸ τιμιώτατον; Plotinus, *Enn.* I, 3, 5), or towards the 'one thing needful'[66] (χρεία ἥ ἑνός, Lk 10, 41-42). (*Nota*. This stress on importance of the *one thing needful* may be taken, to some extent, as justification for some of Shestov's shortcomings, or at least as a hermeneutical insight that somewhat alleviates the frustration one might have due to his metaphysical radicalism and-or seeming disdain for finer technical moments of professional philosophizing [i.e. the incriminated Shestovean 'hogging of blankets' Cz. Milos, or „the Shestov grid" B. Horowitz, etc]). His anti-Kantian protest is *at least* an attempt, Lev tries to convince us, of 'touching' truth on the other side of objectivism generated by the epistemocracy of an hypertrophic ratio: and despite its seemingly undeniable strictures which declare such a thing to be impossible, to be a 'thing in itself' at best…. Out of those reasons he asks Kant why he avoided to clarify – and develop – his concession on the possibility of knowledge *outside* limitations of the forms a priori of the senses and reason – indicating towards the possibility of beings which may be capable of comprehending (intuiting, contemplating) the things themselves directly and immediately, or participating in them in such fashion. Such a query thematizes the…

„…. the dogmatic[67] assertion that man cannot conceive a reality beyond space and time. Why? It is a question of immense importance. Compared with it all the problems of *The Critique of Pure Reason* are secondary. How is mathematics possible, how are natural sciences possible? — these are not even questions at all compared to the question whether it is possible to free ourselves from conventional human knowledge in order to attain the ultimate, all-embracing (всеобъемлющей) truth" (GV 307).

In what sense does *this* 'all-embracing' truth evade the 'all-embracing' truth *of* reason remains a question not only for us, but for Shestov too (taken up in his other works). In that sense the concept of founding 'objective certainty' – which James (as we saw [elsewhere in PFA]) regards as *regulative* 'limital' concept (Grenzbegriff, WB VI, 203) – is 'championed' by another regulative concept (or idea) – namely, by that of groundless-

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[66] In ambivalence between referring to the Judeo-Christian God (Jesus Christ as Son of God) and the Groundless One or Groundlessness – Shestov often (and not at one place only) alludes to the verses of Holy Scripture: „Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful (hreía hē enós)…" (Lk 10, 41-42).

[67] Herewith is to be found one of the terminological hints which explain the subtitle of Shestov's seminal work, namely The Apotheosis of Groundlessness: an Experiment in *Adogmatic* Thought.

ness, or de-foundational subjectivity (which, *in itself*, represents deconstruction of limits of objective 'certainties'). The 'demand' for *scientific* metaphysics – dictated by metaphysics of *science* itself (which sees everything that 'is' through the mirror of the reasoning brain) – reflects the capitulation of the philosophic calling, laments Shestov. If authentic, this calling (Beruf) together with wonder (thaumasein), demands heroic acceptance of sufferings (darings = дерзновения, *not* submissions [JB 250]) as condition of spiritual experimentation and – note – 'systematic' (meticulous) overcoming of partitions that anestheticise or annihilate freedom for the other, different, multifarious and changeable. The philosopher must not turn back (*re*-flect on and into ratio) like the pike:

> „Perhaps the failure of metaphysics lies in the caution and timidity of metaphysicians, who seem ostensibly so brave […]. They have sought for rest […]. Whereas they should have valued more than anything restlessness: of the aimless and even purposeless kind. How can you tell when the partition will be removed? Perhaps at the very moment when man ceased his painful pursuit, settled all his questions and rested on his laurels, inert, he could with one strong push have swept through the charmed[68] (заколдованную) line which separated him from the domain of the unknowable" (A 2, 3).

The so far expounded modes of deconstructivism, in Shestov, together with what we named as asystemic systematics of ground*lessing*, should be seen as part and parcel of instruments later taken for granted in the milieu of theoretical arsenals of the *postmodern* turn of philosophy. Namely, to give a list: the primacy of *irony and allegory* over monosemic and recursive concepts of texts dominated by propositional logic, over self-confident standpoints of knowledge (epistēme) too, the primacy of *query* over answer, primacy of *rhizomic web*, fragment and detail over vertical-hierarchic structure of the whole circle (sphairos) of intellect, primacy of *non-knowing and exception* over totalizing knowledge that subsumes all the concrete-individual under the general All, finally primacy of *paradoxy and anti-dialectical (*and-or *antithetic)* thinking over logical consistency and dialectical synthesis geared towards all-resolving lucidity of the clear and distinct idea of one Mind or mind of the One (ironized in the '*small*' narrative on the axle-pin stew). The following reflexion my well serve to round-up our 'in summa':

> „... *at first sight** [this is] not a philosophy at all: it offers no systematic unity, no coherent set of propositions, no theoretical explanation of philosophical problems. Most of Shestov's work is fragmentary. With regard to the form (he often used aphorisms) the style may be deemed more web-like than linear, and more explosive than argumentative. The author seems to contradict himself on every page, and even seeks out paradoxes. This is because he believes that life itself is, in the last analysis, deeply paradoxical, and not comprehensible through logical or rational inquiry. Shestov maintains that no theory can solve the mysteries of life. Fundamentally, his philosophy is not 'problem-solving', but problem-generating, with a pronounced emphasis on life's enigmatic qualities..."[69].

V. 'Deathbed' words of Lev Shestov: from groundlessness to the Groundless One – recapitulation: apophatic deconstruction of reason and faith

A. The lectio of groundlessness and articulo mortis as lesson in favour of life – from groundlessness to the Groundless One. The philosophy of Shestov did open a *new*

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[68] In similar vein Shestov continues later, at the beginnings of his fideist 'phase'. For example: „... so far a resourceful (хитроумный = fastminded) Ulysses has not appeared so as to succeed in finding the wonder-making herb (волшебный цветок) and thus destroy the charms of the sorceress (Circe BL)..." (PC 307).

[69] n.n. „Lev Shestov", in *New World Encyclopedia* = www.newworldencyclopedia.org.

horizon of meaning for philosophy 'as such'. At hand is *not only* an extension of existentialism into the religious domain or, better said, conscious taping into existential potential of revealed truths (which is positive in itself), *but also*, moreover, an extension of possibilities of *philosophy* which, through absorption of religious meaning furnishes the later with universalizable conceptual-critical status and capacity – *and* expands itself into the spiritual domain. This is the theoretical *horizon* of penultimate existential experience of the *individual* who, in Shestov, is potentialized by bringing to consciousness the *spiritual experience* of groundless personhood. Philosophically schematized groundlessness transforms the autonomous subject of thought into ground*lessing* and *de-centered subjectivity*. This newly discovered type of consciousness, to wit *subjectivity* – through work of its 'will' and in 'cooperation' with meta-reasonal possibilities of thought – discards reason (ratio, intellectus) as ground of autarchical autonomy of moralist rationalism and rationalised moralism in philosophy. The *price* for opening new possibilities, *for* other dimensions of thought, however, is *closing* work not only for reason but also work *on* reason. In other words, the price is a deficit of reconstructive trust towards rationality[70]. *Conditions of possibility* of philosophy of groundlessness (which is, we repeat, existential philosophy open to religious experience) are manifest as phenomenological substrata of subjective existence we named as *de-foundments* and then as *fidements*. That these are conditions of possibility of new posssibilities of philosophy is witnessed to by limital experiences *and* limital insights[71] to which de-foundments lead (which are introduced without pre-reflexion and asking [without 'knocking' on the door] by limital events themselves: by invasive ground*lessing* strikes at 'reason's' construals from within and without, from below and above). Around limital experience the atypical and non-objectivistic object-matter of this philosophy nouvelle is being interwoven. This is aptly demonstrated by the following citation (*n.* although written after *Sola fide*, it does connect awareness [awakening] due to de-founding effects of limital experiences, on one hand, with shedding-off 'false' [slumber-inducive] conditions of possibilty of philosophy, on the other). The *transformation*...

„... begins with the 'true awakening' and carries man 'beyond reason and knowledge' (ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ νοήσεως), beyond the limits of the world 'given' once for all that is 'the condition of the possibility' of knowledge and where the conditions of the possibility of knowledge were created by Ἀνάγκη (Necessity) which does not allow itself to be persuaded and which exists especially for this. And indeed, if Necessity were not deaf and blind, the idea of knowledge would lose all meaning. Truth could not be in the 'adaequatio rei et intellectus', for how could one take as the standard a thing that is not at the disposal

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[70] A paradigm of respectable possibilities opened by a more favourable, varied and mediational approach to 'reason' is given, let us select but one example, by: Hans Lenk, „Vernunft als Idee und Interpretationskonstrukt", y Hans Lenk (ed.), *Zur Kritik der wissenschaftlichen Rationalität*, Freiburg-München 1986. — idem, *Zwischen Wissenschaftstheorie und Sozialwissenschaft*, Frankfurt/aM 1986 (= in Serbian [lat.]: Hans Lenk, „O tipovima i kritici racionalnosti", in idem, *Između teorije znanosti i društvene znanosti*, tr. S. Bosto, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo 1991, 147 et passim).

[71] Should we stress that there is an analogy to be seen here in relation to Jaspers's 'limital situations' confirmed in his *Existenzphilosophie* (Cf. idem, *Philosophie* [3 Bände = I. Philosophische Weltorientierung; II. Existenzerhellung; III. Metaphysik], Springer, Berlin 1932). Shestov wrote favourably on Jaspers, particularly enticed by his work Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz*, Verlag J. B. Wolters, Groningen ¹1935 = *ibid.*, Storm Verlag, Bremen ²1937, v. Lev Shestov, „Sine effusione sanguinis. On Philosophical Honesty. On K. Jaspers" = Лев Шестов, „Sine effusione sanguinis. О философской честности. О К. Ясперсе", Путь 54 (1937) 23-51 (re-published in the following collection: Лев Шестов, *Умозрения и откровения. Религиозная философия Вл. Соловьева и др. статьи*, YMCA-Press, Париж 1964).

of deaf and, by that very fact, unchangeable Necessity but depends on the will of a relenting, susceptible to persuasion and, consequently, 'capricious' being (Kant's deus ex machina or höheres Wesen)?" (AJ 378)[72].

The de-hierarchized and rhizomic web of de-foundments, nevertheless, is *unstable* and remains under the sign of the unforeseeable. Was it not Shestov who said: „Yes, there are sudden metamorphoses [...]. It may also be that anything whatsoever can come from anything whatsoever. What follows from this? Reason does not understand the suddenness?" (PC 79). Whatever follows therefrom, the following may be 'inferred' also: such a state of philosophical affairs strikes a blow at the identity of existential philosophy which Shestov is trying to open to the religious. That is to say, radical subjectivization – this introvert 'infra-glimmering' in the 'darkness' of otherness to knowledge – is simultaneously the *most powerful and most weak* aspect of such philosophy. It is so not (only) because this makes it irrationalist and voluntaristic. More importantly, it is so because this makes it 'non-efficient' and 'non-usable' in the socio-communicational sense (apart from callings of one super-loner to another: callings for analogous co-intuiting of exit-ways from history of 'reasonification' and reason-fiction *of* history and the life world). But this is what Shestov wants. Nevertheless, that does not cure anthropological-ethical, epistemological-gnoseological or spiritual-ontological difficulties, especially not those of the sociological-culturological kind. How are we to know that de-foundments escape in principle the magical 'hypnosis' exerted by reason on the spirit, making it turn back towards reason, that is to the first-selfsame? Is mere suddenness of their pure inter-ruptio-nal happening to explain and-or alleviate everything? 'Until' the event of undermining effects of presence of de-foundments, and afterwards, the philosophy of groundlessness works on critique of culture of ratiolatry and moralolatry – *therefore*, it *abides* by something of the *(self)same*: namely, preaching against preaching (preaching, that is, against preaching in the name of reason and morality). Conditions of possibility of constitution of philosophy as religious or meta-reasonal philosophy are conditionlessly *a posteriori* – and, to add, non-limitable and almost entirely non-anticipative. Furtherstill, conditions of possibility of *transition* from philosophy to *religious* philosophy, although possible, require as *necessary pre*-condition a retreat from conditions of disciplining philosophy (although Shestov conducts this retreat in a extremely *disciplined* manner). The paradox of all paradoxes of existential philosophy of groundlessness (as philosophy which made a shift from autonomy of reason to openness to influx of heteronomous and heterogeneous meaning and sense) is to be seen in the fact that conditions of possibility which lead to it are un-conditionable as much as non-knowable – comprehensible, yes, but post festum...

The event of criticism of autarchic autonomy of reason, nonetheless, leads if not to an epistemologically justified, then to spiritually self-aware *attempts* (опыты) at establishing new conditions of possibility — hence indicating that *an other to reason does exist* which philosophy may and should 'integrate' or, better, carefully acknowledge. It is for *these* reasons that Shestov's thought, although not to be considered a philosophy of reason, is to be concieved as a *philosophy*. Although this philosophy is not

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[72] Lev Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem. An Essay in Religious Philosophy*, Graz 1938 (= Lew Schestow, *Athen und Jerusalem. Versuch einer religiösen Philosophie*, tr. H. Ruoff, Verlag Schmidt-Dengler, Graz, mai 1938) = Lev Shestov, *Athens and Jerusalem*, tr. B. Martin, Ohio University Press, 1966 = Лев Шестов, *Афины и Иерусалим*, Сочинения в двух томах (т. 1), Наука, Москва 1993 = abbr. AJ.

to be confused with a rational theology (theologia intellectualis), it is to be seen as a *religious* philosophy. But it is not even a religious philosophy *if* religious philosophy (as his debate with Berdyaev and Merezhkovsky shows) counts on reason (reor, ratio = count) – 'reasoning' by trust in the 'old Serpent of knowledge'. This successive series of ''not that's'' is generated by its main *apophatic* intuition which inaugurates *non*-knowing or, more precisely, *meta*-knowing sui generis. As suggested by Sergey Levitsky: „In most cases Shestov 'circles around' his themes, from all positions attacking hated 'rational necessity' at the same time betraying his true 'credo', but half-markedly. In that circling around the invisible *centre** of his 'lex credendi' is to be found the main attractive force of Shestov's thought" [73].

Shestov's philosopheme opens insight into *mythology of reason* as part and parcel of the 'old narrative', pointing towards the ancient (hi)story of deification (apotheosis) of human reason. The old story being the turning-back and-or back-turning (оглядка, Zurückblicken as metaphors for *Be*-sinnung, *re*-flexion). As we know Lev has in mind turning-back/back-turning as turning one's gaze away from radical freedom – towards (and by allurement of) necessity of reason and reasonification of necessity, which offer false comfort in the predictable rut of everydayness of life and being. His opinion is that this leads if not to losing freedom altogether, then to capitulation in front of suggestions to accept limited freedom, for which not all things are possible. In his frame of mind this means: accepting the necessity of death (the suggestion of the 'old Serpent', coiled inside and as knowledge). For this reason he rallies for the death of necessity. — Such non-backturning anti-reflexion, however, is not merely *a story about the story of reason*, but, moreover, a symptom of introduction of a *new mythology* ('meta-narrative') which – despite precaution – does not become fully aware of itself as — *mythology*: *neither* does it become aware of itself as moment of that old/ancient story (i.e. as new moment of turning-back, or as *re*-flexion). *For* instead of the unquestionable construal of reason we find postulated another *unquestioned* construal – that of *reason as archenemy* and-or sacrificial tragos: ipso facto we hit against another grand story: the story of Shestov. The lectio and lecture of deconstruction of reason, thus, betrays a *deficit of deconstruction of deconstruction*: deconstruction of *that* kind of deconstruction (or such tendency within it) which, nevertheless, counts on and with reason, at least 'whilst' awaiting on groundlessness to do its job, or 'whilst' awaiting tidings of radical intervention of the Groundless (One), or God…

Having discarded identification with philosophy of religion (because the later remains methodologically *outside* the religious as event and lived phenomenon) the religious philosophy of Shestov has traversed the path from faith in philosophy to philosophy of faith, reaching and crossing the threshold of pure faith. The content of this faith (vibrating in tones of Judeo-Protestantism), however, is more-or-less purged not only from confessional elements, but also – almost – from *God* (more justly put, this is not rarely the case). Berdyaev voices a similar reserve: „But only his negative philosophy is rich and expanded… "[74]. In fact, not only the 'idea' of God but the *experience* of

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[73] Сергей А. Левицкий, *Очерки по истории русской философской и общественной мысли*, II, Frankfurt/Main 1968, 160.

[74] Nikolai Berdyaev, „Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard", Sovremennye zapiski 62 (1936) 376-382: 376 = Николай Бердяев, „Лев Шестов и Киркегард", Современние Записки 62 (1936) 62 (1936) 376-382: 376 = исти, „Лев Шестов и Киркегор", у исти, *Типы религиозной мысли в России* (в. Собрание сочинений, т. 3) YMCA-Press, Париж 1989 (714 сс) 398-406: 398 = abbr. SK.

God also: the experience of the Ineffable Groundless One, Shestov leaves *evacuated from content* – apart from faith in powers of the One making all things possible (omnipotentia): that is, faith in powers of 'All-possibility', the impossible notwithstanding. Again we recall the remark of Berdyaev, who continues thus: „…his positive philosophy is impecunious and short…“ (SK 397). In that sense, again in paradoxical turn, faith itself is sufficient for God to exist, and for Him to be capable (capax) to conduct even impossible things. The parole stating *only by faith* (= sola fide) tends to freeze into the formula *faith alone* – reducing the God event into faith *as* faith. If God is not 'the Good' (as Shestov, following Nietzsche, reiterates from the very beginning [TN 316]) then, as this end result suggests, God is not God either, but — *pure apophatic faith*: re-cleansed to become as pure as a desert bone. Later Lev admits that that he opposes the incarnation of God or, more accurately, opposes the incarnation of the 'ineffable' (неизреченное) into 'definitive' form. In all truth, he will *also* concede that the 'ineffable' *incarnates*[75] itself (in sense of the verb infinitive). However, from a Judeo-Christian point of view, does this not lead to a strange sub-eschatological postponement (perhaps prevention) of incarnability of God or of the 'ineffable' as such – all under the sign of self-willed arbitration postulated on behalf of a extra-institutional and extra-historical individual (to wit, Lev Isaakovich)? Radicalism of the apophatic dimension (измерение) of religious philosophy thus unites irrationalism, scepticism and voluntarism of the protesting will: will for power(lessness) of the lonely individual – of Shestov, that anti-hero of philosophy and-or hero of anti-philosophy.

Shestov is nevertheless to be credited for coming to terms with the world of existence (Lebenswelt), and in the name of it (a world preceding intellectual essentialism and all objectification): namely, this world is successfully inaugurated through shedding light upon what is most threatening to it, and in order to force philosophy to ask, yet *again*, why the question of all questions – the *question of death* – does not overdetermine all other questions and concerns (when the answer to that is the 'one thing needful'). No matter how much, rightfully, philosophers may professionally engage analytical tasks and systemic divisions of labour in the fach of philosophy taken as 'socially useful form of activity' – apart from focusing *scientistic analytical* meanings, warns Shestov, they should theorize (non-speculatively traversing other dimensions of thought) the crucial existential meanings *as well*. This is to be done *first and foremost* whilst preparing for death. Thereby he repeats the word of Plato[76] – rather than the kerugma of Jesus the Nazarene[77] – as the key word of the Groundless…

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[75] As he will write later, in his *fideist* phase: „The ineffable is ineffable because and inasmuch as it is opposed by its very nature not to incarnation (воплощению) in general […] but to definitive and final incarnation. It does incarnate itself (воплощается) but it cannot and *does not wish** to be transformed into knowledge. For knowledge is constraint, and constraint is submission, loss, and privation, which finally hides in its depths the terrible threat of 'acquiescentia in se ipso' (= 'contentment with oneself' BL)“ (AJ 373).

[76] „Those who correctly dedicate themselves to philosophy (τυγχάνουσιν ὀρθῶς ἁπτόμενοι φιλοσοφίας) hide from the non-initiated that they do nothing else (οὐδὲν ἄλλο) but practice [in] dying and [in] death (ἀποθνήσκειν τε καὶ τεθνάναι)“. This locus from Plato's dialogue (Φαίδων 64 a) Shestov quotes characteristically, for instance in the first part of his his study *Sola fide* (= part I. On Greek and medieval philosophy), v. Лев Шестов, *Sola fide: Только верой*, YMCA Press, Париж 1966, 45.

[77] For example: „Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life (μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωήν)“ (Jn 5, 24).

The main word (lectio) of Shestov's philosophy of groundlessness, the lecture (lectio) – bettered by no philosopher after Plato, nor with more talent and conviction – is the lectio on the *meaning and challenge of death* as condition of all conditions of possibility (or 'impossibility') of man's meaning-seeking existence. It is the word of death itself – articulo mortis – as de-foundment of all de-foundments. Shestov's *memento mori* is not a sentimentalist moral on sublimity of recognizing death, *but* a call for becoming aware of it and, even, *overcoming* death. It is a *call* for overcoming death of *irreplaceable* individuals as persons. It is a calling forth for resistance to lethal amnesia (forgetfulness) of the constitutive importance of *irreducibleness* of concrete beings for being 'as' being (besides, Shestov holds that being *as* being [ὄν ῇ ὄν] is non-existent, except in the glassy gaze of the Serpent). Inasmuch the philosophy of Shestov – quite earlier[78] than that of Heidegger (anticipating Martin's Existenzial 'fear/anxiety//care-before-death' or 'being-toward-death' [Sein-zum-Tode]) – utters its *penultimate word* as — *care before mortified yet irreducible being*: — *care for (not only before or due to) mortified yet irreducible being*. More precisely, it takes this defoundment (de-fundamental) as fidement (fidemental) of that *penultimate* faith in life despite death: faith in things impossible being (pen)ultimately possible. „We must overcome fear (summon up all our courage) *go toward death** and try our luck with her (у неё попытать счастья)" (AJ 371)[79].

Thus we capitalize, note the twist, a certain Jamesean 'cash value' of socio-cultural and, even, socio-political relevance of *potential* carried by this existential philosophy in apophatic key (precisely because of the *sobering* effect of exposing all that is mortalized to the horizon of death itself, *but* – in view of the possibility of an *awakening turn* of 'slumbering yet living corpses': hypnotized by knowledge-virtue-usefulness – a turning, perchance, possible on 'this side' of the 'other' side of life...). It is true that Shestov's insistence on 'one thing needful' tends to blunt the socio-political edge of his thought (as has been noticed from Walter Benjamin in 1939. to Michael Weingrad in 2002. The latter is explicit and strict: „Nowhere in Shestov's philosophy is there any sort of guide for action. The inwardness of his philosophy seems to translate into an apolitical passivity. To view existence as a mystery, and to be at the same time critical of any attempt to elucidate this mystery, threatens to lend a metaphysical lustre to the status quo"[80]. — But *still*,

[78] This is simply undeniable and the evidence is clearly ascertainable in works *before Sola fide* (1911-1914), hence before *Sein und Zeit* (1927). As his letter [d. 22.01.1930] to Herman Lovtsky indicates (reported by his daughter Natalia Baranova) Shestov went as far as conjuring that Heidegger's essay *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929) might have been the product (*Einfluss*, in fact) of his talk with Heidegger during his sojourn in the home of his life-long friend Husserl, where all three of them met in 09.11.1928. For example: „I am not sure, but it is possible that his work 'Was ist Metaphysik' was an effect of our talk...". During the meeting Heidegger – probably following Husserl's instigation – urged Lev to read Kierkegaard (which the Russian did). Afterwards Shestov and Heidegger exchanged letters (two letters from Heidegger to Shestov are kept in the Shestov archive: dated 08.01.1929 and 25.05.1929 [in the later, the German informs Shestov on his *Kant-vorlesungen* and mentions his essay *Was ist Metaphysik*?]). Although 'influence-on-Heidegger' is a somewhat long stretched supposition by Shestov, it remains plausible that the work of Shestov carries undeniably *pre*-Heideggerean yet 'Heideggerean' themes and insights... (we discuss this in more detail in PFA).

[79] The „Sein zum Tode" analogy is striking at this point in Shestov's post-Sola fide opus as well. These words were written shortly after *Sein und Zeit* („Parmenides in Chains" was written in 1929), but we have clearly shown (here and elsewhere in PFA) that Shestov attains this existential-phenomenological insight independently and before hand, since *Apotheosis of Groundlessness*... in 1905, surely...

[80] Michael Weingrad, „New Encounters with Shestov", The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy 11:1 (2002) 49-62: 60.

Shestov's philosophy – with its accent on *possibility*, with it emphasis on things *outside* ratiocracy, with its stress on „De profundis *ad te, Domine*, clamavi" – remains doubtlessly meaningful in a civilization of global instrumentalizing of life: in a world subjected to laws of capital: in a domain were hypertrophic power of elitist institutions – alienated from real approval as much as lethal – 'rule' over our planet and over every individual living upon it as mere kataphatic given of statistical digit or index of interest and exploitation[81]. If this philosopheme is bereft of a political action plan, which surely it is, nonetheless, it is not bereft of its own action power (which might be sublimated into other action levels [en passant, we are not sure that Benjamin, Buber, or Weingrad have explored the implications of this possibility to the full]). That is to say: it remains a strong and radical cry against old and new orders of commissars and fuhrers of any age and place: although these agencies of power Shestov himself tends to seek-ot primarily in the fields of spirituality, ontology, or epistemology...

All in all, Shestov conducts his amazingly specific, and salient, warfare against slavery, necessity and death – at times – so convincingly that it itself represents the first fore fruit of victory over non-freedom, necessity — and even death (if one has those other-dimensional eyes to *see*, eyes bestowed by the angle of death, as Shestov tells us). This holds as true at least in form of meaning-imbued hope that *rejection* of technocratic ratiocracy, which forgets or instigates death, is the first step of life: life possible outside rationalized death (and-or outside scientific adaptation to death, for instance, by means of 'prolonging' life [criogenetics for instance]). The correlate of the lesson of death, according to our Judeo-Russian, is that 'knowledge' (taken as autarchic epistemocracy of reason) cannot explain life, let alone encapsulate it. Moreover, as he goes on to claim, 'knowledge' hides its alliance with the process of mortalizing life. It is for that reason that the lessons given via the de-foundment of death (on constituting new possibilities of 'conditions of possibility' of philosophy), according to Shestov, coincide to the fidement of counter-mortality explicated through lessons in — *life-affirming*. It is life precisely that is posited as the most important other to all the (self)same in a world which, when these matters are concerned, repeats the old narrative (story) by repeating (regurgitating, vomiting) the – first (and) self-same. It is suitable to now refer to Tolstoy with whom we commenced our investigations (at the beginning of PFA [in the versio proper]). In fact, we refer to words of the other Tolstoy, with which Shestov concurred, citing the statement of the *other Tolstoy* as his *own*:

> „... I would be unjust if I were to say that it was through reason that I reached what was attained... Reason did toil (работал), however, *something other was at work also** (работало и еще что-то другое), which – for lack of better words – I cannot name differently but as cognisance of *life** (сознанием жизни)" (GV 341).

But let us caution once again: *for Shestov* cognisance of *life* is not a function of the *reasoning* cognitive process but, primarily, an expression of *awakening* to the fact that life *already is death* (a death in process) yet, nevertheless, life as such demands growth and growth only of *life*. The 'work of something other', according to Shestov's self-understanding, therefore, is an expression of becoming aware of everydayness of

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[81] Amongst early positive evaluators of this characteristic trait of the thought of Shestov are, let us mention a prominent two: Benjamin De Casseres, „Shestov's Challenge to Civilization", The New York Times Book Review 03.10.1920, 19. — David H. Lawrence, „All Things are Possible: Apotheosis of Groundlessness", in Lev Shestov, *All Things are Possible*, Martin Secker, London 1920.

life as a mask of/for death, *which* is to be brought to consciousness and then faced *in view/favor of an other life*[82]. In the contrary case, the self-evidence of the beginning which 'ipso facto' must have an end, or self-evidence of life as 'natural' co-extension to death, is nothing other than – *absurdity*. The fact that the absurd is made reasonable (reasoned to) by self-evidence (e.g. everything having a beginning 'necessarily', 'obviously', must have an ending = it is, therefore, 'natural' to die) makes it an even more intense absurdity, or outright – *nightmare* (кошмар). Hence it is appropriate to introduce yet another of Shestov's seminal determinations of philosophy:

„The task of philosophy is to fight-off life during life itself, for an instance at least. This is similar to the way man enters into this world, by crying, or, similar to a scream which awakens him from a nauseating, nightmarish dream: that is how the transition from death to life [...] should be conducted – by meaningless, desperate effort, which finds it adequate expression in a likewise meaningless, desperate scream and weeping. I think many philosophers made the acquaintance of such 'awakening', trying even to speak of it...“ (JB 215-216).

Shestov does nothing other working for the *other*. His discourse on the matter he placed (or sub-versed) under the sneer of the Thracian maid directed at Thales who, gazing at the stars scientifically, fell into the whell of 'groundlessness'. The laughter of Shestov, that thought between sneering and weeping, is not blasé (as might be the case with some post-modernist ironists). For it is a *sting of personal tragic irony* directed at those living in fundamental theoretical amnesia (forgettfulness) *of* death's de-founding arrhythmia (in 'somnambulism' sui generis, cf. JB 256). The 'whole' meaning of a philosophy like Shestov's, finally, may be seen as a philosophy of tragic hope that Socrates is not irretrievably lost, that autarchic autonomy of reason – taken as auto-referential epistemic naturalism (in saeculum saeculorum) – does not, and shall not have the penultimate, if not final word (Lev's articulo mortis makes sure of that). The fact that we inherit traces of the philosophy of general concepts, as legacies of Socrates, Shestov does not take as sufficient reason to turn around (оглядка, Zurückblicken) to *that* (like Orpheus to Eurydice) — *if* the price of that is giving up work on *retrieving Socrates*. So far matters have not progressed beyond retrieving Socrates' philosophy of the general and good *in themselves* (where, as stated in *Euthyphro*, the gods love the Good [Holy] because it is Good [Holy] *in itself* – and where it is *not* the case that the Good [Holy] is Good [Holy] because the *gods* love it, as Shestov points out). And that is a *tragic* state of affairs, laments Lev. It is for these reasons, demands the Russian, that matters should be given into hands of *philosophy of tragedy*. But that is tragic *also*. Namely, according to our opinion, faith in the impossible *turns back* (оглядка, Zurückblicken) towards *arguments* of philosophy of tragedy, although it claims to *be* looking forward at the One making all things possible: towards the event it has *supplemented by itself*. And the One making all things possible, if He is to arrive, shall arrive from something *other*, maybe as someone or something other than that... Is that impossible, or, possible *because* it is impossible? This remains as the penultimate quaestio of Shestov to us, but also as our question to him. This is intended by Lev Isaakovich when he bequeaths his paradoxical 'last will' concerning *one thing needful* (единое на потребу):

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[82] The Hamletean die-or-live issue at stake, and Shestov's deconstructive brilliance – which forgives nothing when logocentric rationalism is targeted – go quite a way in assuring us that his case is not based on a truism flogged into movement by a neo-moralism of sorts.

„It is only when man wishes the impossible that he remembers God" [83] (AJ 657).

„But in order that we may be capable of catching a glimpse, be it ever so vaguely, of the possibility (возможность) of this new dimension of thought (нового измерения мышления), we must have the courage to drive away our habitual terrors and cease to listen to the a priori of every kind that reason whispers to us. And then 'there will no longer be anything impossible (невозможно) for us'" (AJ 634).

Through the above cited topoi the thought of *this* religious philosophy, the *philosophy* of Shestov, discloses a certain weakness – failure (horribile dictu) – of culture as such, culture of philosophy notwithstanding. But by the same token is disclosed the limit of *religious* philosophy also, *this* philosopheme too, which – by thinking the unthinkable and making the impossible possible – traverses the limits of *religion* itself. Beyond those and all other limits, at the moment of being *touched* by all-defoundedness, absolute fragility and death (which crush all synthesis, spoiling the closure of happy endings) – the thought of Shestov transmutes itself into a topos or event of the wholly — *other*: on the other side of the reason-mind dialectic. Is it not, then, to be accepted that Shestov's philosophy, as such, is an *act* of *rejection* coupled from within with a gesture of *self-sacrifice*. Is it not a refusal not only of cult of *culture* (= oobjectification) but also of culture of *cult* (= objectification) in the name of subjectification of the — *holy* (in order to have the impossible – despite all odds and gods – become possible): in order to have the most fragile topos of man, namely *his thought* – which shall never (?) catch its own desire, which shall never (?) be spared from grounding manoeuvres – *become* not only thought 'about' the holy, but a topos of hospitality accommodating expelled holiness (thus ending the exile of holiness from culture and cult: not without a certain 'apotheosis of exile'[84] – exile of the impossible, or holy). But who is to brave the *holy*?

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[83] Let us ask, following the traces of traces of the mindprint of Shestov, whether the echo of this thought (like a radio wave from the bowels of the Shestov galaxy) was caught in membrane levels of the title of the following work of Levinas who, as a young philosopher, admired Lev, learning much from him: *God Who comes to mind (as idea)* – or, better: Who falls upon us out of nowhere, like something or someone impossible… cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *De Dieu qui vient à l'idée*, J. Vrin, Paris 1982.

[84] On aspects of exile-thinking in Shestov, v. Judith D. Kornblatt, „The Apotheosis of Exile: Jews and the Russian Religious Renaissance (The Case of Lev Shestov)", Symposium 57:3 (2003) 127-136.