
RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY BETWEEN WESTERN METAPHYSICS AND EASTERN MYSTICISM

Vadim Vadimovich Kortunov*

Russian State University of Tourism and Service, Department of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology, 141221, Moscow region, Pushkinskiy district, urban-type settlement Cherkizovo, Glavnaya street 99, Russia

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Abstract

The mystical, irrational basis of Russian philosophy still remains one of its most attractive mysteries. However, this attribute, being mainly enigmatic and unusual for an analytical mind, appears to be an obstacle for its truly realistic understanding. The Russian mystical idea is often understood as some exotic poetry that has almost nothing to do with the real daily life. Nevertheless, the idea of irrationality and mysticism originates from the experience of individual and collective consciousness, i.e. from daily and quite this-worldly experience. In a certain sense, a human as a spiritual being is condemned to think irrationally. Otherwise his consciousness loses the ability to truly understand his being, the ability to create.

In my work I wanted to underscore the topicality of the Russian ‘mystical’ world view and to point out its potency at the end of the second millennium. Actually, the development of the civilization has proven the necessity to ‘rehabilitate’ the ideas of irrationalism and aestheticism. The retreat from notorious ‘Common sense logic’ and thirst for different, i.e. nonutilitarian and nonpragmatic values are basic conditions for human survival and the last chance to preserve the Spirit.

Keywords: Russian philosophy, metaphysics, mysticism, irrationality, nonpragmatic values

1. Introduction

Western philosophy’s struggle for the rational world view was continuous and painful. Metaphysical knowledge has evolved on the path of ‘abstract principles’ for centuries. Russian philosophy considers the triumph of ‘integral knowledge’ as the most important epistemological task. Such knowledge must embrace the world in all its diversity and indivisible fullness, mobilize all levels of human consciousness and synthesize all methods of world comprehension. Philosophy had discovered new ways of cognition, but overemphasized them and therefore discredited them. Extreme rationalism involved Philosophy in the maze of scholasticism. Dogmatic empiricism degenerated into sensualism and

*E-mail: kortunov@bk.ru

inevitably led to extreme scepticism about the cognition of reality. Active collaboration between empiricism and rationalism, which began as early as the Enlightenment, certainly has played a positive role in improving the cognition methods, but that was insufficient. The hypothetico-deductive method, based on combining empiricism and rationalism, has stumbled upon fundamentally unsolvable problems. There was always some unknowable surplus in the knowledge which logical thinking was fighting hard but vainly. That surplus is very considerable: it comprises the problems of Ethics and Aesthetics, Ontology and Epistemology, questions of human inner world and the ideal essence of being. N. Berdyaev thinks that “philosophical rationalism reflects the sinful disunity of spirit. Neither the nature of reality, nor the nature of freedom, nor the nature of personality can be comprehended rationally, these ideas and objects are quite transcendent for any rationalistic consciousness, they are an irrational surplus. Because rational reality, rational freedom, rational personality are indeed only signs of abstract, self-sufficient thinking.” [1]

The hypothetico-deductive method ignores most aspects of spiritual life and, at best, the laws of spiritual life take a very relativistic shape under rational examination. According to I.V. Kireevsky, “the highest verities of mind, its living visions and essential beliefs – all this exceeds the abstract circle of its dialectical process and though they are not in conflict with its laws, they can’t be derived from them and can’t be even reached by its activity, when this activity is separated from common activity of other human spirit’s powers” [2]. To E. Trubetzkoy “it is obvious that abstract cognition is the most imperfect for this very reason that it sees its object from a distance” [3].

2. The third way of cognition

How can we compensate for the missing link in the already elaborated cognition system? What method do we need to complete Epistemology with it - so we could cognize an object in its integrity, in its unique individuality and, at the same time, in its universal essence? These questions are recurrent in the history of Russian philosophy. Russian thinkers went far in finding the new, ‘third’ way of cognition. Intuition and self-reflection, revelation and mysticism, art and love were proposed as this way. All these unique-of-a-kind teachings had a common trait. They assumed that the world could be perceived bypassing rationalistic, logical structures of consciousness and, in addition to rational mechanisms of cognition, they offered emotional-psychological ones. In this regard the above conceptions can be called organistic.

In order to avoid a terminological confusion we must make some clarification. Of course, the problem of irrational cognition had different nuances and was analyzed from different points of view in different philosophical systems. Intuitionism, for example, with its focus on intuition, has often expanded the object of its study on purpose: either intuition was equated to the irrational as such, or all the wealth of irrational forms of perception was at any rate reduced to intuition. For example, S.L. Franck called intuition a ‘living

knowledge'. He wrote in his *Object of Knowledge*: "Such living knowledge as an experience of the very being, or the unity of experience and knowledge is not a 'personification' of the impersonal object of knowledge and not a 'self-insertion' into the external object, but the exposure of live which is native to the object as such. The so-called 'in-feeling' is in fact a 'feeling-through' – a direct possession of the nature of being which doesn't fit in the timeless-objective sphere." [4] By this interpretation of intuition (as the universal mechanism of mobilization of all levels of consciousness) we can speak about Gnostic meaning of art, religious faith and love only insofar as all mentioned forms of human activity are a kind of secondary factors which actualize creative reflection and self-consciousness. Various mystical teachings are built according to analogous structures with the only difference: they accept the act of transcendent revelation as the ultimate goal, whereas art, love and intuition are more or less successful ways of its actualization. S.S. Gogotsky interprets mysticism in the following way: "As a matter of fact, mysticism implies a teaching or an acceptance of some verities which is based not on the abstract principles of knowledge, not on the methodical connection of conclusions, but on the direct contemplation or feeling" [5]. It is clear that according to this definition mysticism is practically identical to any emotional-psychological perception of the object. From now on we will use this term in this sense.

Establishing the peculiarity of each above-named method, we also can state with assurance that the main idea is always the same. Typical questions – questions about the 'third', extralogical, extrarational way of comprehension of being - can be traced in every case. What kind of way is it and is it available? Does human have an alternative for reason? V.F. Odoevsky remarks: "There are words that we often use, but we don't notice their profound meaning; we say: <It's against the inner feeling, it shocks mankind, the human heart refuses to believe in it.> What kind of feeling gave birth to these expressions? It's not a result of reasoning, it's not a result of upbringing – in short, it's not a result of reason." [6] Russian philosophers had a strong belief that "a man possesses not only feelings and reason, but also a specific 'organ' of inner comprehension that reveals the essence of being" [7].

The fundamental defect of any theoretical knowledge is that it's always mediated. The deep tragedy of any mediated knowledge is that it's mediated by the human consciousness itself. Of course, it would be madness to try to build an epistemology with a view to avoiding this mediating mechanism. But irrationalism doesn't make it his mission, it asserts only that pure rational, overtheorized structures don't exhaust the whole cognitive potential of human mind. N. Berdyaev stated rightly: "A rationalistic and intellectualistic instance can't be and shouldn't be the highest judicial instance in questions of cognition; it can be only integral life of the spirit" [1, p. 28]. P.D. Yurkevitch wrote: "Thinking doesn't exhaust all the fullness of spiritual human life as well as the perfection of thinking isn't the perfection of the human spirit overall" [8]. Pointing out the one-sidedness of rationalism, I.V. Kireevsky remarks: "Having broken the wholeness of the spirit into fragments, and having left the higher

consciousness of truth to detached logical thinking, in the depth of their self-consciousness, people were torn from all connections to reality... All logical fallacies of logical thinking depend only on its claims to the highest and full comprehension of truth.” [2, p. 257-256]

Where logic and ‘common sense’ appear to be feeble or even harmful at comprehending the truth, illogical and irrational mechanisms of acquisition and procession of information can be useful. Being understood as irrational epistemology, art also can prove to be a very productive basis for systematization of these mechanisms. In this sense, even if it weren’t a source of immediate knowledge, it would at least approach it because there is a variety of mediating links that aren’t involved in artistic creation and perception. As already noted by Kant, indeed, art is perceived without any concepts (or, more properly, perception of artwork isn’t a conceptual perception by definition). That is why the impact of art bypasses many logical schemes of reason and, at the same time, art itself can’t be exhaustively analyzed from the point of view of common sense. This fact allows to consider the language of art (for example, the language of music) as more versatile, subtle and precise than the rigid, generalized and, consequently, rough language of verbal concepts of Science. N. Berdyaev, arguing the possibility of cognition beyond rational-discursive structures, wrote: “How can we know, that cognition is not an emotional experience, that cognition is detached from emotional experience and opposed to it? Is fullness of experience – irrational fullness – possible, if it has no place for cognition? I exactly affirm that in so-called ‘irrational experience’ (or, in my terms, in primary unrationalized consciousness) takes place the true cognition of being, the very touch of the existing, without which any cognition is impossible... We must strongly eliminate the prejudice that every cognition is rationalization, objectivation, judgment, discursive thinking.” [1, p. 71]

3. Art and aestheticization

Art not only breaks the logic of common sense but also breaks the mechanisms of self-limitation of consciousness, therefore it is constructive. For logic and conceptual thinking in general are forms of world cognition and comprehension, elaborated by mankind, and they are also limiting factors of this cognition. Rationalized thinking, being verbal-discursive, is also discrete; the true dialectic is alien to it. It has to avoid contradictions, it is guided by static images, it ignores the infinitude of links, the inexhaustibility of the object of cognition and its individuality. We can declare any dialectical principles in theory, but it won’t make the act of reasoning itself, in the above sense, dialectical. This fact allowed N. Berdyaev to tell that “rationalistic heresies always escaped difficulties and antinomies and never risked madness” [1, p. 24]. But in art there is no such self-limitation. As a system of irrational kind it is inherently intended to reflect the being integrally, to comprehend life in all its paradoxicality. Aesthetic contemplation is capable of what no logic or rationalization can do.

The tendency of universal aestheticization of being was the result of the overall ‘world view’ formed by Russian mentality. This aestheticization allowed not only to overcome one-sided rationalism, but also to form a very original view on humanity and the world as a whole, on religion, public life and, actually, on art. Art acquires the function of cognition of life itself. S.S. Gogotsky was, in this sense, undoubtedly right, stating that “art expresses in itself a peculiar attitude of our sensible nature to the absolute verity that constitutes the object of our practical activity, Science and religion“ [5, vol. 2, 827-828]. Of course, informativeness of art has its own specificity. The truth is given here not in an abstract form, as it is, for example, in a scientific study. Therefore cognition that is realized in the sphere of art is not analogous to scientific cognition. Aesthetic cognition must be considered wider – as ‘chaste’ (σωφρων) cognition that unites ‘integral wisdom’ (σωφροσύνη), moral purity and properly the Truth. This principle finds its implementation in Vladimir Solovev’s thesis of Truth, Goodness and Beauty unity. It is not only cognition namely; it is also ‘insight’, ‘grasp’ of the very essence of the being; it includes both comprehension as the most valuable result of the cognitive process and empathy to the object of cognition. Strictly speaking, Russian religious thinkers ethical theory doesn’t fit in traditional western ethical subject-object paradigm any more. In reference to art the term ‘cognition’ has a sense that is close to the eastern spirit of Zen. That is to say, epistemological resources of art shouldn’t be considered on the model of scientific world outlook. However, the presence of special logic and special thinking in artistic world view and openness of art to the highest verities of the Universe allow defining art as a specific way of world cognition.

Speaking of the specificity of artistic cognition, V.A. Zhukovsky, among others, remarks that “an abstract verity, proposed by simple language of a moral philosopher (which is pleasant only for few), affects only intelligence and leaves in a human soul only a light track that vanishes too fast. The same verity, demonstrated practically, waking feelings and imagination in us, takes on a tangible form in our eyes, imprints itself in mind stronger and must remain there longer” [9].

Aesthetic cognition is extrarational in its mechanisms, it is guided not by hypothetico-deductive structures of consciousness, but by emotional-psychological ones. It is such a cognition, in which, according to K.N. Batyushkov, “taste can be called the finest reason” [10]. But not only the mechanisms of this cognition are irrational, but also its objects. It is no secret that spiritual life defies total and exhaustive analysis for that very reason that it contains irrational laws in a greater degree. However, sometimes irrational is being understood as ‘not rationalized’. As something can seem irrational at the moment but then we’ll study it and it will be no longer irrational to us. Precisely we are talking about something which can never be understood or given a rational explanation. Our mind will definitely be stumped for an answer every time trying to rationalize these spheres of being. And then there is nothing left to say except for: “I’ve been crazy trying to understand something appealing to the

reason rather than to the feelings” [11]. In general, the irrational can be defined as a specific emotional and psychological state of a subject, thanks to which it gets an access to the sense of the objects which in their nature are unable to be rationalized and logically processed. Obviously, such knowledge is possible not only through the art and it’s only a form of irrational cognition, along with religion, intuition, etc.

Art as an irrational-gnostic category is the distinctive view of Russian aestheticians that is contrary to most existing concepts of ‘gnoseologism’ in analysis of artistic contemplation. And though, for instance, German idealism has already formulated a state about epistemological resources, nevertheless, Science always remained for it a standard of cognition. It can be easily traced in the conception of Baumgarten, in his interpretation of sensual cognition as an analogue of reason; in Kant’s philosophy, in his *Analytic of the Beautiful*; finally, in the panlogic system of Hegel, where art and religion are lower levels, as compared to philosophical science, of cognition of the Absolute. Hegel’s system in this sense is upon the whole the apogee of European philosophy that asserts the absolute dominance of Logic and Thought as the main property of the Spirit. Actually, Hegel set a task to create the universal philosophy of Spirit and thereby he incurred anger of his eastern colleagues. Almost every Russian philosopher considered it his duty to castigate Hegelian truly total rationalism that reduced all diversity of spiritual life to the rational thinking. “Following Hegel, we would be vainly trying to enter the spiritual world, - writes P.D. Yurkevitch in his *Idea*, - we can enter only the world of thought” [8, p. 59]. A.S. Khomyakov also thinks that “the root... of Hegel’s error lies in the error of the whole school that took the reason as the integrity of spirit” [12].

Russian philosophy struggled grimly against Kant’s analytical approach and Hegel’s rationalism. But its relations with Shelling were more ambiguous and contradictory. Shelling didn’t quite fit in with German rationalism. The main reason for it was his relation to art as ‘organon’ of Philosophy. As he wrote in his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, “The work of art merely reflects to me what is otherwise not reflected by anything, namely that absolutely identical which has already divided itself even in the self. Hence, that which the philosopher allows to be divided even in the primary act of consciousness, and which would otherwise be inaccessible to any intuition, comes, through the miraculousness of art, to be radiated back from the products thereof.” [13] “It goes without saying that Philosophy reaches the greatest heights, but it brings to them, as it were, only a particle of a human being. But art lets the whole human being reach these heights, reach the cognition of the supreme...” [13, p. 396] In these words Shelling seemingly diverges from the rationalistic approach to art. Nevertheless, it proves to be wrong on closer examination of his system. In particular, he is convinced that “artistic creation is aimed outwardly, it strives for reflection of the unthought which takes place in creation” [13, p. 25], i.e. Schelling introduces an element of intellectual reflection into the sphere of artistic activity. Furthermore, he is convinced that “aesthetic contemplation is nothing else but intellectual contemplation that has gained objectivity” [13]. It is

also remarkable that Schelling, while arraying a row of arts from lower to higher, from 'real' to 'ideal', passes from music to the art of writing, from expressive to depictive arts, in short, travels the path of verbal and discursive increase. Such classification is an indirect evidence for some intellectualization of aesthetic cognition. Therefore, Shelling has, after all, a tendency to rationalize the extrarational.

As for Russian idealistic philosophy, it clearly distinguished art and religious faith from intellectualization of any kind. F.M. Dostoevsky thinks that the presence of subconscious ideas in spirit is a necessary condition of its strength, and bringing them to the conscious level impoverishes human spirit: "Some ideas exist that are unexpressed and unconscious but that simply are strongly felt; many such ideas are fused, as it were, with the human heart. They are present in the People generally, and in humanity taken as a whole. Only while these ideas lie unconscious in peasant life and are simply felt strongly and truly can the People live a vigorous 'living life'." [14]

Art reproduces links and relations of spiritual being. It is a kind of cognition, so it must depend on some object that we cognize by means of artistic perception. The question naturally suggests itself: what exactly do we cognize in art? The proper answer is the following: in art we cognize life in all its diversity and integrity. A Gnostic approach to art is, according to A. Grigoriev, "a view on art considering it as a synthetic, integral, immediate and, I suppose, intuitive comprehension of life in distinction from knowledge, i.e. from analytic, collecting comprehension 'in parts' that can be verified by facts" [15].

For Russian philosophers it was clear that the real processes that take place in life are by no means always homologous to laws of logic. "Indeed, - writes V.V. Rozanov, - the category of thinking and correctly evolved concepts is hardly the only one nature is created in accordance with. What logical formulas can catch the sense of joy that we feel sometimes? However, these acts of our spiritual life are the same reality as what we see and touch: they are a part of the nature that we would like to comprehend only with our mind." [16] Art, therefore, is not only a reflection. Whereas cognition of the material world presupposes its idealization, art doesn't idealize the spiritual reality, because their nature is identical. In art the essence of the being is cognized, for all the sense of the Universe is concentrated in the sphere of ideal ties.

Russian organicists, irrationalists and mystics didn't oppose the ideal to the real: the real can be cognized in its entirety for no other reason that the human consciousness goes beyond logical structures. "But the mind itself appeared to be untenable in front of reality, - exclaims F.M. Dostoevsky, - sensible and learned people themselves are teaching now that there are no arguments of pure reason, that abstract logic is not applicable to mankind..." [17]

The individual world of the artist and his unique personality are objectified in any work of art. Nevertheless, the truth that is crystallized in any particular masterpiece, painted with unique colours of its creator, conveys an overindividual meaning. For L.N. Tolstoy "a genuine work of art is the

revelation of new way of life cognition, the revelation that in accordance with the laws which are incomprehensible for us takes place in the soul of an artist and by its expression illuminates the path the mankind walks on” [18]. “An artist is for no other reason an artist that he sees objects not as he likes to, but as they are” [18, p. 20]. Here Russian philosophy disagrees with Schopenhauer, whom subjective will and irrationalism of the life force served as the justification of the irrational. Figuratively speaking, Schopenhauer (as well as the other theorists of *Lebensphilosophie*) created a system of *natural irrationalism of will*. ‘Biological’ shade of will basis concept (‘vital force’) that underlies his philosophy displeased Russian mystical philosophy that was creating the system of *objective irrationalism of spiritual life*.

Philosophy is a rational-discursive text and it is, according to Russian thinkers, its feebleness. Art uses words not to form judgments and conclusions, i.e. it uses them formally, and it’s its advantage. N. Berdyaev wrote on this subject: “For the ones words are life, reality, action, for the others – only words, only names, only sounds. For the critical philosophy any combination of words is a judgment, and any judgment is a rationalization. But is a declaration of love, expressed in words, also a rational judgment? Is poetry, which is spokenness, also a rational judgment? Shouldn’t the real philosophy be a declaration of mutual love of two lovers? Oh, then everyone would understand each other, then all words would be full of real meaning and sense. It is so terrible that Philosophy is no more a declaration of love, that it lost Eros and therefore turned into a dispute over words.” [1, p. 82] Philosophy’s conversion into art is, first of all, de-discretization and de-verbalization of text. Music as art in which discourse and verbleness are almost nullified can serve as an ideal model of integral expressions of ideas. This consideration allowed prince V.F. Odoevsky to note the following: “...the language of music approaches more to the inner language which has expression for ideas. There will be time when maybe all ways of expression will merge into music.” [6, p. 37]

Russian philosophers were fully aware that any cognition act always has both irrational and rational aspects. Science as creative work doesn’t dispense with intuition and inspiration. Art also contain some rational elements, although they are rather necessary than essential. In the words of N.I. Nadezhdin, “a genius looks at the Universe not through the monochrome microscope of scientific systems, but through the iridescent prism of live, infantilely simple and trustful sensations” [19]. Any cognition, action or perception is a synthesis of these two aspects of the intelligence. The combination of irrationalism and rationalism is also needed to achieve ‘integral knowledge’. That is why Russian philosophy has always been alien to total irrationalism and negation of rational aspects of cognition. That was one more reason why Russian philosophy didn’t accept the system of Schopenhauer, or, for example, researches of Jacobi. A. Grigoriev formulates this thought in the following way: “That is the essential difference between the view that I call organistic and the one-sidedly historical view – the first, organistic, takes as its initial point creative, immediate, natural, vital forces; that is to say, not only intelligence with its logical demands and

theories that are necessarily generated by these demands, but intelligence and logical demands plus life and its organic manifestations” [15, p. 145]. In this sense Russian irrationalism was trying to elaborate an organistic view on the being.

4. Faith as an experience of reality

Schematically, there are two main tendencies in Russian irrational thought concerning the question of overcoming of abstract rational world view. Some of Russian philosophers saw this overcoming in aesthetic activity of a subject. Others believed in potential of religious experience. However, if we divide Russian philosophy in this way, we will make a crucial mistake, because nowhere else than by Russian mystics and theosophists we can see such close axiological and Gnostic unity of art, aesthetics, artistry on the one hand and faith, religion, mysticism on the other hand. This unity results in the following: aesthetic contemplation fills with transcendent sense, art claims to be cognition of the Absolute and mystical confluence of man and God. “Art, poetry are the ultimate earthly bliss, the ultimate faith, the ultimate hope, the ultimate love, the ultimate earthly religion of soul!” [19, p. 390] – said N.I. Nadezhdin. As transcendation of a special kind, religious faith can be a source of inspiration. B. Chicherin wrote about this connection between religion and art: “Supersensible ideas, being a life source of inspiration, contain something positive that impacts the human soul like an irresistible force and raises it to the height which is beyond ordinary comprehension... This ideal basis is exactly that which gives art the highest significance in human life...” [20] According to A.S. Khomyakov, the perception of artwork itself must necessarily presuppose some degree of religiousness of a person. “To gain approach to the sanctity of art, - he reasons, - he needs to be animated by the sense of love that believes and knows no doubt: for consciousness of art is nothing else but an anthem of its love.” [21] But this thought was expressed probably in the most concise and colourful way by V.A. Zhukovsky [9, vol. 2, p. 400]: “Poetry is God in holy dreams of Earth”.

Whereas faith in a mystical interpretation assumes an aesthetic character in the sense that religious contemplation and mystical act are a creative attitude to the object in their essence. Creation of City of Heaven, a breakthrough into the other world is accomplished according to beauty and perfection. That is to say, any activity – cognitive, contemplative, constructive – is a creative activity in the first place, i.e. art. So, the Gnostic sense of religious faith approaches the artistic contemplation, because religion and art (as forms of cognition) have a united and very similar irrational basis. Comparing religious and aesthetic experience with philosophical science, N.O. Lossky remarks: “The answer to a question about the absolute good that we receive from religion has a character of truth expressed in a proper form, i.e. in the form of a full-blooded life. Such an answer stands above Philosophy, because it gives knowledge only in an abstract form. A concrete answer has a character that inheres to art, namely, an artistic

form. Art expresses the truth more perfectly than philosophy due to its concreteness. And concrete entering into the kingdom of truth given by the Christian religion, especially by the Orthodox cult, contains an answer to the question 'what is truth' which is more complete than the answer that can give philosophy." [22] Thoughts of Russian thinkers about religion sometimes also characterize the aesthetic precisely. "Mysteries of religion, - wrote Father P. Florensky, - aren't secrets that shouldn't be disclosed, they aren't conventional passwords of conspirators, they are inexpressible, unspoken, indescribable experiences that can be enveloped with words only in a contradictory way, 'yes' and 'no' at once" [23]. It is obvious that the antinomicity of religious faith remarked by Florensky is also typical for artistic perception.

A religious-mystical act contains, as well as art, a focused creative relation of consciousness to the being, a specific emotional-psychological mood that gives a high productivity of thinking. In art, as well as in a religious-mystical act, the consciousness gets free of rational-verbal stereotypes, of discrete-logical patterns. Actually, the term 'religious' (in Gnostic sense) means nothing else but a creative relation between the subject and the object for Russian philosophers; the term 'mysterious' means the irrational basis that generally makes this creativity possible.

That is why many questions that are traditional for Philosophy (for example, comparison of faith and knowledge, of Philosophy and art, of Science and religion) acquire an absolutely surprising and unexpected tone in theosophy and mysticism. The problem of faith and knowledge used to signify the crucial contradiction between thinking and alogism, scientific world view and religious axiomatization. It was necessary to coordinate results of scientific researches with the events described in Holy Writ. At the same time, there were many attempts to rationalize Christian teaching. But mostly reconciliation between faith and knowledge ended up with a capitulation of reason to 'illogical', 'inexplicable facts' of religious kind: 'I believe because it is absurd'. In short, the impossibility of rational explanation of concrete biblical semantics led to a suggestion to submit to some higher logic of religious dogmas, to accept them without their comprehension.

In Russian philosophy question arises in another way when it comes to the religious belief as a Gnostic category. In this case certain biblical events are interpreted allegorically or (more often) are ignored completely. The belief has a 'worldly' function; it doesn't guide the man to the otherworldly illusive world; on the contrary, it helps to learn this-worldly real relations. It is not a passive reconciliation with the fantastical-irrational, but an active and productive irrational cognition of the truth.

However, it should be borne in mind that religious faith as such is a formal principle in theosophy. It doesn't contain anything substantial and can only serve as a methodology of irrational cognition of some kind, just as formal logic as such isn't knowledge yet but it is only a method of receiving rational verities.

It is necessary to distinguish, for example, in Christianity the concrete meaning of religious dogmas and the certain fundamental disposition a believer gets absorbed in. The first can introduce a man into the world of illusions, the second can serve as a basis for appropriate cognition of the being. "Belief in God, sacraments, - remarks A. Vvedensky, - aren't mystical perception yet, no matter how strong and fervent this belief is, even if the believer always feels himself being in the presence of God and approaches the sacrament with sincere fear and awe. Faith is not knowledge." [24] Religion, mysticism as a method become a necessary part of Philosophy, an element of any full-fledged thinking. "For pure rational philosophy, - notes E. Trubetzkoy, - the absolute is only an object of speculation, not an object of experience. As soon as the absolute becomes for it a direct phenomenon and a givenness of inner (or collective) experience, the philosophy thereby assumes a definitely religious point of view and therefore ceases to be purely rational." [25] A.S. Khomyakov elaborates a particular teaching about faith as an irrational gnoseology. "Faith is always a consequence of a revelation identified as a revelation, - he writes, - it is contemplation of an invisible fact that is revealed in a visible fact; faith is not a conviction or logical convincement based on conclusions, it's something much greater. It's not an act of cognitive ability only which is estranged from other abilities, but an act of all forces of reason which is gripped and profoundly captivated by a living verity of a frank fact. Faith is not something what we conceive or feel, it is something we conceive and feel at the same time; in short, it is not only cognition, but cognition and life." [26]. And further: "...Rational philosophy in a row of strict conclusions (which Germany can justly be proud of) in the system of Hegel came unwillingly to the evidence that a solitary reason that cognizes relations between objects, but not objects themselves, leads to a bare negation, or more precisely, to the non-existence, when it renounces faith, i.e. inner cognition of objects. In this way analysis, having human pride shattered, forces it to ask faith for something that reason alone can't give, because the latter acts in conformity with the laws of logic and it is alienated from other spiritual capacities." [26, p. 87] Kireevsky soundly argues that for an Orthodox Christian "there is no thinking alienated from the remembrance of inner integrity of mind, of a focus of self-consciousness which is the proper place for the highest truth and where not only the abstract mind, but the whole complex of intellectual and spiritual capacities sets their united seal of veracity to the thought" [2, p. 262]. "Faith, - by I.V. Kireevsky, - is a living connection, a harmonious accord of abstract and essential conviction" [2, p. 282].

It cannot be emphasized enough that for Russian religious-idealistic philosophy faith is an experience of reality which (as well as an aesthetic experience) has a concrete, creative and living origin. Having a mystical form, it has to direct the human spirit at the same time to the cognition of the live itself, of the real, not illusive being. Finally, religious faith as well as art is an embodiment of fullness and integrity of spirit. "Intelligence isn't our highest faculty, - concludes N.V. Gogol, - its office is not higher than constabulary: it can only put in order and arrange something we already have. It doesn't move

forward until other abilities do and it is getting smarter owing to them. By abstract reading, thinking and continual taking of courses of any lectures we can bring it just a little further; sometimes even this depresses it and hinders its authentic development... There is a faculty which is higher; it is called wisdom, and it can be given to us only by Christ.” [27] “One-sidedness of thinking, - continues Gogol, - reveals only that the person is on their way to Christianity, but didn’t reach it yet, because Christianity brings versatility to mind” [27, p. 112].

Philosophy and Science must be supplemented with an irrational element in a form of aesthetic or religious experience. Russian philosophy tried to unite philosophy, mysticism and poetry. F.M. Dostoevsky wrote in a letter to his brother: “Philosophy shouldn’t be considered as a simple mathematical problem... Note that a poet in his flash of inspiration unriddles God, i.e. he fulfils the purpose of Philosophy... Therefore philosophy is poetry, the highest degree of it!..” [14, p. 372] “Our time is a preparation for a new form of human soul, in which poetry and science will unite” [6, p. 58], - hoped V.F. Odoevsky. At the same time, Russian philosophers were inclined to draw faith and knowledge together, rejecting their autonomy in the spirit of ‘double truth’. P.Y. Chaadaev wrote in his letter to A.I. Turgenev: “Of course, there is a science of spirit and a science of mind, but both belong to our cognition and both lie in it. Ways of acquisition and outer forms are different, the essence is the same.” [28] “Boundaries of knowledge and faith blend, - wrote Florensky, - rational partitions melt and flow: the whole reason is turning into a new essence” [23, p. 62].

As a result, we have come to a conclusion that Russian religious philosophy, being not satisfied with German rationalism, suggested introducing an irrational element to complete the cognitive process. This element is religious and aesthetic experience. On the one hand, according to A. Grigoriev, “art is discernment of essence of phenomena, discernment led by a consciousness of more or less wide and bright ideal” [15, p. 114]; on the other hand, as P. Chaadaev wrote, “Christianity provided human mind with new and numerous instruments” [28, p. 232]. At the same time, we reveal many analogous mechanisms of both aesthetic and mystical cognition, in short, “poetry is an earthly sister of heavenly religion...” [29].

Such close Gnostic proximity of religious faith and art allows some Russian researchers to speak about aesthetic reinterpretation of Orthodoxy [21, p. 396-397].

5. Conclusions

In the 19th century the irrationalistic tendency in Russia became especially distinct. It was natural: at this very time German rationalism achieves integral form, which signifies its intellectual predominance in the sphere of spirit. It aroused an instant reaction not only in Russia, but also all over Europe including Germany. However, irrational tendency in Russian philosophy can’t be

explained only by protest against German 'rationalness'. We can find inclination to unite the rational and the irrational, reason and heart in the literature of the 18th century and even earlier, before the sacralization of philosophy. This specifically mystical basis that serves as a necessary condition of cognition is easy to be traced in these sources. I.V. Lopukhin, the founder of Russian freemasonry, wrote: "The true, living cognition of creation mystery and contemplation of light of the nature, or vision of acting of its spirit in its imperishable flesh as its very first incarnation opens up only in the light of grace that enlightens the soul in the new life of revival" [30]. Moreover, in 1780 (i.e. the year before Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason*) he published a small, but very significant work – *Discourse on Misuse of Reason by Certain New Writers*. The great Ukrainian philosopher H. Skovoroda states that "the true man has the true eye which is called faith because it bypasses the semblance and, seeing behind it a novelty, dwells on it" [31]. "What is faith if not an exposure and explanation, made by heart, of nature which is not visible but comprehensible?" [31, p. 347]

We suppose that nothing else but Orthodoxy should be acknowledged as the true source of Russian irrationalism (and mysticism as one of its forms). Nothing else but Orthodoxy was the Byzantine-Russian phenomenon in which irrational reinterpretation (and maybe true comprehension?) of Christianity took place. Nowhere else than in Orthodoxy we can find an interpretation of heart as 'the second mind', as Gnostic and at the same time overintellectual human ability. Slavophiles as well as non-Slavophiles drew attention to this feature of Orthodoxy many times.

Analyzing the texts of Holy Writ, P.D. Yurkevitch concludes: "The heart is the throne of all cognitive acts of the soul" [32]. P. Florensky interprets in the following way: "The 43rd periscope from Matthew (11.27-30), which is read at the office of Saint Sergius, has primarily a cognitive meaning, and even a knowledge-theoretic or epistemological meaning. This becomes most clear when we recognize that the subject of the entire eleventh chapter of Matthew is the problem of knowledge, the problem of the insufficiency of rational knowledge and the necessity of spiritual knowledge." [23, p. 12]. B.P. Vysheslavtsev investigated this feature of Orthodoxy specially: "...not only the intellect comprehends, contemplates and discovers, comprehension is wider than thinking and intellectual cognition. The heart is also an organ of comprehension, it comprehends much of what the intellect can't understand, it comprehends 'sanctity', beauty, value... We are coming back to the initial biblical meaning of heart; the heart is an organ of cognition if we consider cognition in the whole breadth of contemplation and comprehension which is far beyond scientific cognition." [33] "An extremely characteristic feature of Eastern Christianity, - remarks B.P. Vysheslavtsev, - is that mind, intellect, reason have never been considered as the ultimate basis and the foundation of life; reasoning about God isn't a true religious perception" [33, p. 69]. Lev Shestov makes a very interesting and unusual interpretation of the doctrine of the fall of man: "The essence of knowledge is in its limitation: it's the meaning of the biblical

narrative... Direct seeing can't introduce anything bad or false. After creating lies and evil, knowledge tries to teach man how he can save himself from lies and evil through his own strength, his own works. But 'knowledge' and 'works' - if one accepts the mysterious Biblical legend - were precisely the source of all evil upon earth. - One must redeem oneself in other wise, through 'faith' as Saint Paul teaches, through faith alone, i.e. through a spiritual exertion of quite peculiar nature, which we describe as 'audacity'" [34]. L. Shestov declared rational knowledge the absolute evil. The human spirit is omnipotent. But people don't know it. Or, more exactly, they 'learn' boundaries of their potential by reasoning. Such knowledge, according to Shestov, makes them feeble. Shestov can be called irrationalist doubly. He exceeds the boundaries of constructive irrationalism which was so typical for Russian religious-philosophical world view, the boundaries in which rational knowledge is not only sensible but also necessary and positive for the process of cognition.

So, the conviction that "great thoughts spring from the heart" [10, p. 94] runs like a golden thread through the galaxy of great names in Russian philosophy. Having its commencement in Orthodoxy, irrationalism becomes then secularized in works of Slavophiles and mystics and finally receives its most integrate and complete form in the system of V. Solovyov. After V. Solovyov irrational tradition was carried on in works of theorists of Russian religious-philosophical renaissance. Since 1917 this tendency has been persisting in works of the philosophers of the Russian Diaspora as well as in our country – within the limits of the Orthodox Church.

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