The Philosophy of Time and History in the Thought of Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev

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Ph.D. Thesis

I, Morgan Stark, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the problem of time and the connected problem of history in the thought of two Russian thinkers, Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev. After an introduction tracing the history of these problems in philosophical thought from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century, the main body of the thesis is divided into two central chapters, the first on Bulgakov and the second on Berdiaev. Analysis of their two contrasting approaches to these questions reveals opposite formulations of the time-history relationship, in which Bulgakov suggested the primacy of history over time, whilst Berdiaev maintained the primacy of time over history. Subsequent exploration aims to account for these different organisations of the time-history relationship, and discusses how for Bulgakov a deterministic pattern of thought about time and history was central, and how for Berdiaev a paradoxical approach to these problems was dominant. Across this discussion, these thinkers' various points of contact with classical, European and Russian intellectual traditions is highlighted, and in this way their thought on these questions is located within an intellectual context which extends beyond Russia.

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Introduction:

Time, History and the Russian Tradition

What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know.

If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know.

– St. Augustine, *Confessions.*[1]

1. Overview

Thesis objective

The central objective of this thesis is the exploration of the problem of time and the connected problem of history in the thought of two 'Silver Age' Russian thinkers, Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Nikolai Berdiaev (1874-1948).[2] Although time is the primary concern, it is difficult to separate thought about time from thought about history in the work of these two philosophers. History is therefore considered alongside time, providing a more accurate and fuller account of their thinking. Bulgakov and Berdiaev were chosen due to their significant but contrasting engagements with these themes, as they present opposite formulations of the time-history relationship: Bulgakov suggested the primacy of history over time, whilst Berdiaev maintained the primacy of time over history. This thesis will aim to account for these different organisations of the time-history relationship, looking at their various points of contact with classical, European and Russian intellectual traditions.

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[1] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1992), p. 230.

[2] Evtuhov's definition of what constitutes the Russian 'Silver Age' will be used: '…I use it [the term Russian "Silver Age"] to refer more generally to the complex of ideas, literature, art, philosophy, and politics that together constituted the cultural explosion of those years [1890-1920].' Catherine Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy* (New York, 1997), p. 3.

Time, history and the Russian tradition

Time is amongst the most basic categories of human existence. In the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* it is noted that:

> Time is the single most pervasive component of our experience and the most fundamental concept in our physical theories.[3]

The desire to study the nature of time reflects an intellectual demand to understand exactly how we live in the world, how our lives are organised, and, ultimately, why we must one day die. Overviews of the philosophy of time usually begin with Plato (424/3-348/7 BC),[4] and can be traced right through to the present day.[5] Considering the almost continuous presence of the question of time in the history of philosophy, it is unsurprising that thinking about time can also be found within the Russian tradition. However, as is attested above, in the early twentieth century Russian context such thinking may be interwoven with thought about history, creating some specific problems.

The nature of the relationship between time and history was being questioned in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe as well as in Russia. After the fall in popularity of the metaphysical systems of history put forward by philosophers such as Georg Hegel (1770-1831) in the early nineteenth century, many were beginning to question whether they should be searching for the ultimate meaning of life in history or in time. As Roberts notes:

> But by the end of the [nineteenth] century, the intrusiveness of time and history was

[3] Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 9 (London, 1998), p. 413.
[4] See, for example, amongst many others: John F. Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge MA, 1948); Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (New York, 1986).
[5] The twentieth- and twenty-first century engagement with time is vast in terms of scope and is of immense complexity. For the most comprehensive overview of contemporary debate on time, see Nathan Oaklander (ed.), *The Philosophy of Time: Critical Concepts in Philosophy*, 4 vols (Abingdon, 2008). Also see Jeremy Butterfield (ed.), *The Arguments of Time* (Oxford, 2006); Robin Le Poidevin, Murray MacBeath (eds), *The Philosophy of Time* (Oxford, 1993).

> forcing a more radical rethinking. Some sought a new means of access to the suprahistorical, while others moved in the opposite direction, taking change, time, novelty, and creativity as ultimately real.[6]

Philosophers such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) offered different perspectives on this problem, and likewise in Russia both positions that Roberts outlines found support. Indeed, it is noticeable that Bulgakov looked for access to the 'suprahistorical' via the historical whilst Berdiaev, to use Roberts' expression, 'moved in the opposite direction', taking the above problems – time, creativity, and change – as some of the most important. It should, however, also be noted that both viewpoints suggest a continued preoccupation with matters relating to the passage of time, to what time itself means and to what it may bring in the future. It is therefore an operating assumption of this thesis that whilst the questions they provoke may be different, a significant aspect of both discourses – those on time and those on history – relate to a very similar philosophical problem.

The question of history in Russian thought has been studied far more broadly by scholars than the question of time. This is partly because Russian philosophy is more obviously engaged with the question of history than it is with time: it is easier to find reflection on the path of history – specifically Russian history – than it is on time.[7] Indeed, Wachtel has spoken of a Russian 'obsession' with the past,[8]

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[6] David D. Roberts, *Nothing but History*: *Reconstruction and Extremity after Metaphysics* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 40.

[7] Notable Russian philosophers writing about history include Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856), particularly his *Filosoficheskie pis'ma*: see P. Ia. Chaadaev, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 15-138; Nikolai Danilevskii (1822-1885): see N. Ia. Danilevskii, *Rossia i Evropa*. *Vzgliad na kul'turnye i politicheskie otnosheniia slavianskogo mira k germano-romanskomu* (St Petersburg, 1995); Konstantin Leont'ev (1831-1891): see K. Leont'ev, *Vostok, Rossiia i Slavianstvo. Filosofskaia i politicheskaia publitsistika* (Moscow, 1996). Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900) also wrote at length about history, but there is no text in particular in which he expounds his views on history in full. See instead Manon de Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation: A Reassessment of Vladimir Solov'ev's Views on History and his Social Commitment* (Bern, 2004). A debate between Slavophiles and Westernisers, which began in the 1830s and involved key Russian thinkers such as Aleksei Khomiakov (1804-60), Ivan Kireevksii

Copleston identified the philosophy of history as a key element of Russian philosophy,[9] and Malinov opened his recent work on eighteenth century Russian philosophy with the claim that the philosophy is history is a 'special' theme in the history of Russian thought.[10] Vasily Zen'kovskii (1881-1962) has also made the famous claim that Russian thought is in itself historiosophical:

> Русская мысль сплошь историософична, она постоянно обращена к вопросам о «смысле» истории, конце истории и т.п.[11]

However, this should not overshadow the importance of the question of time in the Russian mind. As shall be seen in the case of Bulgakov and Berdiaev, time was an independent problem, and, further, some of their thinking about history was built upon temporal concepts and presuppositions. It will therefore be seen how for both these thinkers ideas about time figured significantly in their contrasting philosophies.

Location within Silver Age scholarship

Scholarship around Russian Silver Age philosophy has had an interrupted history. This is partly due to the previously sidelined position of this element of Russian philosophy in the Soviet Union: the diversity of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian tradition was hidden by a monotonous official narrative which focused on the development of Marxist thought and discredited those who had

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(1806-56), and Konstantin Aksakov (1817-60), is another a central argument in the history of Russian thought, which related primarily to Russia's place in history. For a definitive account of this debate, see: Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought,* translated by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Oxford, 1975).

[8] Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past* (Stanford, 1994).

[9] Frederick C. Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy: Selected Aspects* (Notre Dame, 1988), pp. 37-57; Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Notre Dame, 1986), pp. 168-200.

[10] A. V. Malinov, *Filosofiia istorii v Rossii XVIII veka* (St Petersburg, 2003), p. 7.

[11] V. V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 1991), p. 18.

spoken out against it.[12] Many significant Silver Age Russian philosophers were banned in the Soviet Union and if they were discussed at all it was in the most derogatory of terms.[13] This meant that until the fall of the USSR, the primary sources were scattered, with very few available in translation. It was only after the extensive republication of Russian philosophy from the late 1980s onward that work on Russian Silver Age philosophy really began in earnest.[14]

In spite of this there were still overviews of Russian thought available before the 1990s, and some of these were quite brilliant.[15] Indeed, the histories of Zen'kovskii and Walicki, for example, remain seminal works. However, such accounts typically foreground individual thinkers and movements, rather than themes. In the Soviet period, accounts were also written by Western scholars who were interested in Russian philosophy, particularly in those philosophers who lived in European exile. Some of these works, however, show a variety of methodological, intellectual and, sometimes, even linguistic shortcomings. Despite the great increase

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[12] The classic Soviet description of the emergence of historical materialism is V. E. Evgrafov et al. (eds), *Istoriia filosofii v SSSR,* 5 vols (Moscow, 1968-1988). As Tihanov's recent essay on the subject also notes, 'Ignoring Marxism [in an overview of Soviet thought] and preferring instead to explore solely various non-Marxist discourses would have resulted in a failure to grasp the crucial place of Marxism in the often subterraneous dynamics of stability and change which sustained and shot through the public discourses of philosophy and the social sciences in the Soviet period.' Galin Tihanov, 'Continuities in the Soviet Period', in William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (eds), *A History of Russian Thought* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 311-39 (p. 311).

[13] For example, in G. S. Vasetskii et al. (eds) *Ocherki po istorii filosofii v Rossii. Vtoraia polovina XIX i nachalo XX veka* (Moscow, 1960), the central thinkers of the Silver Age period are mentioned only in a series of defamatory essays in which Lenin is cited more frequently than all of them put together. Their ideas are not explored, but they are rather just held as examples of 'anti-revolutionary', 'anti-democratic,' and 'bourgeois' ideology. Within this text, see in particular the essays: Z. G. Afanas'eva, 'Razvitie V. I. Leninym marksistskoi teorii klassovoi bor'by v kontse XIX veka i kritika "legal'nogo marksizma"', pp. 177-200; N. I. Bochkarev, 'Nekotorye voprosy kritiki V. I. Leninym ideologii burzhuaznogo liberalizma v Rossii (1907-1914 gg.)', pp. 201-23; S. I. Popov, 'Bor'ba V. I. Lenina protiv neokantianskoi revizii marksistskoi filosofii i znachenie etoi bor'boi dlia sovremennosti', pp. 224-49. For a similarly pejorative Soviet discussion of Berdiaev in particular, see V. A. Kuvakin, *Kritika ekzistentsializma Berdiaeva* (Moscow, 1976).

[14] Motroshilova, for example, comments broadly concerning the changes taking place in research in the mid-1980s: 'К тому времени [середине 1980-х гг.] в сфере исследований русской философии уже начались – но только начались – преобразования, благотворное влияние которых подтвердилось в последующие годы.' N. V. Motroshilova, *Mysliteli Rossii i filosofiia zapada. V. Solov'ev, N. Berdiaev, S. Frank, L. Shestov* (Moscow, 2006).

[15] See, for example: N. O. Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* (Moscow, 1991); Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* 4 vols; Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, translated by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Stanford, 1979).

in scholarship in the last twenty or so years, the study of Russian philosophy is still very much a work in progress.[16] Many themes central to the Russian Silver Age tradition remain underexposed to proper scholarly analysis. This is particularly true with reference to the problem of time, though less so for the question of history.

The aim of this thesis is therefore novel in a number of respects. Firstly, it brings the question of time to the forefront, something which, save for a few isolated examples, has not been done with respect to either of these central figures or the Russian tradition.[17] Time is a major theme in the history of philosophy and it emerges frequently within Russian philosophical discourse in a number of different ways. Considering the long history of the problem of time, a discussion of the philosophy of time in the Russian context will develop further understanding of how Russian philosophy was connected to other bodies of thought. An attempt to connect these two Russian philosophers to the philosophical mainstream therefore takes precedence over connecting them to other Russian thinkers. Secondly, this thesis represents a continuation of the more recent thematic approach to Russian thought. Finally, the comparative dimension of this work is also reasonably novel within the context of scholarship on Russian philosophy. Although there are newer examples where comparisons between larger numbers of philosophers are evident,[18] such a

[16] Newer studies have taken on a more thematic approach to the history of Russian thought, whilst maintaining a sense of chronology. See, for example: G. M. Hamburg and Randall A. Poole, *A History of Russian Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2010); Edith W. Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy* (New York, 2004); P. A. Sapronov, *Russkaia filosofiia. Opyt tipologicheskoi kharakteristiki* (St Petersburg, 2000); and William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (eds), *A History of Russian Thought* (Cambridge, 2010).

[17] The major exception here is Howard A. Slaate, *Time, Existence and Destiny: Nicholas Berdyaev's Philosophy of Time* (New York, 1988). Although identifying a number of key themes in Berdiaev's philosophy of time and providing an interesting discussion of Berdiaev's work in relation to certain modern theologians, this work unfortunately fails to bring much in the way of critical discussion of his ideas. Its exploration of Berdiaev's work is essentially a descriptive rather than analytic enterprise, and it further suffers from an obvious intent to promote Berdiaev's philosophy.

[18] See, for example: Anna Lisa Crone, *Eros and Creativity in the Russian Religious Renewal: The Philosophers and the Freudians* (Leiden, 2010); Motroshilova, *Mysliteli Rossii i filosofiia zapada*; Mikhail Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy: Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Losskii and Berdiaev* (New York, 2006); Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology, Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox*

direct comparison between Bulgakov and Berdiaev is a new undertaking, despite the significant confluence of their thought and lives.

In order to introduce the themes of this thesis more fully, a quite comprehensive introduction to the philosophy of time and the philosophy of history will follow, as will a discussion of the concept of 'temporality' which is used later on. Of necessity, this takes something of the form of a 'potted history', but this is important as it establishes key parameters and problems in philosophical thinking about time and history. In this overview, it should be noted that scholarly overviews will be drawn on as much as primary sources. There will also be a more detailed account of the Russian exploration of these themes in the nineteenth century, and further discussion of Bulgakov's and Berdiaev's respective philosophies.

Theology in a New Key (Edinburgh, 2000); G. F. Garaeva, *Sofiinyi idealizm kak istoriko-filosofskii fenomen. (Solov'ev V. S., Florenskii P. A., Bulgakov S. N.)* (Moscow, 2000).

2. The philosophy of time

Thought about time is, unsurprisingly, varied. However, many of the basic questions concerning time which have engaged the philosophising mind were defined long ago. Callahan notes:

> Solutions to the problem of time are still proposed to go back in their essentials to one of these four ancient views [Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Augustine], even though the modern philosopher may be unaware that his theory is not being offered for the first time.[19]

Speculation on the nature of time has by no means been all strictly philosophical, although much of it refers back to philosophical concepts. This is evident in scientific study: although philosophy did not play a lead role, it still helped define the broader parameters and questions that scientists sought to answer. As Disalle notes:

> Indeed, the empirical success of physics itself was made possible, in some part, by the achievements of […] philosophical effort…[20]

Time has played an important role in theology and philosophy, and a rich tradition of thought about time exists which bears little reference to developments in physics. Below is an outline of the major developments in the history of thought about time up to the late 1940s, where the scope of our project is limited by the death of Nikolai Berdiaev in 1948. Points of contact with the Russian tradition will be noted when they arise, but the central concern is an elaboration of the history of thought about time, so it can be better understood how Russian thinking fits into a broader philosophical tradition.

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[19] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy,* p. vii.
[20] Robert Disalle, *Understanding Space-Time: The Philosophical Development of Physics from Newton to Einstein* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 1.

Time and Eternity in ancient philosophy: Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Augustine

Speculation on the problem of time is already present in the philosophy of the ancient Greeks. A key theme that emerged from this discussion of time was the identification of two contrasting temporal dimensions of 'time', on the one hand, and 'eternity', on the other, distinctions which recur throughout theological, mystical and idealist approaches to the question. Time, put simply, was taken as the immanent temporal dimension and eternity as the metaphysical temporal dimension, with varying modes of connection postulated between the two. In the first of the four classical approaches to time mentioned above, Plato (428/427-348/347 BC) expounded his ideas about time and eternity in the *Timaeus* dialogue (360 BC).[21] His fundamental intuition was that time was a moving 'image' of eternity.[22] Eternity was motionless and uncreated, whereas time was created and in motion:

> Time is created primarily by the maker of the universe in the very act of ordering the universe in accordance with the eternal model and producing the moving image of eternity. But time could not be created unless there were something to proceed according to number in the realm of becoming.[23]

Time proceeds independently according to 'number', a regular, external measure.[24] Plato thereby set out two problems that would be of great consequence to the development of thought about time. First, he identified a position which would later be termed 'platonism', 'substantivalism' or 'absolutism'.[25] Absolutism is the belief that time is, quite simply, *absolute*: it is not defined by events, space, or change. Time flows independently and is contingent on nothing for its passage. This point of view found many advocates, including Isaac Barrow (1630-1677) and Isaac Newton

[21] Plato, *Timaeus*, translated by Donald J. Zeyl (Indianapolis, 2000).
[22] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, p. 18.
[23] Ibid., pp. 20-21.
[24] Ibid., p. 17.
[25] In this thesis I will refer to this tradition of thought as 'absolutism'.

(1643-1727), and the debate between absolutism and 'relativism' or 'reductionism' (the countervailing tendency, suggesting the dependence of time on a variety of other conditions) would become a defining aspect of the debate about time, specifically in natural philosophy and physics.

The second position which Plato established regarded the nature of the relationship between time and eternity. Unlike the absolute-relative debate, this was a question of interest to Russian thinkers, particularly Berdiaev. Plato, understanding the general harmony and rationality of the universe,[26] asserted that time reflects this harmony and is thus an 'image' of the order which exists in eternity. Time is a form of eternity and bears much likeness to it. For many Christian philosophers, as well as for other mystical and idealist philosophers, this would become problematic on account of their negative perspective on the empirical world where time exists. A final point of note is that thinking about time and eternity, especially in theology, frequently led to the construction of historical frameworks which described how eternity was reached after a passage through time. This *historicising* tendency is also notably evident in the Russian tradition.

Following Plato, Aristotle (384-322 BC) developed a philosophy of time and eternity not altogether dissimilar to Plato's, but one which reflected a greater concern with natural philosophy.[27] Perhaps on account of this interest, Aristotle did not influence Berdiaev and Bulgakov – or, perhaps, Russian thought more broadly – in the same way as Plato. Aristotle, mainly in the fourth book of his *Physics,*[28] studied the relationship between motion and time. He concluded that time was the 'number'

[26] Waterfield notes: 'In short, Plato's vision is of a rationally ordered, teleological universe, where everything has its place and its purpose.' Robin Waterfield, 'Introduction', in Plato, *Republic*, translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford, 1993), pp. xi-lxii (p. lv).
[27] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, p. 40.
[28] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Physics: Books 3 and 4*, translated by Edward Hussey (Oxford 1983).

of motion, or the measure of a given motion:

> Time defines motion by being the number of motion, but motion defines time as well, since we may call time much or little, measuring it by motion.[29]

This time-motion relation introduced an element of *relativity* into the understanding of time, as it suggested the dependency of time upon motion. Such relativism would later be developed in different ways by philosophers including George Berkeley (1685-1753) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716), and also by scientists such as Einstein. However, despite this relativism, for Aristotle time was still fundamentally absolute, as Hawking notes:

> Both Aristotle and Newton believed in absolute time. That is, they believed that one could unambiguously measure the interval of time between two events, and that this time would be the same whoever measured it, provided they use a good clock. Time was completely separate from and independent of space.[30]

Time is absolute because all motion, in Aristotle's universe, is a reflection of the continuous, perfect motion ongoing in the heavens, started by the creator.[31] This therefore still indicates time's reliance on eternity, or something conceptually similar. Although suggesting the possibility of temporal relativity, Aristotle does not follow through and fully establish it.

The nature of the relationship between time and eternity was adjusted significantly by Plotinus, who offered his philosophy of time in the third of his *Enneads*.[32] Plotinus, like Plato, held that time was created,[33] but he could not agree with Aristotle that time was *only* limited to the measure of motion, despite

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[29] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, p. 67.
[30] Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (London, 1988), p. 18.
[31] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 86-87.
[32] Plotinus, *Enneads*, translated by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, 1966-88).
[33] Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London, 1994), p. 117.

appreciating the argument: he believed this does not tell us what time is, only what it measures.[34] Plotinus argued more grandly that time is the 'life of the soul', a reflection of the soul's process of becoming in the world of time.[35] Plotinus' argument was built upon his description of a narrative in which the One, the unified centre of the universe from which all emanates, expands out through various phases of development, stages which will be eventually returned through in a passage back to the One. In the realm of eternity, an activity in the 'soul', something akin to 'discontent', led to the emanation of time from eternity.[36] Time, however, is *evanescent*. It will be transcended and all will return back to eternity, as Majumdar emphasises:

> Perhaps Plotinus' deepest contribution to the philosophy of time is not so much his critically modified vision of Plato's view as his inference that time is evanescent – an opaque iconostasis to be left behind in the soaring flight of the self.[37]

Plotinus thus offered a development of the time-eternity question, suggesting a deeper sense of narrative to the whole process of time and also a sense of the end of time. This narrative structure would impact profoundly upon Christian thinking:

> …Plotinus' treatment of the subject became paradigmatic not for later Neo-Platonists but rather for the Christian tradition. The strong distinction Plotinus makes between eternity and time, repeated almost word for word by Boethius, is a window between Christian and Plotinian creation metaphysics.[38]

The narrative that emerges from Plotinus' philosophy – i.e. a movement from One to eternity, from eternity to time, then a movement back to eternity and eventually back to One – would complicate in particular Nikolai Berdiaev's attempt to engage with the

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[34] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 105-06.
[35] Pauliina Remes, *Plotinus on Self: The Philosophy of the 'We'* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 42.
[36] Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 123.
[37] Deepa Majumdar, *Plotinus on the Appearance of Time and the World of Sense: A Pantomime* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 5.
[38] Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 116.

problem of time, and also played a role in Bulgakov's thought.

The last of the great classical views on time was offered by Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). Philosophically speaking, he was the most influential theologian of the Patristic period, as McGrath comments:

> …[Augustine was] probably the greatest and most influential mind of the Christian church throughout its long history.[39]

Augustine was also the most expansive Christian voice on the problem of time, something which is particularly important for the Russian tradition in view of its deep connections to Christianity. Indeed, the Bible itself is rather silent on the philosophical question of time and eternity, as Barr notes:

> [There is a] very serious shortage within the Bible of the kind of *actual statement* about "time" or "eternity" which could form a sufficient basis for a Christian philosophical-theological view of time. It is the lack of actual statements about what time is like, more than anything else, that has forced exegetes into trying to get a view of time out of the *words* themselves.[40]

In view of this, Augustine's views on time, given his influence, become even more relevant.

In terms of his description of time and eternity, Augustine offered little that was particularly new. Similarly to Plato, he argued that in (God's) eternity there is no change, whilst in the realm of time change takes place.[41] He also agreed with Aristotle regarding the relationship between time and motion.[42] In contrast to Plotinus, he did not assert that time was any sort of 'emanation' from eternity: he held rather that God directly created time, and that it was continuously dependent on God's

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[39] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Malden, 1998), p. 12.
[40] James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (London, 1962), pp. 131-32.
[41] Simo Knuuttila, 'Time and creation in Augustine', in Eleonore Stump, Norman Kretzmann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 103-15 (p. 105).
[42] Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, p. 151.

providential activity for its existence.[43] The uniqueness of Augustine's thought about time, however, was not so much in his discussion of time and eternity, but, rather, its 'psychological' aspect, as Knuutila emphasises:

> Augustine is mainly interested in a psychological account of time, but he also takes some basic ideas formulated in ancient natural philosophy for granted.[44]

This psychological element consisted in a description of how the individual constructs time. Emphasising the role of *memory* and *anticipation*, Augustine highlighted how time is a 'distension of the soul' – he argued that whilst the past and future do not seem to exist, the activity of the soul (i.e. the individual) makes them real.[45] This is because the past exists in memory and the future exists in anticipation: time is therefore made whole by man, in the soul. By placing an emphasis on the human relationship to time, Augustine reordered the formulation of time and eternity in which eternity simply sat above, or around, time. Instead, he suggested that there was something within man, rather than within a more loosely defined eternity, which played an ordering role over time. This element of Augustine's thought will reappear in particular in Berdiaev's philosophy of memory and time, as we will see later.

Medieval philosophies of time: classical philosophy and mysticism

In the medieval period there were few notable developments made in thought about time, although the question continued to be addressed. Augustine remained influential over medieval Christian thought,[46] as did Plato and Aristotle, who similarly figured prominently in some non-Christian philosophy. For example, the Persian

[43] Knuuttila, 'Time and creation in Augustine', p. 105.
[44] Ibid., p. 109.
[45] Ibid., p. 112.
[46] Ibid., p. 107.

philosopher and polymath Avicenna (980-1037)[47] wrote significantly on the problem of time, but he was still in dialogue with Plato's *Timeaus.*[48] For the Russian tradition, a relevant offshoot of medieval Christian thinking about time was developed by the German mystic Meister Eckhart (1260-1327).

Eckhart described how the metaphysical and divine were absent from the created, material world of nature. He suggested that the divine should be sought in the spirit, not in the corporeal:

> There are three things that prevent us from hearing the eternal Word. The first is corporeality, the second is multiplicity, the third is temporality. If a man had passed beyond these three things, he would dwell in eternity, and dwell in the spirit, and dwell in unity, and in the desert, and there he would hear the eternal Word.[49]

He thereby separated time and eternity on the basis of his intuition of a division between 'internal' and 'external' domains: as time is closely connected to the corporeal and material, he suggested that the divine, and by implication the eternal, was wholly absent from this time. Indeed, as Clark emphasises:

> God does not exist in the sphere of time but in that of eternity.[50]

Eckhart was still deeply influenced by Augustine, as Clark also mentions,[51] and similarly believed in the fact that time was engendered by God, was a measure of motion, and flowed dependent on God's providence. However, Eckhart's introduction of an impassable divide between corporeal time and divine eternity was significant. For Plotinus – arguably the greatest early influence over Christian ideas about time – notions of time 'emanating' from eternity suggested a close link between the two.

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[47] Avicenna is the Latinized name of Abū 'Alī al-Husayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā.
[48] Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London, 1992), pp. 49-53.
[49] Meister Eckhart, 'Sermon 20: Qui audit me non confundetur' (1300-1327), in James M. Clark, *Meister Eckhart: An Introduction to the Study of his Works with an Anthology of his Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1957), pp. 223-27 (p. 223).
[50] Clark, *Meister Eckhart,* p. 43.
[51] Ibid., p. 45.

Eckhart conversely suggested no such close connection. This would become a central distinction in Russian thinking about time.

The modern period: absolutism, relativism and Kantian idealism

From the late seventeenth century onwards debate about time began to flourish more widely. The most important aspects of this discussion included a reinvigorated debate between temporal absolutists and relativists – which as noted was of less consequence to the Russian discussion – and Kant's exposition of idealism, which was much more significant for Russian thought. The absolutism-relativism debate was developed in arguments between Isaac Newton (1643-1727) and a variety of other philosophers, including Berkeley and Leibniz. Although Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) was the first of the early moderns to propose the platonic notion of the absolute nature of time and space,[52] Newton is perhaps the most famed advocate of this position. He states this unequivocally in *Principia* (1687):

> Absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external...[53]

Disalle encourages us to look at Newton's contributions to the debate over the nature of time not in terms of a continuation of philosophical supposition about time, but in terms of a fledgling scientific project.[54] However, looking at its broader continuities with the philosophical tradition, it is still evident that the philosophical groundwork laid down by figures such as Plato and Aristotle figured prominently in Newton's understanding of an absolute time.

Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) took the opposite stance to Newton. Already

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[52] Michael J. Futch, *Leibniz's Metaphysics of Time and Space* (Boston, 2008), p. 11.
[53] Sir Isaac Newton, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1729), in H.G. Alexander (ed.), *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence: Together with Extracts from Newton's Principia and Opticks* (Manchester, 1956), pp. 143-71.
[54] Disalle, *Understanding Space-Time*, p. 13.

embroiled in debate with him over who should take responsibility for the advent of calculus,[55] there was a distinct personal dimension to their argument. Leibniz came from a philosophical background, and, on the basis of a 'monadology' in which the substance of all things can be reduced down to the level of 'monads', argued that time was not independent from substance but was instead a measure of these substances:

> Leibniz [...] rejects the philosophical cogency of absolute space and time, arguing instead that they are orders or systems of relations.[56]

Leibniz therefore came to the relativistic conclusion that time was dependent on relations within space, prefaced by his notion of the universal 'monad' basis of all things.

George Berkeley (1685-1753), the English idealist philosopher, came to a similar conclusion to Leibniz, but by different philosophical means. Also motivated to refute Newton,[57] Berkeley argued that time was dependent entirely on the mind. Time, he held, is nothing more than the succession of ideas:

> A succession of ideas I take to *constitute* Time, and not to be only the sensible measure thereof, as Mr. Locke and others think.[58]

This completely *subjectivises* time: time becomes located within the subject, it is the product of consciousness. This would lead Berkeley into trouble as he refused to posit any sort of 'universal' or 'meta-' time outside the time of the individual subject. Berkeley postulated that each individual lived in their own 'private' time,[59] making it difficult to understand by what principle two different individuals could agree on a

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[55] See, for example: Jason Socrates Bardi, *The Calculus Wars: Newton, Leibniz, and the Greatest Mathematical Clash of All Time* (New York, 2006).
[56] Futch, *Leibniz's Metaphysics of Time and Space*, p. 29.
[57] A. C. Grayling, *Berkeley: The Central Arguments* (La Salle, 1986), p. 176.
[58] George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* (1843), in George Pitcher, *Berkeley* (London, 1977), p. 207.
[59] Grayling, *Berkeley,* p. 175.

common time. A similar problem, as will be seen later, could be raised with Berdiaev's philosophy of time, but, as an existentialist, for him this was not such an immediate concern. As Pitcher concludes:

> Berkeley's view of time is what we might call a solipsistic one: there is no common time for everyone, but a separate, unique time for each mind. There are no temporal relationships among the different time series […] because there is no common time in which alone such relationships could exist.[60]

Although Berkeley's ideas therefore somewhat fall apart on the question of time, they demonstrate how an early-modern idealist dealt with the problem.

Although the absolute-relative debate was not central to Russian thinking about time, the same cannot be said for Kant's (1724-1804) philosophy. His *Critique of Pure Reason*[61] revolutionised thought about time. His principal argument was that the human mind, when attempting to deal with the phenomena of the world, or *things-in-themselves*, deploys *a priori* notions of time and space to organise these phenomena:

> Time is a necessary representation, lying at the foundation of all our intuitions. With regard to appearances in general, we cannot think away time from them, and represent them to ourselves as out of and unconnected with time, but we can quite well represent to ourselves time void of appearances. Time is therefore given *a priori*. In it alone is the reality of appearances possible.[62]

Kant is therefore cognisant of the continuing question of the relationship between time and space, and of how time relates to objects, but reaches the radical conclusion that time is a function of human intellect. While demonstrating a sensitivity to the Berkelian thesis that time is held within the mind, Kant's far more

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[60] Pitcher, *Berkeley*, p. 208.
[61] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A revised and expanded translation based on Meiklejohn (London, 1993). See in particular pp. 54-69.
[62] Ibid., p. 54.

sophisticated solution looks at the role the mind plays in constructing time, not just at the extent to which the mind's activity itself *constitutes* time. However, on the basis of the ideal nature of time, Kant also suggested that time was infinite.[63] This worked against the original Plotinian intuition concerning the evanescence of time, an idea which, as already noted, took on great importance in Christian and, later, in Russian thinking about time. Kant, therefore, will be a point of some ambivalence for Russian philosophers, in particular Bulgakov, who held Kant in great esteem but did not fully agree with him. Berdiaev also held Kant in high regard.

Of the subsequent German idealist thinkers – Johann Fichte (1762-1814), Georg Hegel (1770-1831), Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) – Hegel is of greatest import, but his thinking is of more relevance to the historical concerns of this thesis, as are his connections with Karl Marx (1818-1883). They will therefore be discussed later.

Discussions of time contemporary to Bulgakov and Berdiaev

At the beginning of the twentieth century thought about time diversified significantly. Philosophers began to engage with it in new ways, and as a consequence of their efforts the philosophy of time is now recognised as a central philosophical problem. Many Russian Silver Age thinkers, including Bulgakov and Berdiaev, had only an incomplete understanding of what was going on around them, a fact which is perhaps not surprising but is also revealing about the development of Russian philosophy.

[63] Ibid., p. 55.

Science: Einstein

Albert Einstein established the basis of the modern scientific understanding of time, outlined in his Special Theory of Relativity (1905) and General Theory of Relativity (1916). Although the French mathematician Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) was developing similar theses to Einstein, it is the latter who has received credit for the theory of relativity. For most, Einstein's theory of relativity put an end to the absolutism-relativism debate which had dogged discussions of time for thousands of years. Einstein, as is known, postulated the relativity of time, space and motion. His relativity works on the principle of the constancy of the speed of light: whatever speed an object is travelling at, light will always travel exactly 300,000 kilometres a second faster.[64] This would seem to suggest that for two different objects travelling at different speeds, light travels at different speeds, as it is exactly 300,000 km/s faster than both. However, Einstein refused to accept such a contradiction:

> In a move of breathtaking audacity, Einstein reasoned that, since there were no real contradictions, and therefore a light beam cannot have two speeds in the same respect and at the same time, *the two* [objects] *must have different times.* That is, the [objects] each measure the same relative speed for the light beam because *time flows differently for each* [object].[65]

Einstein therefore concludes that time itself is relative to the motion of an object. The faster an object travels, the slower the experience of time.[66] Time and space become totally interdependent, conceived of as 'space-time'. The implications of relativity would imprint themselves profoundly on future discourse about time. However, at the same time, Einstein – at least for us – concludes the narrative of the relationship between science and philosophy on time, as from here on physics, becoming more

[64] J. B. Kennedy, *Space, Time and Einstein: An Introduction* (Chesham, 2003), p. 12.
[65] Ibid., p. 12.
[66] Ibid., p. 13.

and more complex, bears less and less relation to philosophical concepts and debate. It is notable that neither Berdiaev nor Bulgakov make any reference to Einstein's work on time, nor demonstrate any serious understanding of or interest in developments in contemporary physics.

Philosophy: concern with the nature of time

Two key early twentieth century European thinkers, the British philosopher John McTaggart (1866-1925) and the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941), demonstrated a concern with the nature of the 'flow' of time itself – that is, with the passage of past, present and future. This interest was shared in particular by Berdiaev, although he indicated no awareness of McTaggart and an incomplete understanding of Bergson.

In his article 'The Unreality of Time' (1908), McTaggart offered a breakthrough for the stricter philosophy of time comparable in significance to Einstein's for the physics of time. As a 'critical' idealist, McTaggart considered the interior qualities of time and boldly asserted his conclusion:

> I believe that time is unreal.[67]

This positing of the unreality of time was based upon his discussion of what he believed to be the two ways in which time was experienced,[68] the 'A' and the 'B' series. In the 'A' series, event M is experienced in terms of past, present, and future. At time T, M can theoretically be equally future to, present with, or past to time T, depending on T's position with relation to M. In the 'B' series, the distinctions earlier

[67] J. Ellis McTaggart, 'The Unreality of Time' (1908), in L. Nathan Oaklander (ed.), *The Philosophy of Time: Critical Concepts in Philosophy*, vol. 1*, The Reality and Language of Time* (Abingdon, 2008) pp. 21-35.
[68] Ibid., p. 22.

and later are used. Event M, for example, will always be earlier than event N because M happened first. M is earlier than N, N is later than M and this will always be so.[69] McTaggart held that both of these forms of time fall into contradiction and are thus unreal. In his account of McTaggart's thinking, Kennedy concisely outlines how both series are contradictory. The 'B' series, he notes, is contradictory because the time distinctions 'earlier' and 'later' are static. However, time is change: the two are incommensurable. Time cannot be the 'B' series.[70] The 'A' series is also contradictory, for two reasons. The first is because an event can potentially be past (P), present (N) and future (F), but these are contrary properties.[71] This is contradictory. In an attempt to overcome this contradiction, it could be suggested that an event is P, N, and F *at different times*: however, this would demand the supposition of another time, a 'meta-time', in which an event could be P, N, and F.[72] Likewise, when this 'meta-time' is distinguished in terms of P, N, and F, in order to escape the original contradiction of the 'A' series, a further time, a 'meta-meta-time' will be required. This will carry on *ad infinitum,* and so too leads to contradiction.[73] McTaggart thereby finds both series unreal and concludes that time is likewise unreal. Although Berdiaev did not reference McTaggart, it is certainly striking that Berdiaev, as will be seen later, similarly arrived at the notion of the 'paradox', or contradiction, of time.

Bergson likewise demonstrated a concern with the passage of time, but offered a philosophy of time that resonated with many Russian thinkers:[74] it was anti-positivist but was not of the sort of 'critical' idealism which frequently proved too

[69] Ibid., p. 22.
[70] Kennedy, *Space, Time and Einstein*, p. 136.
[71] Ibid., p. 137.
[72] Ibid., p. 137.
[73] Ibid., p. 137.
[74] Hilary Fink, *Bergson and Russian Modernism*, 1900-1930 (Evanston, 1990).

laborious for many Russians. Contrary to positivist approaches to the question of time, Bergson was concerned with the apprehension of the 'duration' (la durée), the time of existence which was unified, rather than divided up. This duration is a part of the subject:

> …for our past follows us, it swells incessantly with the present that it picks up on its way; and consciousness means memory.[75]

The above recalls Augustine's thesis on time as a 'distension of the soul', as both place impetus on the activity of the subject in unifying time. For Bergson, the problem relating to time was to establish the inner unity that he felt over-analytic approaches to it had destroyed. Therefore, as Pearson recounts, Bergson's ideas about duration are non-mathematical and non-logical:

> Let us begin with the point we wish to get to and arrive at: duration cannot be made the subject of a logical or mathematical treatment.[76]

Bergson set an anti-positivistic paradigm for a treatment of time which would be influential in Russia. More broadly he reflected a growing protest against the terms of positivism, scientific thought, and perhaps also of the sort of McTaggartian 'critical' idealism which then were monopolising discourses on time. The intentions behind this project resonated deeply with Silver Age thinkers.

Heidegger

Martin Heidegger (1889-1971) is the last of the philosophers we want to look at here. This is because he developed if not the first, then perhaps one of the most influential *existentialist* readings in the philosophy of time. His philosophy of time is

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[75] H. Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by T. E. Hulme (London, 1913), p. 10.
[76] Keith Ansell Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life* (London, 2002), p. 14.

detailed best in *Being and Time* (1927).[77] In a broadly idealist manner, Heidegger examined the way in which time depends upon being. Blattner categorises Heidegger's thinking as follows:

> *Being and Time* intends to develop an account of the sense of "being" by linking being with time; time is to be the "horizon" of "any understanding of being at all." That is, being is to be interpreted or understood in terms of time.[78]

Heidegger identifies various types of time that relate to being: 'ordinary time', 'world time', and 'orginary temporality'.[79] 'Originary temporality' is the most primary of these forms of time, and the others are built on top of it. In this discussion, Heidegger espouses the dependence of time upon being: without being or 'Dasein', he argues, there would be no time. As Blattner explains:

> …I shall characterise Heidegger as a "temporal idealist." He believes that without Dasein there would be no time. This temporal idealism places him in a venerable, philosophical tradition that includes Plotinus, Leibniz, Kant and Bergson.[80]

Heidegger, then, despite the novelty of his engagement with the problem of time still demonstrates some continuity with a broader philosophical trend. He reflects well some of the modes that have been identified throughout the history of thought on this problem.

The later twentieth century and beyond

The twentieth century has seen a radical development of thought about time and also a significant complication of the ideas and terms used. Quantum theory, time-travel, space-time, the tropics of time and the direction of time have come to

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[77] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford, 1995).
[78] William D. Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 2.
[79] Ibid., p. 28.
[80] Ibid., p. 27.

dominate much of the discourse. However, these discussions lie well beyond the intellectual context of this project and there is not space to discuss them. For the most up-to-date and comprehensive account of the problems related to time which engage contemporary philosophers, see *The Philosophy of Time: Critical Concepts in Philosophy*.[81]

Summary

This overview of the problem of time has sought to describe the broad tradition in which we want to locate Russian thought about time. Although it has extended into areas of thinking which many Russians were not familiar with – or perhaps did not want to be familiar with – it serves to highlight the larger context to the themes which preoccupied Russian thinkers in general, and Bulgakov and Berdiaev in particular. It will emerge that both Bulgakov and Berdiaev show points of contact with a great variety of these thinkers. The temporal theme perhaps most central to the Russian tradition is that of the relationship between 'time' and 'eternity': we will see how this is a formative concept not only for Berdiaev, but also for Bulgakov. This theme also gives rise to the question of *narrative*, which introduces the problem of the relation between time and history. Next we need to look in greater depth at the philosophy of history.

[81] Oaklander (ed.) *The Philosophy of Time.*

3. Philosophy of history

The primary focus of this thesis is the question of time. However, the Russian tradition, in its dealings with the question of time, also demonstrates a degree of reliance upon the historical imagination. Thinking about time is therefore frequently confused with and complicated by thought about history. As was mentioned at the outset, Bulgakov and Berdiaev came to opposite configurations of the time-history relationship. Bulgakov *conceptualises* time *as* history – for him time *is* history. Berdiaev takes the opposing stance: for him history is time, not the other way round.

An inclination to connect time and history stems from three philosophical assumptions. The first of these relates to a theme in the broader philosophy of time, the use of the related concepts of 'time' and 'eternity'. Plotinus arranged these concepts into an historical narrative in which time would eventually come to an end, and the Christian tradition, following in his footsteps, put them to a similar use. Russians emulated this example. As a result eschatology, an orientation towards the end,[82] became particularly significant to their discussions of time. Secondly, a Russian tendency towards thinking about an ultimate truth or meaning manifested itself in the assumption that the 'meaning' of time could and would somehow be revealed. It was understood that this revelation would take place *across* time, which potentially implied a narrative or history. Both these assumptions or predispositions can be allied to the anti-positivist trend in much Silver Age philosophy so that – whether they read them or not – many Russians would perhaps not have engaged with the overly 'critical' successes of McTaggart.

This historical thinking did not take place in a vacuum, however, and it bore relation to a number of existing historical concepts and trends that need to be

[82] McGrath notes: 'The term "eschatology" comes from the Greek term *ta eschata*, "the last things," and relates to such matters as the Christian expectations of resurrection and judgement.' McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 540.

outlined. The influence of these historical concepts in Russia constitutes the third contributing factor to the Russian predisposition towards historicised treatments of time. Philosophers such as Georg Hegel (1770-1831) and Karl Marx (1818-1883), offering models in which time was relegated to being something akin to the 'bearer' of history, rose to great prominence in Russian intellectual circles. As Courten notes:

> …[Hegel's] contribution was decisive in providing history with an *immanent* meaning. In Russia his views on history were enthusiastically welcomed, and he enjoyed there a much more enduring influence than in Western Europe, which makes him a highly relevant author to address with respect to philosophy of history in Russia.[83]

It is apparent, however, that within these sorts of historical systems there is still a number of concepts at work suggesting an interest in temporal problems. They surround assumptions about the way history moves and flows. A dialogue with the problem of time therefore continues, albeit under the umbrella of historical discussion.

From the above it is evident, then, that we are interested in the 'speculative' philosophy of history rather than the 'critical' philosophy of history, as the latter concerns the more 'prosaic' writing of history, whereas the former looks at history in a more grandiose, potentially metaphysical aspect. The broad developments of thought about history need to be outlined so the Russian stance can be better understood.

The emergence of historical thinking

Whilst there is a long-standing and quite continuous concern with time which can be traced across the history of philosophy, the modern historical 'consciousness', evident in sophisticated discourse on history as an independent intellectual problem, emerged relatively recently. The ancient Greeks, for example, believed in the

[83] Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation*, p. 64.

general perfection of the universe and tended to treat the historical process as secondary, at least from a philosophical point of view. Similarly, in the Roman period and on into Christianity, history as a discipline was not held in high philosophical esteem, as Burns notes:

> Nevertheless, throughout the later Hellenistic and Roman period the philosophical discounting of history as a scientific discipline continued. One might have expected that with the advent of Christianity […] concern to affirm the scientific status of history would emerge, but this did not happen.[84]

Although Christianity laid out a model of history, given specific formulation by Augustine,[85] this did not trigger philosophical debate about the nature of history. Christian thinkers laid down important historical concepts but did not establish history as an independent philosophical problem.

There is a general consensus that thinking about history in its own right began some time towards the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the Enlightenment. Roberts contends:

> Gradually, and relatively recently, then, it became possible in the Western tradition to conceive the world as fundamentally historical in some sense. This new historical consciousness achieved articulation as a sequence of thinkers reacted against the intellectual mainstream, reformulated with the twin Galiliean and Cartesian revolutions.[86]

The Enlightenment idea that mankind could comprehend the entire world solely by use of reason was instrumental to the development of such thought. Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) is frequently identified as one of the earliest significant thinkers

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[84] Robert M. Burns, 'On Philosophizing about History', in Robert M. Burns, Hugh Rayment-Pickard (eds), *Philosophies of History: From Enlightenment to Postmodernity* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 1-29 (p. 5).
[85] Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation,* p. 52.
[86] Roberts, *Nothing but History*, p. 23.

about history,[87] and he demonstrated this Enlightenment optimism that man could understand history through only human means. Vico looked at human history as a whole, from the emergence of cognitive human life, and thereby placed emphasis on history's immanent aspect, rather than relying on transcendental assumptions handed down by theology.[88] The study of the development of reason within this process was seen as vital to the study of humanity.

David Hume (1711-1776) then expanded the Enlightenment ambition to understand the nature of history. He introduced the problem of *determinism* in history, something which would become a major theme in the philosophy of history, particularly in Russian formulations. Determinism is the belief that if one properly understands a given system, then one can by analysis of the forces in play accurately predict results:

> Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature […] and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour.[89]

Hume's determinism, as the above demonstrates, is non-teleological, and demonstrates a weak sense of a historical process leading anywhere. However, it enshrines the principle that the results of events can be predicted through rigorous analysis of their conditions. Later, teleology would be blended with this determinism in potent formulation.

The broader impact of the Enlightenment assumption of the boundless potential of reason was significant: Hamilton has suggested that the result of this

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[87] See, for example: Burns, 'On Philosophizing about History'; Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (London, 1996); Roberts, *Nothing but History.*
[88] Roberts, *Nothing but History*, pp. 24-26.
[89] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford, 2000), p. 64.

optimism led to the beginnings of a search for 'universal' history, a key feature of later German thought.[90] This search consisted in an attempt to map out the complete course of history according to a set of rational rules, and it became a common theme in nineteenth-century philosophy more broadly.

Nineteenth-century developments: Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche

The nineteenth century saw a flowering of historical thought, both of the speculative and critical varieties. The latter of these developments, which to a significant extent were set in motion by the historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), is not of primary interest to us. However, in the figures of Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche we see three more speculative philosophies of history which asserted great influence over the Russian tradition. There are of course many other philosophers from this period who introduced important philosophical concepts about history, but they will be noted as they arise later. For the time being only these three, pre-eminent figures will be covered.

The shadow of Georg Hegel (1770-1831) stretches across much nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russian thought. Hegel's philosophy of history aspires to the sort of 'universal' history identified by Hamilton in the previous section. The Hegelian understanding of history describes how Spirit, the metaphysical essence, takes on a material form and engages in the process of 'becoming'. This becoming forms a teleology within history, as the end of history will be the conclusion of becoming. Within this process, every stage is meaningful, and, furthermore, every stage is driven by rational necessity. Hegel thus offers a deeply determined, teleological vision of history, as Roberts notes:

> But it is equally crucial that for Hegel, the individualities of history form a totality; history

[90] Hamilton, *Historicism*, p. 33.

> is a single, unified, and all-encompassing process. Moreover, that process is meaningful, significant. For Hegel, the fact that there is history, with its variability and difference, is not a mundane imperfection but is essential to what the world is and necessary for its purpose to be achieved.[91]

Hegel demonstrated what would later be termed 'historicism' – a belief in the all-consuming importance of the historical process, and in the idea that history could be fully understood according to rational principles. A century later, the term 'historicism' would be used by Karl Popper (1902-1994) in the pejorative aspect. He believed that such historicism reflected a naïve attempt to understand the inner mechanics of history, with the aim to predict the future accurately.[92] This allowed, Popper held, the totalitarian interpretations of history which provided intellectual justification for monstrosities such as Stalinism and Nazism. We will return to Hegel later when we come to the thought of Sergei Bulgakov, as Hegel asserted a particular influence over his thought about history.

The importance of Karl Marx (1818-1883) in the context of Russian history needs no introduction. Marx, a student of Hegel's, is commonly perceived to have 'turned Hegel on his head'. What is meant by this is that where Hegel identified a metaphysical teleology in history, defined by the becoming of Spirit, Marx identified a materialist teleological determinism, working towards the 'becoming' of the proletariat and the final arrival of communism across the world. The metaphysical was thus turned over and replaced by the material. As Hook notes in his study *From Hegel to Marx*:

> [Marx] shares with Hegel the belief that the order of historical events is more than a confused record of chance occurrences. He does not claim that anything could have happened in the past. Nor that there are unlimited degrees of freedom in the present

[91] Roberts, *Nothing but History*, p. 28.
[92] Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London, 1957), p. 3.

> and the future. But he differs from Hegel in refusing to believe that what did happen has any more meaning than what individual men can find in it.[93]

Marx's interpretation of history was based upon his ostensibly empirical studies into human history around the world. According to the terms of his pseudo-scientific theories, the progression of human society through a number of stages, inevitably reaching that final stage of communism, was guaranteed by the logic of an internal dialectic in which a series of crises produced new world orders. This process was both highly determined and driven by a clear teleology. As with Hegel, Marx will also be discussed in greater depth later.

In contrast to Hegel and Marx, Nietzsche did not offer a 'universal' philosophy of history in the way they did. Indeed he was contemptuous of the nineteenth-century preoccupation with the past:

> Not only is Nietzsche's contribution to the assault on metaphysics widely recognised, it is taken for granted that, as one aspect of that assault, he denigrated "history," helping to undermine the premium on historical modes of understanding characteristic of the nineteenth century.[94]

Nietzsche impacted on Russian historical thinking in that he helped give momentum to the intellectual forces moving against the metaphysical, 'universal' histories of philosophers such as Hegel, forces that were maturing in the late nineteenth century. However, Nietzsche still offered a radical call to human potential and freedom in history. Putting emphasis on human *will*, Nietzsche prophesied that man could reach beyond his present circumstances and radically alter the future. For example, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885), Zarathustra proclaims:

> Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills

[93] Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (New York, 1994), p. 38.
[94] Roberts, *Nothing but History*, p. 58.

> *its own* will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world.[95]

Nietzsche therefore wanted to detach man from the abstract strictures of metaphysical systems and allow him to fulfil his ability to become great. Man in Nietzsche's reckoning was unfettered from the past and free to realise what he wanted in history. This great power that Nietzsche invested in man, free from any sort of historical coercion, was a powerful idea and many Russians felt compelled to either contend or agree with it.

The discipline and study of history has of course moved on further in the twentieth century, including the development of the Annales School and the move into modernity and then on to post-modernity.[96] However, the Russian thinkers we are dealing with demonstrated no awareness of the sorts of developments going on in the discipline of history, as they were still very much grounded in nineteenth-century patterns of thought.

The Christian philosophy of history and the idea of Kairos

The final intellectual context which needs to be outlined relates to ideas about history in the Christian tradition, as this played a major role in Russian thinking. The basic Christian notion of history, laid out in the Bible, is well known: after man fell from Eden into the world, human history began. The eventual resolution of this history will be the second coming of God and the salvation of all mankind. As has already been suggested, this bears significant similarity to the Plotinian historical narrative in which activity in the Soul engenders time from eternity (akin to the Fall),

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[95] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathrustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (London, 2003), p. 55.

[96] For a characteristic representation of the modernist school of historiography, amongst many others, see Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essay in Cultural Criticism* (London, 1978). For a post-modernist historiography, see Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London, 1991).

but that at some later point this time will disappear and all will return back to eternity (the point of salvation). However, looked at in more depth, there are also some further, distinctive aspects of the Christian interpretation of history.

One of these features is the focus on the historical significance of specific events, many of which concern Christ. These include his life, death and resurrection. McGrath notes:

> The New Testament is saturated with the belief that something new has happened in the history of humanity, in and through the life and death of Jesus Christ, and above all through his resurrection from the dead. The theme of *hope* predominates, even in the face of death.[97]

Christianity therefore places great emphasis on what it interprets to be seminal events in the passage of history. This identifies specific moments in the course of history as taking on particular value, as Ricouer explains:

> …Christian Revelation scandalized the Greeks though the narration of those "sacred" events: creation, fall, covenant, prophetic utterances, and, more fundamentally, "Christian" events such as incarnation, cross, empty tomb, and the birth of the Church at Pentecost.[98]

Single, critical events therefore mark out providential developments in the Christian understanding of history. Many Russian thinkers continued to look for the religious importance of critical moments in their own time.

As noted by McGrath in the quotation above, the importance of the events surrounding Christ also engenders hope, which constitutes the foundations of the Christian perspective on future history. This hope allows the Christian to believe that the future course of history is guaranteed by the providence of God: history will come

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[97] McGrath, *Christian Theology,* pp. 541-42.
[98] Paul Ricoeur, *History and Truth*, translated by Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston, 1965), p. 84.

to an end with the second coming of Christ, with the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven and the end of suffering:

> For the Christian, faith in the Lordship of God dominates his entire vision of history. If God is the Lord of individual lives he is also Lord of history: God directs this uncertain, noble, and guilty history toward Himself.[99]

This ending to history is *eschatological*, as has already been explained. In eschatology it is expected that the world will change permanently, that a new order will come about:

> A characteristic Christian belief, of decisive importance in this context, is that time is linear, not cyclical. History had a beginning; it will one day come to an end. "Eschatology" deals with a network of beliefs relating to the end of life and history, whether of an individual or of the world in general.[100]

In Christian eschatology there are three central interpretations. The first is *futurist*, believing that the kingdom of God lies in the future and will one day suddenly intervene into human life; the second is *inaugurated*, expressing the belief that the kingdom of God has begun to be established in the world, but that it is not yet completed; the third is *realised*, which states that the kingdom of God has already been realised in the coming of Christ.[101] We shall see how Berdiaev tends towards the first of these eschatological interpretations whereas Bulgakov's thought is closer to the second.

The Christian Idea of Kairos

The notion of 'Kairos', an appointed time of reckoning in which the flow of time or 'Chronos' is broken down, is also an influential idea in much Christian thought, but

[99] Ibid., p. 92.
[100] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 540.
[101] Ibid., p. 547.

it takes on particular significance when eschatological thinking is taken into account. The notion of Kairos was originally developed from the Greek tradition of rhetoric: the moment of Kairos was considered a particularly opportune moment for an action. In Christian thinking, however, it took on a much grander, historical scope. Paul Tillich, the twentieth-century theologian, wrote in particular detail about the notion of Kairos. He writes:

> We call this fulfilled moment, the moment of time approaching us as fate and decision, *Kairos.* In doing this we take up a word that was, to be sure, created by the Greek linguistic sense, but attained the deeper meaning of fullness of time, of decisive time, only in the thinking of early Christianity and its historical consciousness.[102]

If we turn to the Bible, Kairos, although often appearing either in translation or in indirect reference, is a pertinent, widespread notion which is often recalled when discussing the idea of temporal or historical 'fulfilment'. In Mark 1:15, for example, it is written:

> And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Similarly, in II Corinthians 6:2:

> For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Both of these quotations propagate the sense that 'the time has come' or that 'time is at hand', and both also imply an apocalyptic context which is particularly influential in Russian thinking. The idea of Kairos, then, will elucidate some of the theological background to Berdiaev's and Bulgakov's – particularly Berdiaev's – thought about time. It not only describes an apocalyptic context in which a notion of temporal and

[102] Paul Tillich, *The Interpretation of History* (New York, 1936), p. 129.

historical fruition is perceived in particularly clear form, but also describes how the flow of history and time is perceived to empty out into a particular moment or decision. This is a key notion in any eschatological schema, and figures prominently in both thinkers. Kairos also adds an urgency to conceptualisations of time and history, something that will be particularly notable when we come to look at Berdiaev and Bulgakov in more depth.

Summary

A number of key themes emerge from this brief overview of the historical concepts that were influential for Russian conceptualisations of history. The first of these is the point raised at the outset, namely, as identified by Roberts, that around the *fin de siècle* period, thinkers frequently looked for either a 'suprahistorical' or a temporal meaning to the world. We will see how the two thinkers who form the subject of this thesis tend towards opposite sides – Bulgakov the former, Berdiaev the latter. However, at the same time each offers profound speculation on both the 'suprahistorical' and the temporal, so the distinction is not entirely clear-cut. Next, in their thought about history the theme of *determinism* will be particularly contentious. The historical determinism which was given shape by philosophers such as Hegel and Marx was particularly influential in the Russian context, whether this was manifested in a continuation of deterministic thinking or a radical reaction against it. Finally, there is the context of the Christian interpretation of history, which offered a broad model of history around which other concepts could be implemented. Christian ideas featured prominently in both philosophers' understandings of history.

4. The concept of temporality

A final concept used in this thesis needs to be highlighted here. An investigation into the intellectual concerns of time and history has two aspects. For our purposes, the main aspect concerns philosophical *conceptualisations* of time and history. The background to these has been explored. However, a second aspect concerns the way in which this time or time-as-history is actually *experienced*. These two aspects – experience and conceptualisation – work to inform one another, and therefore exploration of the understanding of temporal and historical *experience* will enrich and deepen analysis of the more complex *conceptualisations* which are at least in part built upon this experience. McKeon, for example, notes how questions arising from an experience of time influence a commentator in the way he then thinks about time (and, likewise, history):

> "Time and temporality" is a formula to designate time in its circumstances, substantive and cognitive, and it may be used as a device by which to develop and examine the variety of circumstances in which "time" acquires its variety of meanings in the context of a variety of problems...[103]

'Temporality', then, will better orientate an understanding of a conceptualisation of time, as it provides a context in which it can make more sense. Similarly, Koselleck, a distinguished contemporary thinker on the question of time and history, has proposed that in the historical realm 'experience' (i.e. the experience of the present) and 'expectation' (comparable to a conceptualisation of time or imagination of the passage into the future) are intimately linked. He suggests:

> …[they are] indicative of a general human condition; one could say that they indicate an

[103] R. McKeon, 'Time and Temporality', *Philosophy East and West,* vol. 24, no. 2 (April 1974), pp. 123-28 (p.123).

> anthropological condition without which history is neither possible nor conceivable.[104]

A close relationship between these two dimensions of thought about time – time and temporality – has therefore been posited relatively recently.[105]

In the two main chapters of the thesis, there will thus be some space given to an account of Bulgakov's and Berdiaev's temporal *experience*. Experience, in this reckoning, should not refer to their direct analysis of time or history: it is instead concerned with commentary and thought specifically about the present, with how the contemporaneous situation is understood and related to. This is what is meant by *temporality*. This means that, when discussing temporality, we will be looking at time, history and their related problems, extending forwards and backwards, through the prism of the present. It is intended that in this way the two philosophers' thinking about time and history will be better understood as it will be *contextualised* within a more immediate historical timeframe. Analysis in each case will therefore proceed via the following model: temporality, as it is a broader, more simple concept will be explored first, and then conceptualisations of time and history will be discussed afterwards. These conceptualisations will thus be located within a better defined intellectual and historical context.

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[104] Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time,* trans. K. Tribe (New York, 2004), p. 257.

[105] For further work on the questions of time and history, see, for example, Ged Martin, *Past Futures: The Impossible Necessity of History* (Toronto, 2004); G. Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven, 1994).

5. The Russian Tradition

One of the aims of this thesis is an attempt to locate Russian thought about a philosophical problem within a broader intellectual context, as it often happens that much scholarship focuses on the purely Russian dimensions of a philosophical problem. Having said this, there is clearly a significant Russian context that needs to be explored, as Russian ideas grew in the context of not only a European, but also a Russian background.

Historical thought in Russia

In the Russian context, historical themes figure more prominently and have been analysed in more depth than those relating to time. However, this merely reflects the fact that many of the better known Russian thinkers engaged with this sort of problem were active in the nineteenth century, when historical thought was, as has already been mentioned, in vogue. Bulgakov and Berdiaev were writing when such thinking had lost some of its popularity, and it will be quite noticeable how little, beyond some broader conceptual and structural similarities, they have in common with many of the ideas about time and history that are characteristic of nineteenth-century Russian thought. The following overview is not intended to outline exhaustively the Russian engagement with the problem of history, but rather to present the tradition into which Bulgakov and Berdiaev were entering.

Chaadaev, the Slavophiles and Westernisers

Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856) is a deeply significant thinker in the history of Russian philosophy, and, as Zen’kovskii has noted, he has always attracted the

attention of historians of Russian thought.[106] In terms of the themes that are being examined here, Chaadaev played a particular role in the development of the Russian philosophy of history, and also suggested a certain orientation with respect to time. Although in many ways different to Bulgakov and Berdiaev, he nonetheless played a part in the creation of a Russian mode of thinking in which contemplation of history and the end of history became well entrenched.

As Losskii notes, Chaadaev's philosophical worldview had a strikingly religious character,[107] and his ideas about history, which frequently exhibit a French, Catholic influence, demonstrate this. Walicki writes:

> At the root of Chaadaev's philosophy of history were his beliefs in a "universal mind" – a collective consciousness evolving within the historical process – and in the importance of the social and organizational functions of the Church.[108]

Within this understanding of history Providence dominated and the role of individual will was diminished. Waliciki continues to explain:

> Man can be called truly great and free when he realizes the creator's design and indentifies his own will with the superior will animating history. Unlike the traditional Providentialists, Chaadaev thus attempted to reconcile the notion of a transcendent Providence with an immanentist philosophy of history.[109]

This attempt at identifying the transcendent 'superior will' immanently within history recalls the Hegelian notion of a transcendent spirit subjecting itself to the teleological process of becoming within history. Chaadaev's philosophy of history thereby reflected the broad notions about history existing elsewhere in Europe at this point, which held that there was a single, universal meaning to history. However,

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[106] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 161.
[107] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, p. 56.
[108] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 84.
[109] Ibid., p. 85.

Chaadaev also charged this with a potent sense of religiosity.

The second notable aspect of Chaadaev's philosophy of history, possibly more important than the first, was how he linked his ideas about history to a value-laden, at first deeply negative discussion of Russia's historical fate. These ideas were laid down in 1829-30 in the first of his *Philosophical Letters*. Here he wrote:

> Дело в том, что мы никогда не шли вместе с другими народами, мы не принадлежим ни к одному из известных семейств человеческого рода, ни к Западу, ни к Востоку, и не имеем традиций ни того, ни другого. Мы стоим как бы вне времени, всемирное воспитание человеческого рода на нас не распространилось. Дивная связь человеческих идей в преемстве поколений и история человеческого духа, приведшие его во всем остальном мире к его теперешнему состоянию, на нас не оказали никакого действия.[110]

Chaadaev thereby developed a sense of the non-historicity of Russia, and similarly the sense that it lay 'outside time' – there is a feeling that Russia somehow sits outside the providential processes of history. The powerful notion of Russia's historical backwardness, the cure to which Chaadaev believed lay in an emulation of the West, would spark one of the defining Russian philosophical debates of the nineteenth century. This argument was fought between the Westernisers on the one side, who believed that the West held the key to Russia's future, and the Slavophiles on the other, who believed that Russia was unique historically, geographically and spiritually, and that these special characteristics marked Russia out as superior to the West. They accordingly constructed philosophies of history in which a Russian historical 'mission' took on universal eschatological significance.[111] Chaadaev thus postulated a number of ideas which helped to define the tradition in which Bulgakov

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[110] Petr Chaadaev, *Filosoficheskie pis'ma,* Pis'mo pervoe. In Chaadaev, *Sochineniia*, pp. 15-34 (p. 18). The First Letter was published, by mistake of the censor, in 1836.
[111] For a definitive account of this debate, see Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*.

and Berdiaev later operated.

Danilevskii

Nikolai Danilevskii (1822-1885) is another Russian philosopher of the nineteenth century who is well-known for the development of an elaborate philosophy of history. His philosophy demonstrated Slavophile tendencies and was concerned with the historical fate of Russia, but also went beyond this. Danilevskii was thus not a conventional Slavophile. As MacMaster puts it:

> [Danilevskii] was no orthodox Slavophil gone astray. He never wholly believed in the doctrine.[112]

Like many other Russian thinkers, his interests were broad, in this case including botany, zoology, economics, ethnography, statistics and history.[113] Much of this found its way into his philosophy of history. However, his most notable success concerns the elaboration of the idea of 'cultural-historical types'. Bazhov notes:

> Соответственно Н. Я. Данилевский – создатель теории культурно-исторических типов, является родоначальником одного из влиятельных направлений в философско-историческом мышлении XX века.[114]

After describing the various 'types' of cultural-historical civilisations, Danilevskii outlined a set of laws according to which these types would develop across history. He sets this out in *Rossiia i Evropa* (1869):

> Начну прямо с изложения некоторых общих выводов или законов исторического развития, вытекающих из группировки его явлений по культурно-историческим типам.[115]

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[112] Robert E. MacMaster, *Danilvesky: A Russian Totalitarian Philosopher* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 182.
[113] S. I. Bazhov, *Filosofiia istorii N. Ia. Danilevskogo* (Moscow, 1997), p. 7.
[114] Ibid., p. 8.
[115] Danilevskii, *Rossiia i Evropa,* p. 77.

The broader purpose behind defining these cultural-historical types was to highlight the absence of a unified humanity, since Danilevskii held that it is the existence of the many different types which characterises human civilisation. History is therefore seen as the competing interaction of these types, as Losskii describes:

> Смысл культурно-исторических типов состоит в том, что каждый из них по-своему выражает идею человека, и совокупность этих идей есть нечто всечеловеческое. Всемирное владычество одного культурно-исторического типа было бы оскудением жизни.[116]

Danilevskii also adds a latent teleological framework to this interpretation of competing historical types, by suggesting that the Slavic type will be the first to be grounded in all four categories (religious, scientific-artistic-technical, political, social-economic) of civilisation, and that an all-Slavic federation will rise after the fall of European history and the Austro-Hungarian empire.[117]

Danilevskii thus developed a philosophy of history which, whilst not influencing Bulgakov or Berdiaev in any particularly notable way, demonstrated many common Russian themes such as panslavism and eschatology.

Leon'tev

The philosophy of Konstantin Leont'ev (1831-1891) resonated with Berdiaev in particular, although this was perhaps more due to the former's anti-equality stance and his assertion of the aristocratic nature of truth rather than his philosophy of history. Leont'ev's understanding of history centred on analogy to the growth, flourishing, and final decay of an organism. It is outlined in *Vizantizm i Slavianstvo*

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[116] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, p. 79.
[117] Ibid., p. 79.

(1875).[118] Walicki summarises:

> All development, Leontiev argues, passes through three fundamental stages that are common not only to biological evolution but also to the evolution of artistic styles or whole social organisms. The starting point is a period of simplicity in which a primitive homogeneity prevails […] The transition to the second stage is a process of growing complexity in which both the whole and its parts become individualized […] this second stage culminates in "flourishing complexity," i.e. maximum differentiation […] From this moment evolution passes into [the third stage of] disintegration…[119]

Leont'ev's estimation of the historical process was therefore quite negative. He was familiar with Danliveskii's idea of cultural-historical types and willingly adopted it in order to demonstrate how the European 'type' followed his model of diversification and decay.[120] He saw such decay chiefly in Western pluralism and liberalism, and was deeply concerned that Russia was being forced to follow the European path:

> Но неужели мы, русские (и все славяне, с нами вместе), в самом деле раз навсегда уже прикованы к развитой колеснице Запада?.. Неужели нет никакого поворота с этого общего пути, на котором уже *нет спасения (это, кажется, ясно)*?[121]

His solution to the problem of encroaching European liberalism in Russia was bold, and is put forwards in his famed thesis of 'freezing Russia':

> Нельзя же действовать теперь противу привилегий, которых нет; а надо, напротив того, действовать в наше время противу *равенства и либерализма...* То есть надо *подморозить* хоть немного Россию, чтобы она не «гнила»...[122]

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[118] In K. N. Leont'ev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvenadtsati tomakh*, vol. 7, book 2 (St Petersburg, 2006), pp. 300-443. See in particular Chapter 6, 'Chto takoe protsess razvitiia?', pp. 373-82.
[119] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 301.
[120] Ibid., p. 302.
[121] From an editorial in *Varshavskii dnevnik*, 15th February, 1880, in Leont'ev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7, book 2, pp. 59-62 (p. 60).
[122] From an editorial in *Varshavskii dnevnik*, 1st March, 1880, in Leont'ev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7, book 2, pp. 69-73 (pp. 72-73).

Leont'ev's response to the movements he perceived in history was one of deep reaction: he seemed to suggest that it was possible to arrest a little the movement of the historical process outlined in his theory of development by somehow 'freezing' Russia and stopping the onset of inevitable decay.

Leont'ev again highlights the diversity of the Russian nineteenth century engagement with the problem of history, and posits one of the more unorthodox theories on the nature of history. Continuing the debate begun by Chaadaev, he was still eager to demonstrate the bankruptcy of the European developmental paradigm. Leon'tev's suggestion of turning time and history around or 'backwards' also reappeared in the work of another equally unusual philosopher, Nikolai Fedorov (1829-1903), with his task for redirecting human effort from forward-looking progress to resurrection of all past generations of forefathers.

Solov'ev

The work of Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900) had great significance for the course of Silver Age philosophy in Russia. He is the most influential of the Russian religious philosophers, and emphasised the importance of religion *over* philosophy, rather than the other way round. As Shestov commented in 1927:

> [Соловьев] не от философии пришел к религии, а от религии к философии.[123]

Both Bulgakov and Berdiaev, but particularly Bulgakov, were influenced by him. Solev'ev's deepest intuition, as Berdiaev notes, concerned the themes of *all-unity* and *Sophia*:

> У Вл. Солевьева, как и всякого значительного мыслителя, была своя первичная целостная интуитция, из которой объясняется все его миросозерцание. То была

[123] Lev Shestov, 'Umozrenie i Apokalipsis', 1927. In D. K. Burlak (ed.), *Vl. Solov'ev: pro et contra. Lichnost' i tvorchestva Vladimira Solov'eva v otsenke russkikh myslitelei i issledovatelei*, vol. 2 (St Petersburg, 2002), pp. 467-530 (p. 486).

> интуиция конкретного всеединтсва, связанная со встречей с Софией Вечной Женственностью Божией.[124]

This theme of a search for unity through philosophy, started by Ivan Kireevskii (1806-1856) and propagated through the Slavophile movement, found an influential formulation in the work of Solov'ev. The notion of *Sophia*, the Divine Wisdom, was an important concept here and it figured very prominently in Bulgakov's thought.

Solov'ev's philosophy of history was also influential for a number of Russian thinkers, although his thinking on this theme is spread across his work rather than being elaborated in a single text.[125] A search for unity, manifested in the idea of the eschatological, final re-unification of the churches, constituted a core aspect of his idea of history, which may be at odds with some more Russo-centric worldviews. Within this schema *Sophia*, a bridge between metaphysical and material, played a critical role. These ideas will be discussed in greater depth later when we turn to Bulgakov, as they had particular significance for him.

Russian Marxists and Revolutionaries

The Russian Marxist and otherwise revolutionary 'philosophical' engagement with the questions of time and history is understandably quite limited, in view of the fact that many of them were social and political activists rather than philosophers. Indeed, many would have balked at the suggestion that they were philosophers, as it was against such bourgeois pursuits as endless philosophical debate that they protested. There are many excellent accounts of the social and political dimensions

[124] N. A. Berdiaev, 'Vladimir Solov'ev i my', 1937. In Burlak (ed.), *Vl. Solov'ev: pro et contra,* pp. 176-81 (p. 177).
[125] For an overview of Solov'ev's ideas about history, see: Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation.*

of such movements.[126] However, there is certainly a case to be made that Russian Marxists and revolutionaries, in their often pathological focus on the coming revolution, espoused a quite distinct philosophy of history. The Marxist dimensions of the philosophy of history have already been outlined and need not be repeated. What is peculiar to the Russian aspect of this, however, is the frequently eschatological, or, more specifically, *millenarian* tones that the Russian Marxist perspective on history took. This locates them within the arena of more traditional Russian philosophy, as eschatology was an already well-established intellectual commonplace in Russia. Sergei Nechaev (1847-1882), Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) and Leon Trotskii (1879-1940) all demonstrate different interpretations of a similar predisposition towards such millenarian thought.[127]

Time in Russian Philosophy

As has been mentioned above, the scholarly discussion of the theme of history in Russian philosophy has been considerably more extensive than the discussion of time. Indeed, the specific problem of time as such has attracted relatively little attention. However, this should not be taken as an indication that Russian philosophers and writers did not engage with the problem of time. To the contrary, a Russian concern with time can be traced which exhibits some clearly identifiable characteristics. Although it is not my contention that the problem of time was an overt theme in the Russian tradition, it is nonetheless possible to demonstrate how it has been broached by a range of Russian thinkers.

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[126] See, for example: L. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (London, 1955); Alain Besançon, *The Intellectual Origins of Leninism* (Oxford, 1981); and Derek Offord, *The Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s* (Cambridge, 1986).

[127] For a further discussion of this theme see Peter Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After* (London, 1999).

This concern with time comes into particular focus when viewed through the prism of an idea discussed by Berdiaev. He postulated an *existential* time, an interior, non-uniform, concentrated form of time. This idea bears similarities to a number of other Russian thinkers, who likewise alluded to a special time of almost extra-temporal experience, where the perceptible, commonplace rhythm of regular time breaks down. This form of time is often juxtaposed against a more formulaic, external time which is regular, tangible and more commensurate, in certain respects, to history. The axiomatic value attached to these forms of time also varies: some see the extra-temporal space as problematic, whilst others, like Berdiaev, see it as the realm of prophecy and truth. To demonstrate this theme in Russian thought we will take four prominent intellectual figures – Chaadaev, Gertsen, Dostoevksii, and Tolstoi – who all demonstrate an engagement with these ideas in different ways.

Chaadaev, as has already been mentioned, developed a philosophy of history which was deeply influential in the development of Russian thinking. However, his ideas relating to the historical position of Russia suggested a striking philosophical assumption concerning the relationship that Russia and the Russian people had with time. He suggested that Russia stood beyond the normal flow of time, in a kind of "outer" time where the regularities of the normal temporal course are not perceptible:

> Мы стоим как бы вне времени, всемирное воспитание человеческого рода на нас не распространилось. Дивная связь человеческих идей в преемстве поколений и история человеческого духа, приведшие его во всем остальном мире к его теперешнему состоянию, на нас не оказали никакого действия.[128]

Chaadaev thus suggests that Russia somehow lay 'outside time' and that it was untouched by the 'history of the human spirit'. Although not attributing any positive

[128] Petr Chaadaev, *Filosoficheskie pis'ma, Pis'mo pervoe*, p. 18.

value to such an extra-temporal position, as Berdiaev later would, Chaadaev is nonetheless identifying a special temporal domain in which departure from the common rhythms of time and history – where human ideas, generations and spirit are all connected – is possible.

Gertsen, albeit to a lesser extent, at times expresses himself in ways which resonate with this idea of temporal deracination. Although a thinker more engaged in the empirical world of politics, history, and society, a similar sense of an extra-temporality or non-historicity emerges in parts of *S togo berega* (1850), originally published in German. In a more romantic mode, we read in the opening dialogue of the text:

> Стало быть, наша мысль привела нас к несбыточным надеждам, к нелепым ожиданиям; с ними, как с последним плодом наших трудов, мы захвачены волнами на корабле, который тонет. Будущее не наше, в настоящем нам нет дела; спасться некуда, мы с этим кораблем связаны на живот и на смерть остается, сложа руки, ждать, пока вода зальет, а кому скучно, кто поотважнее, тот может броситься в воду.[129]

Although this is evidently a less overt rendition of the theme that has been detected in Chaadaev's thought, there is a similar suggestion of the possibility of a domain lying outside the usual flow of time. It is more grounded in events, as is suggested by the physical metaphor of the ship, but the possibility of a step beyond the standard experience of time, which relates to the flow of the present into the future, is still posited. Later in his life, Gertsen made separate claims which also resonate with the Berdiaevian theme of the importance of the present, the experience of the now, albeit in a different way. In his essay on Robert Owen, the British socialist, Gertsen

[129] A. I. Gertsen, *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniia,* vol. 2 (Moscow, 1946), p. 22.

discussed how mankind had been liberated from old ideas about history: freed from religious ideas and determinism, he wrote, history was 'going nowhere', and could therefore go 'wherever possible'. A sense of great historical culmination is thereby evinced in the essay, focused on the idea that in the present, in the all-important now, man had be liberated from predestination and that anything was possible.[130] Similarly, then, there is the suggestion of a special, deeper time, connected to the present moment, which is opposed to linear models of time and history which suggest determination.

Although often dealing with the uniform, historical time that we see in texts such as *Voina i mir*, in certain texts Tolstoi also demonstrates a sense of another time, a time outside the regular flow of existence. *Smert' Ivana Il'icha* provides an example of how Tolstoi dealt with this other form of time. In this text, although there is a strong sense of the regular time which the living characters experience – Tolstoi makes a number of references to the years, months, weeks and days that they live by – these temporal markers have less importance for Ivan Il'ich as he moves closer to death. Indeed, there is a sense of an *eschatological present* in this text, the living experience of the final moments of death. We see this when, by the end of the tale, Ivan Il'ich fully grasps that his death is imminent. He becomes almost fully detached from regular time:

> – У! Уу! У! – кричал он на разные интонации. Он начал кричать: «Не хочу!» – и так продолжал кричать на букву «у».
>
> Все три дня, в продолжение которых для него не было времени, он барахтался в том черном мешке, в который просовывала его невидимая непреодолимая

[130] A. I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1954-66) , pp. 240-253.

сила.[131]

There is a sense across this text, particularly evident in the latter stages of Ivan Il'ich's illness, that he experiences time in a different way as he moves closer to the end. Tolstoi thus similarly makes use of this 'other' time often touched upon by Russian thinkers and philosophers, in this case exploring how the dying have access to a different temporal space, which symbolises a path to the end. This time orientated toward death, this eschatological present, is contrasted to the regular time of the living world.

Throughout much of his work, Dostoevskii makes a similar use of time which at moments suggests that two types of time – a normal, regular time and a special, concentrated time where such regularity breaks down – exist. In this latter form of time there is frequently a pervasive sense of *crisis*, a theme which will also be explored in Bulgakov's and Berdiaev's thought as a shared feature. Such a time is particularly evident in *Idiot*, most notably at the points prior to when Prince Myshkin experiences epileptic seizures. At these moments, it is almost as if Myshkin slips out of the normal flow of time into a moment of understanding and clarity, which in itself takes on a prophetic, mystical character:

> Гром, крик, драгоценные осколки, рассыпавшиеся по ковру, испуг, изумление – о, что было с князем, то трудно, да почти не надо изображать! Но не можем не упомянуть об одном странном ощущении, поразившем его именно в это самое мгновение и вдруг ему выяснившемся из толпы всех других смутных и странных ощущений: не стыд, не скандал, не страх, не внезапность поразили его больше всего, а сбывшееся пророчество! [....] Еще мгновение, и как будто все пред ним

[131] L. N. Tolstoi, 'Smert' Ivana Il'icha', *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 12 (Moscow, 1964), pp. 57-115 (p. 113).

> расширилось, вместо ужаса – свет и радость, восторг; стало срипать дыхание и... но мгновение прошло.[132]

Dostoevskii uses time as something pliable, and in this instance we see how the 'moment', a single, concentrated temporal point, rises out of the regular flow of time. Everything expands, becomes clearer and more acute: indeed the feeling of immediacy becomes less important to Myshkin than the clarity and the 'prophecy' that is revealed in an isolated temporal moment. Bakhtin,[133] in his discussion of Dostoevskii's poetics, similarly asserts that this special, concentrated time that Dostoevskii uses is a notable feature of his work:

> Только то, что можеть быть осмысленно дано одновременно, что может быть осмысленно связано между собою в одно времени, - только то существенно и входит в мире достоевского; оно может быть перенесено в вечность, ибо в вечность, по Достоевскому, все сосуществует. То же, что имеет смысл как «раньше» или как «позже», что довлеет своему моменту, что оправдано лишь как прошлое, или как будущее, или как настоящее в отношении к прошлому и будущему, то для него не существенно и не входит в его мир.[134]

In Dostoevskii's work, this concentrated, simultaneous time, where things intersect with eternity and where the distinctions of past and future break down, is a notable theme. Again, then, we see a sense of an extra-temporal space where the regular flow of time is no longer important. Instead, a more acute, concentrated experience of time opens up.

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[132] F. M. Dostoevskii, *Idiot. Roman v chetyrekh chastiakh. Chasti tret'ia i chetvertaia* (Moscow, 1971), p. 202.

[133] Bakhtin presents a number of influential ideas on the question of time, many of which continue to be discussed in contemporary scholarship. However, given the limits of space, there will not be a detailed discussion of Bakhtin, particularly in view of the fact that neither Bulgakov nor Berdiaev indicated that they read Bakhtin's work. Further, by the time Bakhtin was publishing, the two were already old men and had fully established their own philosophical systems. A more complete overview of the Russian approach to time would, however, include a full section on Bakhtin.

[134] M. Bakhtin, *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* (Moscow, 1979), p. 34.

5. Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev

In this concluding section of the Introduction, we will turn now to the two thinkers who are the focus of this thesis. Bulgakov and Berdiaev were two central philosophical figures of the Silver Age period in Russia. They were active in the major philosophical and religious communities before the revolution and both were exiled in 1922 by the Bolshevik regime.[135] In exile they independently took on leading roles in the Russian emigration. Bulgakov, when in Paris, helped found the St Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in 1925, and Berdiaev rose to fame as one of the most published and translated Russian philosophers in Europe – he was even given an honorary doctorate by the University of Cambridge in 1947.[136] As philosophers, then, they were both well respected and well-known.

Born only three years apart, Bulgakov and Berdiaev lived through the same intellectual and social movements developing in Russia and Europe, and occupied broadly similar philosophical positions, that is, as religious philosophers. Both moved from an initial position of 'Legal Marxism', a type of non-violent, gradualist socialism, on to a vaguely defined idealism concerned with the philosophical development of religious ideas. As young men, they were in some contact with one another and even co-edited a journal, *Novyi put'*, for a short time around 1904-05.[137] In his autobiography Berdiaev wrote favourably of his early dialogue with Bulgakov:

> Большую близость я чувствовал с С. Булгаковым, с которым переплетались наши пути во внешних проявлениях. У С. Булгакова тогда уже был решительный поворот к христианству и православию. Я же стоял еще на почве свободной

[135] For the fullest treatment of this remarkable event, see Lesley Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War: The Voyage of the Philosophy Steamer and the Exile of the Intelligentsia* (New York, 2006).
[136] Nikolai Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie. Opyt filosofskoi avtobiografii,* in Nikolai Berdiaev, *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 1 (Paris, 1949-83), p. 395. (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie.*)
[137] Ibid., pp. 156-57.

> духовности. Разговоры с С. Булгаковым в Киеве на религиозные темы имели для меня значение.[138]

Both also wrote in the three path-breaking Russian collections *Problemy idealizma* (1902), *Vekhi* (1909) and *Iz glubiny* (1918). Given the intellectual and historical confluence of their lives, then, a comparison between the two has clear attractions.

However, when looked at more deeply there are distinct differences in their thinking, which makes the contrast between them all the more interesting. Bulgakov allowed theology to penetrate into his philosophical worldview much more deeply than Berdiaev, and in 1918 he was ordained into the priesthood. His philosophical work – the work that this thesis is concerned with – was written before 1918, but still demonstrates his greater dependence on religious ideas. Berdiaev, on the contrary, was driven to solutions that were perhaps more philosophical than they were religious: although still maintaining a strong sense of faith throughout his work, the central concepts that Berdiaev dealt with, including existentialism, creativity and objectification, were more overtly philosophical than they were theological. Berdiaev and Bulgakov eventually therefore became quite distinct from one another in their thinking, and the intellectual processes through which this happened are the source of significant interest.

Most importantly for this project, both had a lot to say on the theme of time and history, and both came to very different resolutions of the time-history relationship, as has already been mentioned. However, there has been little recent work exploring the theme of history in either of these philosophers, and next to nothing concerning their philosophies of time. The scholarly background to both thinkers will be laid out in greater depth below.

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[138] Ibid., p. 151.

Scholarship on Bulgakov and Berdiaev

There has been a substantial amount of scholarship dedicated to both philosophers from the 1950s onwards, but since the 1990s the quality and scope of this work has increased. Bulgakov has been lately more popular than Berdiaev, but there is still a reasonably consistent stream of scholarship concerned with the latter.

Bulgakov

Generally speaking, due to the nature of his thinking as a whole, Bulgakov has been written about more in theological journals and books than in philosophical publications. However, he was initially also less well known than Berdiaev in broader philosophical and intellectual circles. Although Bulgakov appears in overviews of Russian thought such as those written by Losskii and Zen'kovskii,[139] there is not much of significance written about him from the 1950s to the early 1980s. A number of reasons could be suggested for this, but most likely Berdiaev's more outspoken, radical style, along with his more flamboyant personality and appearance made him more popular on a broader stage. Copleston wrote about Bulgakov in some depth in his 1988 work on Russian religious philosophy,[140] and from the 1990s onwards Bulgakov began to attract more attention. Catherine Evtukhov is the leading authority on Bulgakov outside Russia, and she has written the key intellectual biography of him available in English, published in 1997.[141] She has also published widely in Russian and English on Bulgakov elsewhere.[142] Work on Bulgakov gained further momentum towards the end of the 1990s and on beyond 2000. A number of essays on Bulgakov appear in Kornblatt and Gustafson's book on Russian religious

[139] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii;* Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii.*
[140] Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy*.
[141] Catherine Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle.*
[142] See, for example, E. Evtukhov, 'O snoskakh Bulgakova (ideinyi kontekst "Filosofii khoziaistva")', in M. A. Vasil'eva, A. P. Kozyrev (eds), *S. N. Bulgakov. Religiozno-filosofskii put'* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 140-54.

philosophy,[143] and he was the subject of an international conference held in Moscow, the papers of which were published in 1998.[144] Bulgakov then appears in a spate of works in the last decade concerned with various elements of Russian philosophy,[145] and also in the esteemed *Russkii put'* 'pro et contra' series.[146] As has been suggested, much of the focus on Bulgakov has concerned his theological work, specifically his ideas about Sophia. Vaganova's recent study provides an extensive discussion of this theme in Bulgakov's work,[147] but there is a wealth of material which deals with this and the other aspects of his theology. These are frequently discussed in journals, both philosophical and theological, and over the last ten years there has been a reasonably consistent stream of scholarship dedicated to his work on Orthodoxy.[148] Philosophical themes have not been entirely relegated, to which Krasicki's recent article is witness.[149] However, as this overview demonstrates, Bulgakov's thought has been much more the object of theological rather than philosophical research. A focus on the themes of history and time in Bulgakov's thought is attractive in that it contributes to the somewhat under-represented body of scholarship on Bulgakov's philosophy, as opposed to his theology.

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[143] J. D. Kornblatt, R. F. Gustafson (eds), *Russian Religious Thought* (Wisconsin, 1996).

[144] U. M. Osipova, V. M. Kul'kova, E. S. Zotovoi (eds), *Preodolenie vremeni. Po materialam mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi tvorcheskomu naslediiu S.N. Bulgakova* (Moscow, 1998).

[145] Significant works include, but are not limited to: Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology, Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Edinburgh, 2000); Sapronov, *Russkaia filosofiia*; T. G. Trubnitsyna, N. P. Nedzvetskaia (eds), *Dva Bulgakova. Raznye sudby,* 2 vols (Moscow, 2002); Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy* (2006).

[146] I. I. Evlampiev (ed.), *S. N. Bulgakov: pro et contra*. *Lichnost' i tvorchestvo Bulgakova v otsenke russkikh myslitelei i issledovatelei. Antologiia,* vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 2003).

[147] N. A. Vaganova, *Sofiologiia protoiereia Sergiia Bulgakova* (Moscow, 2010).

[148] See, for example: Aidan Nichols OP, 'Wisdom from Above? The Sophiology of Father Sergius Bulgakov', *New Blackfriars,* vol. 85, Issue 1000 (2004), pp. 598-613; Paul L. Gavrilyuk, 'Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, vol. 57, part 1 (April 2006), pp. 110-32; Andrew Louth, 'Sergii Bulgakov and the Task of Theology', *Irish Theological Quarterly,* 2009, vol. 74, pp. 243-57.

[149] Jan Krasicki, '"The tragedy" of German philosophy. Remarks on reception of German philosophy in the Russian religious thought (of S. Bulgakov and others)', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (February 2010), pp. 63-70.

Berdiaev

Scholarship on Berdiaev has gone through two distinct phases. The first of these was a great flowering of interest in Berdiaev and his work around the end of his life and after his death. In Europe and America, scholars, intellectuals, theologians and people who felt themselves to be inspired, one way or another, by Berdiaev's writing and thought published a large amount from the late 1940s to the end of the 1960s.[150] Unfortunately, much of this work, while not lacking in enthusiasm, suffered from a lack of scholarly rigour and objective analysis. There was some émigré Russian work on Berdiaev in the 1950s and 1960s,[151] and also an intriguing analysis from a Soviet intellectual in the 1970s.[152] This Russian material possessed a greater analytical acumen and clarity, as the calibre of commentator – notably figures such as Zen'kovskii and Losskii – was very high. With the passing of this generation, however, people became less interested in Berdiaev, and it was only in the 1990s and 2000s, with the broader resurgence of interest in Russian Silver Age philosophy, that interest began to grow again, in Europe and the USA as well as in Russia. In scholarship written in English, there has not been as much recent work dedicated to Berdiaev as there has been to Bulgakov.[153] However, especially in Russia, there has been a reasonably regular flow of articles published about

[150] See, amongst others: Evgueny Lampert, *Nicolas Berdyaev and the New Middle Ages* (London, 1945); Oliver Fielding Clarke, *Introduction to Berdyaev* (London, 1950); M.-M. Davy, *Nicolas Berdyaev: Man of the Eighth Day*, translated by Leonora Siepman (London, 1967); C. S. Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope: A Contribution to Marxist-Christian Dialogue* (Leiden, 1968); James C. S. Wernham, *Two Russian Thinkers: An Essay in Berdyaev and Shestov* (Toronto, 1968).
[151] Berdiaev featured in both Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, and Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*. His philosophy of history was also discussed in N. P. Poltoratskii, *Berdiaev i Rossiia. Filosofiia istorii Rossii u N. A. Berdiaeva* (New York, 1967).
[152] Kuvakin, *Kritika ekzistentsializma Berdiaeva*.
[153] Noteworthy discussions of Berdiaev include: A. A. Ermichev (ed.), *N.A. Berdiaev: pro et contra* (St Petersburg, 1994); Christian Gottlieb, *Dilemmas of Reaction in Leninist Russia: The Christian Response to the Revolution in the Works of N.A. Berdyaev 1917-1924* (Odense, 2003); Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy* (2006).

Berdiaev from the 1990s onwards, particularly in the journal *Voprosy filosofii*.[154] Two biographies have been published over the last 20 years, both in Russian.[155] Again, however, some of this modern material has suffered from a lack of critical insight, and some work is marked by its shortcomings.[156] The scholarly landscape around Berdiaev, then, is mixed: it contains some excellent work, but there is also much within it that is somewhat lacking in quality.

As has already been discussed, the problem of time, and time related to history, has had next to no exclusive discussion with relation to these thinkers. The works that have been dedicated to relevant topics – namely Poltoratskii's *Berdiaev i Rossiia*,[157] and Slaate's somewhat obscure work on Berdiaev's philosophy of time[158] – are discussed where they are directly relevant.

Structure and methodology

This thesis is separated into two large chapters. The first investigates Bulgakov's philosophy of 'history and time', in which he presents history as having primacy over time. The second discusses Berdiaev's philosophy of 'time and history', where he presents the alternative argument of time having primacy over history. Due

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[154] See, amongst others: A. L. Dobrokhotov, 'Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev', in A. L Dobrokhotov et al., *Russkie filosofy. Konets XIX – seredina XX veka* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 48-55; E. V. Dvoretskaia, 'Stanovlenie "my" v zapadnoi i russkoi personalisticheskoi filosofii: Levinas i Berdiaev', in Anan'eva et al., *Russkaia i evropeiskaia filosofiia: puti skhozhdeniia* (1999), pp. 93-98; Iu. Melikh, 'Sushchee lichnosti i lichnostnost' edinosushchego. K voprosu o spornosti personalizma u L. P. Karsavina i N. A. Berdiaeva', *Voprosy filosofii* (2008), no. 8, pp. 145-57; V. P. Vizgin, 'Nikolai Berdiaev i Gabriel' Marsel': k fenomenu vstrechi', *Voprosy filosofii*, 2010, no. 3, pp. 110-18. Particularly noticeable is Bonetskaia's excellent discussion of Berdiaev and Nietzsche: N. K. Bonetskaia, 'Apofeoz tvorchestva (N. Berdiaev i F. Nitsshe)', *Voprosy filosofii,* 2009, no. 4, pp. 85-106.

[155] A. V. Vadimov, *Zhizn' Berdiaeva* (Oakland, 1993); Ol'ga Volkogonova, *Berdiaev* (Moscow, 2010).

[156] One recent article deserves particular attention, as within it some of Berdiaev's ideas are quite obviously manipulated to support the broader argument of the article. See Alicja A. Gęścińska, Steven Lepez, 'Freedom as praxis: a comparative analysis of August Cieszkowski and Nikolaj Berdjaev', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (February 2010), pp. 109-23.

[157] N. P. Poltoratskii, *Berdiaev i Rossiia. Filosofiia istorii Rossii u N. A. Berdiaeva* (New York, 1967).

[158] Slaate, *Time, Existence and Destiny.*

to differences in their philosophical exposition and output, a different approach will be taken to each philosopher. With Bulgakov, due to his movement into the realm of theology in 1918, a shorter chronological period of work is examined (1900-18), so the investigative method taken will be *diachronic*. This means that his philosophy of history and time will be discussed as it unfolds, as there are clear, logical steps in the development of his philosophy. Berdiaev, however, is a more nebulous philosopher, and it has been elected to discuss his thought in a *synchronic* fashion, as his relevant work extends across most of his active life as a philosopher (1900-48). Synchronic analysis places greater emphasis on the construction of Berdiaev's thought, as he is rather vague when trying to present his ideas about a subject in full.

As has been outlined already, the analytic concepts applied to both will be the same: first there will be a discussion of their intuition of 'temporality', their perceptions of the time in which they live. This is intended to contextualise their *conceptual* thought about time and history, which will be discussed afterwards. In this way it is hoped that discussion and comparison of Bulgakov and Berdiaev will be firmly grounded in their historical and intellectual contexts. The comparative dimension will be examined more closely in the second chapter on Berdiaev, as it will be more clear when we come to discuss his thought how it contrasts to Bulgakov's philosophy.

All quotation will be indented in the style that has been established. For the sake of consistency, this will also include quotations shorter than one sentence in length. The central subdivisions within chapters will be numbered and underlined, the minor headings will be presented in italics.

Primary Sources

The central primary materials used in this thesis, the works of Bulgakov and Berdiaev, are readily available in print. These texts were all originally published between the 1930s and 1950s, many of them in France by the YMCA. Since then, the majority have then been re-published – some more than once – between the 1980s and 2000s. All are therefore available in reliable, scholarly editions. No complete collected works, however, have been published for either thinker.

Chapter 1: Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov

History and Time

1. Introduction

Sergei Bulgakov

Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) is an exemplary representative of the intellectual and philosophical generation in Russia which developed its thought across the Silver Age period. Born into a clergyman's family, Bulgakov renounced his faith at an early age and established himself as a recognised Marxist, only to then abandon this new belief in 1900 and return over a number of years to Orthodoxy. He described this path in the title to his first major publication, *Ot Marksizma k idealizmu* (1903), which recounts an intellectual journey broadly shared by a number of his contemporaries. Bulgakov's writing, in which currents of Neo-Kantianism, Orthodoxy and Marxism converge, demonstrates a rich and varied intellectual heritage. Considering the breadth of his work and the extent of his activity in intellectual and political groups in the early twentieth century, Bulgakov can be identified as a Russian thinker of particular importance.

Bulgakov's thought

Bulgakov's non-Marxist philosophical work began in 1901 with the lecture 'Karl Marks kak filosofskii tip', and ended around 1917 with *Svet nevechernii*.[159] He

[159] There exists a broad consensus that Bulgakov's philosophical work terminated with *Svet nevechernii*. See, for example: V. V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, vol. 2, part 2 (Leningrad, 1991), pp. 205-06; I. I. Evlampiev, 'Religioznyi idealizm S. N. Bulgakova: "za" i "protiv"', in Evlampiev (ed.), *S. N. Bulgakov: pro et contra*, pp. 7-59 (pp. 45-49); Elena Monakhinia, 'Professor protoierei

then took orders and became a priest in 1918, moving to theological problems and beyond the concerns of this project. As Krasicki notes:

> Theological dogma may lead philosophical thought beyond the barriers philosophy imposes on itself, to which Bulgakov's thought is a perfect witness. It can reveal the depth inaccessible to philosophical speculation.[160]

Desire to access this theological 'depth' led Bulgakov on to the discussion of problems which were not strictly philosophical. Indeed, the suggestion of a superior value being attached to the notion of 'depth' in itself testifies to the sorts of problems one encounters when subjecting more overtly theological material to philosophical investigation, and helps explain why we will not trace Bulgakov's thought beyond 1917.

In his philosophy, Bulgakov's central aim was to construct a religiously orientated idealism. This was, however, originally developed out of an attempt to refute the Marxism and Positivism that he had once esteemed. Quite differently to Berdiaev, who identified his defining philosophical problems in his first works, Bulgakov's philosophy took a number of years to develop, and we see over his seventeen-year philosophical period the process through which he came to formulate it. Bulgakov's idealism demonstrated the rule of the metaphysical or God over the material world,[161] although it still asserted the meaningful existence of the material dimension. He maintained that reality is both 'real' and 'ideal':

> Вся жизненная действительность идеально-реальна во всех своих изгибах, она алогично-логична.[162]

Sergii Bulgakov (1871-1944)', in S. Bulgakov, *Dva grada*. *Issledovaniia o prirode obshchestvennykh idealov* (St Petersburg, 1997), pp. 353-414 (pp. 376-77).

[160] Krasicki, '"The tragedy" of German philosophy', p. 69.

[161] A general impression of the 'metaphysical', which for Bulgakov had always been charged with religious and spiritual meaning, becomes synonymous with the 'divine' by 1917.

[162] S. N. Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (Moscow, 1990), p. 23.

Bulgakov searched for a deeper spiritual or religious meaning to govern the broad logic of human nature, the world and history. He looked for evidence of this meaning in specific material problems: he wrote extensively on the question of economy and developed a system whereby economic development took on metaphysical significance. However, when discussing the metaphysical, a key element of his thinking was the suggestion of a relationship between metaphysical and material coloured by deterministic assumptions, in which the metaphysical, through a variety of channels, controls what goes on within the material.

Although looking for a way in which the material and metaphysical could coexist harmoniously and in connection – thereby avoiding dualism – Bulgakov still maintained a *divide* between them. In *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) he looked instead to connect them through a different intellectual apparatus, and did this by taking on the Solov'evan concept of *Sophia*.[163] Recalling the cosmology of the nineteenth-century German idealist Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) and ideas from biblical scripture about Divine Wisdom,[164] Sophiology in Bulgakov's thought describes how everything in the material world possesses a potential metaphysical, divine (or *Sophiological)* value, which is given to them by Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, who exists in both material and metaphysical dimensions. Sophia, therefore, acts as *nexus* between the ideal and material realms, making possible simultaneous transcendence and immanence and a broader sense of unity. Sophia became a central feature of Bulgakov's developed religious-philosophical worldview.

Broadly, then, Bulgakov's thought is religious-idealist. However, the structure

[163] For fuller exploration of Russian Sophiology, see, amongst others: Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy*; Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy*; Garaeva, *Sofiinyi idealizm*.
[164] Nichols identifies particularly the 'wisdom texts' from the Old Testament as being of relevance to Bulgakov's Sophiology, including: The Book of Proverbs (1:1–9:18); The Book of Wisdom (6:22–11:1); The Book of Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach, 24:1–34); The Book of Baruch (3:9–4:4) and the Book of Job (28:1–28). Nichols, 'Wisdom from Above?', p. 605.

of this thinking, as will be shown, demonstrates a determinist bent much more characteristic of Marxist-Hegelian thought, and reflects the influence of a range of philosophers outside strictly Orthodox circles. In view of the way in which Bulgakov's thinking developed over time, a diachronic investigation of Bulgakov's philosophy will be favourable. This means that a longer introduction to his thinking is not necessary: as we trace the development of his philosophy, its terms will become clear.

The problem of history in Bulgakov's thought

In respect of the relationship between time and history in Russian Silver Age thinking, Bulgakov demonstrates a continued engagement with the question of history, rather than time, and also a historicised approach to a range of different philosophical, social and religious problems. For him, the problem of time is viewed through the prism of history – his principal thesis on time suggests that time *is* history:

> …во времени, т.е. в истории.[165]

It is only later in Bulgakov's philosophical development, specifically in *Svet nevechernii* (1917), that he gives space specifically to the question of time, and even here his grasp of time is still fundamentally historicised:

> «Трансцендентальное» время Канта, или отвлеченная форма времени, неизбежно мыслится как потенциальная бесконечность, не знающая ни начала ни конца; поэтому его идея и приводит разум к антиномии, обнаруженной самим же Кантом. Напротив, конкретное время, которым и является история, имеет и начало, и конец...[166]

Time is therefore *conceptualised* as history: Bulgakov needs to attach a historical

[165] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, pp. 90-91.
[166] S. N. Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii. Sozertsaniia i umozreniia* (Moscow, 1994), p. 302. (Hereafter Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*).

meaning to time and the sense of a beginning and end which he clearly believes is implicit in the idea of history. From the above it is also evident that this time conceptualised as history has a teleological dimension.

The nature of Bulgakov's conceptual engagement with the problem of history reveals a number of the trends identified in the introduction to this thesis. An interest in history issues both from the influence of Orthodox Christian thinking, which places a strong emphasis upon eschatology and historical destiny, and also from the influence of Hegelian and Marxist thought, in which historicism and a preoccupation with historical process are central to the development of an intellectual worldview.[167] Furthermore, as will be explored when looking at Bulgakov's sense of *temporality*, the cataclysmic background of early twentieth century Russia and Europe will also have provoked thought concerned with the direction and meaning of history. In a characteristic reflection upon the greater meaning of history, Bulgakov writes in 1903:

> Является ли человек, а затем человечество, а затем его история только фактом, непредвиденным результатом причинных рядов, не имеющим никакой внутренней необходимости, а лишь необходимость внешнюю, или же человек и историческое человечество несет в себе абсолютную идею, выполняет абсолютную задачу, существует не вследствие случайной комбинации причин, а во имя нравственной цели?[168]

As the above suggests, it will be revealed how history provides Bulgakov with a means to perceive a system of governing forces which are based not on empirical, scientific laws, but rather on religious, metaphysical and divine laws. They direct the movement of history, and therefore mankind and the world, towards the coming of

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[167] Popper suggested that 'historicism' also belies a deeper concern with the discovery of the laws and trends of history, with a view to predict future historical events. This too can be detected in Bulgakov's thought. See Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, p. 3.

[168] S. Bulgakov, 'Ob ekonomicheskom ideale', *Nauchnoe slovo*, vol. 5, 1903. Published in S. Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma. Stat'i i retsenzii, 1895-1903* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 638-61 (p. 649).

the Kingdom of God.

‘Historicised’ problems in Bulgakov’s thought

Bulgakov’s thinking about history extends into a number of other problems which at first glance do not appear to be innately historical. However, due to their treatment these questions take on historical significance and can thus be described as ‘*historicised* problems’. They include the questions of evil, freedom, and creativity, and it is a point of particular note that these same questions will also take on great importance for Berdiaev’s construction of a philosophy of time. Bulgakov’s work on these historicised problems reveals with greater clarity a determinist pattern of thinking, and, significantly, they will also put the paradoxical nature of Berdiaev’s dualistic apprehension of time into starker relief. They are thus a noteworthy set of problems in both philosophers’ work, but it remains to be seen how the two philosophers will attach different relative importance to them.

Influences on Bulgakov’s historical thought

There needs to be some preliminary reference made to the intellectual influences that directed Bulgakov’s thought in his work on history, as this allows his philosophy to be better understood later. This will be a little different than with Berdiaev, as fewer philosophers are immediately obvious as directly influential upon him. With Bulgakov, though, the situation is more clear. It should be noted, however, that the latter’s level of erudition is intimidating, and that there is not space in this study assiduously to trace every intellectual influence which acted upon him. Not only in terms of theology, but also in philosophy he was immensely well read and moved through a number of different phases of thought. For our purposes we need

only outline the principal influences and intellectual contexts which acted upon Bulgakov's thought concerned with history. Although these philosophers have all been introduced in the introduction to this thesis, it is still necessary to outline more exactly the ways in which they influenced Bulgakov's thought.

Concerning Bulgakov's relationship to these other thinkers, Zen'kovskii has commented, perhaps somewhat unfairly, that:

> …только Соловьев и Флоренский вошли в его внутренний мир властно и настойчиво. В мужественном и даже боевом складе ума у Булгакова – как ни странно – жила всегда женственная потребность «быть в плену» у кого-либо...[169]

The idea that Bulgakov needed to be in 'womanly' bondage to a particular thinker is misleading. Although in terms of historical thinking certain bodies of thought demonstrated tenacious influence over Bulgakov's mind, this does not constitute any sort of bondage; a variety of different philosophies placed influence on him simultaneously, making bondage to a single one difficult. A conception of reliance upon one particular thinker overshadows the influence of another.

Marx

Marx's influence over Bulgakov was most extensive specifically in his work on history. Although he abandoned Marxism in 1900 after writing his Magister thesis, some of the basic notions in Marx's thought continued to influence Bulgakov, albeit in unexpected ways. Gonzalez, however, encourages appreciation of the fact that in the Russian context there was a variety of *syntheses* of Marxist thought, and that it is therefore misguided to look here only for 'orthodox' interpretations of Marx:

> In fact, it would be incorrect to assume that ''an orthodox Marxism'' or ''a Marxist

[169] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 2, part 2, p. 205.

> doctrine'' existed in Russia at the turn of the [twentieth] century. Similarly, it would be just as foolish to believe that the brand of Marxism that subsequently developed in Russia was anything other than a unique synthesis of eclectic thought.[170]

Although it would be very wrong to see Bulgakov as a Marxist, he still demonstrates how certain elements of Marxist thinking were synthesised into other philosophies, even those which were overtly opposed to Marxism.

In terms of the theme of history, a preoccupation with history was both typically Russian and typically Marxist. Marxism is steeped in historical consideration, and a central feature of Marxist thought lies in its clear identification of an historical schema:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.[171]

Bulgakov without question inherited this legacy of historicism from his Marxist past, and similarly looked to identify a clear historical framework existing in the world. Marxist influence is perhaps expressed most clearly in his willingness to describe history in terms coloured by determinism: he was happy to limit the scope of a number of 'historicised problems' – including freedom, creativity, evil, and the nature of life itself – to make them correspond to a determined and teleological structure which would guarantee the end point of history:

> Это работа Софии над восстановлением мироздания, которую ведет она чрез посредство исторического человечества, и ею же устанавливается сверхсубъективная телеология исторического процесса.[172]

Determinism, the determination of activity by given conditions, and teleology, a deep historical goal-orientation, thus worked hand in hand with one another in Bulgakov's

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[170] John Gonzalez, 'In pursuit of a historical tradition: N. A. Rozhkov's scientific laws of history', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 59 (October 2007), no. 4, pp. 309-46 (p. 317).
[171] Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition* (London, 1998), p. 34.
[172] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* p. 125.

thought as they did in Marx's.

Although the deterministic elements of Bulgakov's thought are metaphysical whilst Marx's determinism is material, their arrangement and the way in which they work remain similar. The influence of Marx on Bulgakov has been traced in recent scholarship. Rodnianskaia, for example, speculates:

> Стоит задуматься над тем, с какой инстинктивной уверенностью молодой Булгаков нащупал в марксизме самое для себя главное – исторический материализм с его притязанием на предвидение будущего, на гарантированное будущее.[173]

Similarly Garaeva, who on the whole has drawn much more sympathetic conclusions on Bulgakov's relationship with Marxism, still admits that:

> Естественно, у него [Булгакова] тяготение к такой философской системе, которая бы дополняла марксизм.[174]

Marx, then, was a key figure in the formulation of both Bulgakov's broader philosophy and his conceptualisation of history.

Hegel

The question of Marx and Bulgakov leads naturally on to the question of Hegel and Bulgakov. There are certain aspects of specifically Hegelian thought manifested in Bulgakov's work on history which go beyond Marxian formulations. As was outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the first of these is the suggestion of a highly determined *metaphysical* teleology unravelling across history, in which the key notion is the historicised concept of *becoming*. This idea suggests that something

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[173] I. B. Rodnianskaia, 'Bulgakov v spore s marksistkoi filosofiei istorii: ottalkivaniia i pritiazheniia', in Evlampiev (ed.), *S. N. Bulgakov: pro et contra*, vol. 1, pp. 885-901 (p. 889).
[174] Garaeva, *Sofiinyi idealizm*, p. 257.

complete or perfect is already contained within the relative, but is in a condition of self-revelation. If we contrast, for example, statements from Hegel and later remarks from Bulgakov the closeness becomes apparent:

> But the other side of its Becoming, *History*, is a *conscious*, self-*mediating* process – Spirit emptied out into Time; but this externalisation, this kenosis, is equally an externalisation of itself; the negative is the negative of itself. This Becoming presents a slow-moving succession of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance […] its fulfilment consists in perfectly *knowing* what *it is*…[175]

The above reveals a construction of the history-time relation analogous to Bulgakov's: it suggests, if not the primacy of history over time, then at least a degree of identity between the two.

Considered alongside the quotation from Bulgakov below, we see a similar conceptualisation, albeit phrased according to slightly different principles:

> Божественные энергии, действующие в мире, принадлежат вечности Абсолютного, а то, что принадлежит самому миру в его процессе, существует лишь в относительном: мир покоится в лоне Божием, как дитя в утробе матери. Оно живет собственной жизнью [...] но вместе с тем оно существует в матери и только матерью [...] Абсолютное, не теряя абсолютности своей, полагает в себе относительное как самостоятельное бытие – реальное, живое начало […] Творческое *да будет* […] делает его началом мирообразующим, с своим особым центром, «становящееся абсолютное»...[176]

These two statements similarly suggest that the process of history is some gradual procession of the Absolute or God (with varying definitions of what this constitutes)

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[175] G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford, 1977), p. 492.
[176] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 158.

through a process of becoming in the relative. There is also a similar level of *abstraction* to their description of history: where Marx identifies clear stages in historical development, Hegel and similarly Bulgakov demonstrate a willingness to talk about history in abstract terms.[177]

Solov'ev

Solov'ev's influence over Bulgakov's thinking is particularly deep. Along with Florenskii, Solov'ev was key in informing much of Bulgakov's developing religious-idealist worldview. He recognised this directly:

> Целостное и последовательно развитое христианское миросозерцание – вот что дает современному сознанию философия Соловьева.[178]

In terms of historical thinking, Solov'ev was integral to the formation of Bulgakov's ideas on a range of problems which would contribute to his philosophy of history. The most obvious of these is Sophia, but they also include subjects such as evil, theodicy, freedom, and all-unity. Bulgakov's and Solov'ev's styles and concerns were also quite similar, as is evident in the way in which they approach the problem of history. As Courten notes in her recent work on Solov'ev's philosophy of history:

> …Vladimir Solov'ev never elaborated his conception of history in a systematic manner. His numerous views are scattered over many texts, but he neither produced one single book devoted exclusively to his views of history, nor addressed the possibility and methods of knowing history.[179]

This could almost be repeated word for word about Bulgakov: despite evincing a

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[177] Later in life Hegel would offer more concrete "analytical" work on history. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, translated from the third German edition by J. Sibree (London, 1857).
[178] S. Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladmira Solov'eva?', *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii*, 1903. Published in S. Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*, pp. 571-637 (p. 637).
[179] Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation,* p. 17.

consistent concern with history he never addressed it head-on in a way that would make analysis more straightforward.

The basic goals of Solov'ev's philosophy of history were also quite similar to Bulgakov's. A theme in Solov'ev is the unification of old theological principles and modern secular ideas:

> …Vladimir Solov'ev sought to combine the traditional model of history (theology of history) with the modern conception of universal process (philosophy of history) into a synthesis (Sophiology of history), which, however, remained unachieved.[180]

We see the same concerns in Bulgakov's work on history, and in his philosophy more broadly. Just like Solov'ev he wanted to combine modern, secular ideas with religious ideas about history, as Stöckl notes:

> As a theologian, he [Bulgakov] certainly understood himself as rooted in patristic theology, but in his own works he sought to advance from this basis, and to develop a theology of engagement with and involvement in the secular world.[181]

Bulgakov, like Solov'ev, also sought to establish the connection of the old and the new through a Sophiological thesis on unity. Solov'ev is thus an example of a Russian thinker whose thinking resonated very deeply with Bulgakov. However, it should be noted that Bulgakov was not in any sort of thrall to Solov'ev: he made his own way to the conclusions he did according to the influence of some quite different interests and ideas.

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[180] Ibid., p. 19.
[181] Kristina Stöckl, 'Modernity and its Critique in 20th century Russian Orthodox Thought', *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 58, no. 4 (December 2006), pp. 243-69 (pp. 251-52).

Kant

Although Kant did not directly influence Bulgakov in terms of his thinking about history, he nevertheless exerted a continual influence upon Bulgakov, and would be significant when he came to write about time. Kant's authority in Russian intellectual circles was rarely subject to doubt, and, as Kamenskii notes, most Russian thinkers of this period felt the need to orientate themselves philosophically in one way or another towards him:

> Европейская духовная жизнь конца XIX – начала XX в. и специфические национальные задачи русской философии заставляли всех ведущих авторов журнала так или иначе определить свое отношение к учению Канта, испытать остроту ума, глубину и силу собственных принципов и убеждений в осмыслении системы, в высшей степени сложной и «лукавой».[182]

Bulgakov was similarly driven to emphasise his connection with the Kantian tradition. For example, he writes in 1903:

> Должен сознаться, что Кант всегда был для меня несомненнее Маркса, и я считал необходимым проверять Маркса Кантом, а не наоборот.[183]

He continues to write at length about Kant throughout his work. There exist references to Kant throughout *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), and *Svet nevechernii* (1917) opens with the Kantian question, 'How is religion possible'.[184] Later, when Bulgakov came to write about the problem of time more specifically in *Svet nevechernii*, Kant would become important due to the fact that he presented a philosophy of time with which Bulgakov could not agree, but one which he felt he had to discuss due to the nature of Kant's significance to the broader construction of his

[182] Z. A. Kamenskii, V. A. Zhukov, *Kant i filosofiia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1994), p. 115.
[183] S. Bulgakov, 'Ot avtora', *Ot marksizma*, pp. 367-82 (p. 373).
[184] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 8.

personal philosophy.

Florenskii

Father Pavel Florenskii (1882-1937) deserves special mention when looking at Bulgakov's intellectual background. Florenskii, in the words of Pyman, was a 'quiet genius'.[185] Of astonishing intellect, Florenskii distinguished himself in mathematics, philosophy, theology, applied physics and linguistics. Like Kant, however, whilst Florenskii perhaps did not directly influence Bulgakov's thought about history or time, he was still instrumental in Bulgakov's broader philosophical, theological and personal development.[186] Florenskii's thought was based on a strong distinction between two worlds, the 'Edenic' and the 'non-Edenic' domains, as Khoruzhii explains:

> Иными словами, различие между бытием эдемским и не-эдемским воспринимается как различие онтологическое; «детское осуждение онтологично», замечает Флоренский. […] На языке «взрослой» метафизики Флоренского, эти два рода бытия различаются как бытие, соответственно, заключающее и не заключающее в себе определенное ноуменальное (духовное, онтологическое) содержание, смысл, идею.[187]

Although this created a stronger sense of a material-spiritual divide than Bulgakov maintained, what is particularly noticeable how Florenskii tied them together. As Khoruzhii also notes:

> «Родство» некоторых элементов есть факт онтологический и означает общность или тождественность их метафизической сущности, ноуменального содержания.

[185] Avril Pyman, *Pavel Florensky: A Quiet Genius. The Tragic and Extraordinary Life of Russia's Unknown Da Vinci* (London, 2010).
[186] Mikhail Nesterov's famous painting 'Filosofy' (1917), for example, portrays their closeness well.
[187] S. S. Khoruzhii, *Mirosozertsanie Florenskogo* (Tomsk, 1999), p. 8.

> В терминах этого нового онтологического понятия, истинное, совершенное бытие, или «Эдем», можеть быть определено тем свойством, что там *все – родное всему;* все сущее в его пределах – будь то люди, природа, формы, запахи, звуки – оказывается всюду и полностью соединенным родством, «уроднившимся» друг другу, «родимым, родным до сжимания сердца».[188]

This sense of a deeper metaphysical base to everything that exists in the world is a notion we find well expressed in Bulgakov's work, particularly in his *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912). Florenskii also developed important ideas about antinomy[189] which, again although slightly different to Bulgakov's apprehension of antinomy in *Svet nevechernii* (1917), further demonstrate how Florenskii influenced Bulgakov's engagement with a variety of themes. Finally, Florenskii was also a major exponent of *Sophiology*, a theological idea which, as has already been discussed, was of great significance to Bulgakov for his discussion of the relationship between material and metaphysical. As Fudel' notes, Florenskii similarly interpreted the universal Sophiological nature of the world, and this helped provide him with a broader sense of unity:

> Идея Богоматери-Церкви-Софии полностью удовлетворяет всечеловеческому стремлению ощутить софийное единство мира, и в этой части письма большая заслуга о. Павла.[190]

Sophia figured in a similar way in Bulgakov's philosophy, and satisfied Bulgakov's similar 'all-human' striving to uncover a broader unity in the world.

Florenskii therefore influenced Bulgakov at a deeply *conceptual* level, and provided him with some profound intuitions about the nature of the world and the

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[188] Ibid., p. 10.
[189] See S. M. Polovinkin, 'P. A. Florenskii: Logos protiv Khaosa', in D. K. Burlaka, *P. A. Florenskii: pro et contra. Lichnost' i tvorchestvo Pavla Florenskogo v otsenke russkix myslitelei i issledovatelei* (St Petersburg, 1996), pp. 625-48 (pp. 629-30).
[190] S. I. Fudel', *Ob o. Pavle Florenskom* (Paris, 1988), p. 113.

structure of the relationship between metaphysical and material. Further, he encouraged Bulgakov to engage with themes such as antinomy, Sophia, and unity, thereby reinforcing concerns which Bulgakov, after reading Solov'ev, had identified as central.

The Russian tradition

Finally, the general influence of the Russian intellectual milieu is evident in Bulgakov's thinking. It is apparent in the nature of the problems he looks at, the way he tries to synthesise such a wide range of philosophical ideas, his lack of strict analytical discipline and the way he moves through themes and different, often unrelated problems so quickly. Indeed, many commentators have termed Bulgakov's thought particularly 'Russian':

> По всей видимости, не может быть философского воззрения более «русского», чем теория [философии хозяйства]...[191]

This 'Russian' thinking extends deeply into his engagement with the theme of history. It is particularly manifest in Bulgakov's preoccupation with *eschatology*: eschatological thinking, a focus on the eschaton, the end of history or time, permeated Russian thought. It is evident in Russian religious, philosophical, positivist and Marxist thinking: we see it in thinkers such as Chaadaev, Fedorov, Solov'ev, Berdiaev and many other thinkers of many different creeds. Indeed, as was discussed earlier, it could be asserted that ever since Chaadaev the question of Russia's historical destiny and the theme of history have been particularly significant to Russian thought. Bulgakov was very much a product of this national tradition.

[191] Evtukhov, 'O snoskakh Bulgakova', p. 141.

Methodological considerations

The treatment of Bulgakov's thought is divided into two sections. The first deals with Bulgakov's sense of *temporality*. This exploration is intended to lay the ground for and orientate the detailed exploration of Bulgakov's *conceptualisation* of history, in the subsequent, main section. Further, in the course of the main section, when questions relating to Bulgakov's more limited philosophy of time emerge, these will also be discussed. They will not be addressed in a separate section as this would break the narrative of his thought. Throughout frequent and quite lengthy quotation from Bulgakov is used. This reflects both Bulgakov's rather expansive style and the need for textual support for the argument.

Finally, the approach is diachronic, rather than the synchronic approach that will later be applied to Berdiaev. This is due to the fact that Bulgakov gradually unfolds his philosophy in quite a logical fashion across his philosophical works. After his essay-based period of writing between 1900-1911, the two central texts of the 1910s (*Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) and *Svet nevechernii* (1917)) demonstrate clear steps in the elaboration of a philosophy. As we trace this development of his philosophy, the gradual development or discovery of a conceptualisation of history will unfold. This will not be possible with Berdiaev, who demonstrates no such development of ideas.

2. Temporality

Разве мы не являемся свидетелями всеобщей катастрофы,

крущения всей «новой истории»?

Iz glubiny, 1918.[192]

Investigation will begin by looking at Bulgakov's sense of temporality, at how he understood the nature of the present in which he lived. This will help provide an intellectual context in which to orientate his thought concerned with conceptualising history later. While Bulgakov purportedly looks at time *historically*, in terms of history, he still demonstrated a keen sense of the present. Indeed, he typically interprets present, living experience in an historical context:

> Ибо история не есть лишь хронология, отсчитывающая чередование событий, она есть жизненный опыт...[193]

Bulgakov's sense of temporality thus maintains an historical character.

Temporality as Crisis

Looking over the sweep of Bulgakov's post-Marxist philosophical work, from 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' (1901) to *Svet nevechernii* (1917), a significant proportion of his commentary on the present relates to a theme of crisis. This at times becomes cataclysmic or apocalyptic. As he remarks in 1909 in his *Vekhi* essay:

> Русская революция развила огромную разрушительную энергию, уподобилась гигантскому землетрясению, но ее созидательные силы оказались далеко слабее

[192] S. Bulgakov, 'Na piru bogov', in *Iz glubiny. Sbornik statei o russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 90-144 (p. 141).
[193] S. Bulgakov, 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo. Iz razmyshlenii o religioznoi prirode russkoi intelligentsia' (Bulgakov's essay in *Vekhi,* 1909), in S. Bulgakov, *Dva grada*. *Issledovaniia o prirode obshchestvennykh idealov* (St Petersburg, 1997), pp. 275-99 (pp. 275). (Hereafter Bulgakov, *Dva grada*).

> разрушительных. У многих в душе отложилось это горькое сознание как самый общий итог пережитого.[194]

If we look at the historical period across which Bulgakov was philosophically active, crisis – specifically Russian, but also international – is a pervasive theme. In Russia, following the turn of the century, catastrophic failure in the 1904 Russo-Japanese war, the 1905 revolution, the failed political projects of the Duma in 1906 and 1907 (in which Bulgakov participated), world war from 1914, revolution and then further civil war from 1917 testified to continuous social, political and national tumult. A religious dimension, connected to the notion of 'Kairos' discussed in the introduction to this thesis, can also be explored here: the identification of single, defining motions in time and history has a distinct Christian appeal. In eschatological, Christian philosophies such as Bulgakov's, it is anticipated that there will therefore be a certain propensity towards identifying crisis moments in the passage of history.

Highly sensitive to these historical developments, Bulgakov also experienced other forms of crisis. A personal philosophical crisis began in 1900, when, after the conclusion of his Magister thesis, he denounced Marxism. As a result of this, he began to see in society around him an encroaching *intellectual* crisis, most obviously manifested in the popular embrace of Marxism and Positivism:

> Между тем при всем богатстве знаний и развития науки современная мысль представляет картину внутреннего распада и бессилия.[195]

This had deep moral and religious implications, and in the following cataclysmic historical events of the early twentieth century Bulgakov also saw refractions of this maturing intellectual crisis.

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[194] Bulgakov, 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo', in *Dva grada*, p. 276.
[195] Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladmira Solov'eva?' in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*, p. 571.

Temporality as crisis therefore underpins Bulgakov's experience of the present, and, consequently, of time. Moreover, it adds a sense of immediacy and purpose to much of his writing, and offers some bearing on the direction of his thought regarding the problem of history. It serves to crystallise his sense of moral and intellectual responsibility, something which is reflected in his assertion that philosophy is demanded more than ever in the contemporary world:

> А философия необходима для жизни теперь более, чем когда-либо, благодаря некоторым особенностям переживаемого нами исторического момента.[196]

It should be noted that this sense of crisis would not then lead directly to the formulation of a philosophy of history, but rather created a *mood* in which the development of a philosophy of history, or at least the engagement with historical themes, seemed a sharper, more immediate problem.

The theme of crisis will be identified across Bulgakov's philosophical work. However, this will not follow any particular diachronic logic, as what is being highlighted is the synchronic pervasiveness of this mood – emphasis is not being placed upon its development. Having said this, particular attention will be paid to 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo' (Bulgakov's 1909 *Vekhi* contribution) and 'Na piru bogov' (his 1917 *Iz glubiny* contribution), as these two texts, which are not featured in particular depth in later analysis, demonstrate particularly vibrant engagements with the theme of crisis.

Historicised crisis

An important characteristic of the prevailing sense of crisis is that it is deeply

[196] S. Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Problemy idealizma,* 1902. Published in Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma,* pp. 492-537 (p. 531).

historicised – meaning that Bulgakov is acutely aware of the *historical* proportions of the present. For example, he writes in the introduction to *Dva grada* (written in October 1910):

> Настоящая эпоха представляет собой в некоторых отношениях критический и поворотный период в русской истории [...] настоящее знаменует собой критическую эпоху в нашем культурном самосознании.[197]

The present is, therefore, described as a critical *epoch* – meaning that Bulgakov, as well as identifying the prolonged nature of this present crisis, is also imbuing it with an innately historical dimension. This will be similar to Berdiaev, who in more overt ways identifies an 'epoch of crises'. It is important to note, however, that this sense of historicised crisis predates obvious national or historical events, including both the 1904 war and 1905 revolution, although it no doubt draws on the fin-de-siècle mood of the times. He writes in 1903:

> Ради необыкновенной, можно даже сказать – торжественной, важности переживаемого исторического момента и ради его необыкновенной трудности нам нужно рождающее силу единение, чтобы дружно сомкнутыми рядами идти навстречу багровеющему востоку, где уже занимается новый день русской истории.[198]

A feature of this sense of historical crisis, as is described above, is also that there is something fundamentally *unusual* (neobyknovennoi) going on in the present. The difficulties of the present moment are – even before any of the great national historical upheavals – portrayed as unusually stark. This sense of the *strangeness* of the present, of things being out of equilibrium, is maintained elsewhere in Bulgakov's work:

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[197] S. Bulgakov, 'Ot avtora', *Dva grada*, pp. 7-14 (p. 14).
[198] S. Bulgakov, 'Ot avtora', *Ot marksizma*, pp. 367-82 (p. 382).

> Те элементы, которые нормально должны находиться в гармонии, теперь враждуют между собою или находятся в состоянии взаимного отчуждения…[199]

There exists, then, the idea that the current historical moment is deeply significant, that the channels of the past and future lead to and from this decisive historical point. Bulgakov, again in 1910, refers to this moment as an historical 'conjuncture':

> Как бы ни было велико фактическое влияние этой силы [черносотенства] в настоящий момент благодаря исторической конъюнктуре, все-таки это есть сила прошлого...[200]

Conjuncture is here a revealing concept, as it reinforces the sense that Bulgakov perceives himself to be standing at some sort of great crossroads on the paths of history, where historical fate hangs in the balance.

A sense of historicised crisis is evinced particularly clearly in Bulgakov's *Vekhi* (1909) and *Iz glubiny* (1918) contributions. Here we find a particularly vivid demonstration of Bulgakov's sense of history leading up to a critical point. For example, in 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo', he writes:

> Вдумываясь в пережитое нами за последние годы, нельзя видеть во всем этом историческую случайность или одну лишь игру стихийных сил. Здесь произнесен был исторический суд, была сделана оценка различным участникам исторической драмы, подведен итог целой исторической эпохи.[201]

Epochal and almost biblical significance is attached to the present situation through the supposition of some sort of 'historical judgement' (istoricheskii sud) being made in the present.

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[199] Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladmira Solov'eva?', *Ot marksizma,* p. 571.
[200] Bulgakov, 'Ot avtora', *Dva grada*, p. 13.
[201] Bulgakov, 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo', in *Dva grada*, p. 276.

This reaches a zenith in ‘Na piru bogov’ (1918). This piece, recalling of Solov'ev’s poem ‘Tri razgovora’, is composed of six – rather than of three in ‘Tri razgovora’ – dialogues between characters representing different aspects of Russian society. The apocalyptic tone of this text is captured well in a peroration made, in the first dialogue, by the ‘public figure’:

> *Общественный деятель*: Погибло, все погибло! Умерло все, и мы умерли, бродим, как живые трупы и мертвые души. До сих пор ничего я не понимаю, мой ум отказывается вместить. Была могучая держава, нужная друзьям, страшная недругам, а теперь – это гниющая падаль, от которой отваливается кусок за куском на радость всему слетевшемуся воронью. На месте шестой части света оказалась зловонная, зиряющая дыра.[202]

This sort of fearful, apocalyptic outcry is repeated across ‘Na piru bogov’. Again, we see the apprehension of the contemporary crisis in the broadest terms:

> *Беженец*: В действительности этот кризис идет гораздо глубже. Его терпит вся европейская культура, и русская интеллигентция есть лишь здесь наиболее чуткий барометр. И он происходит не от войны, но от общих духовных причин. Можно сказать, что и сама война скорее явилась следствием, а вместе и симптомом этого кризиса.[203]

Also, in the translation of a sense of temporality as crisis into a perception of history as crisis (amply manifested in historical events), it is not difficult to see, at least in part, the influence of Marx alongside that of religious eschatology.

Intellectual crisis

A central aspect of the current or impending calamity, in Bulgakov’s reckoning,

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[202] Bulgakov, ‘Na piru bogov’, in *Iz glubiny*, p. 91.
[203] Ibid., p. 126.

consists in the intellectual degeneration of his contemporaries. The intelligentsia, in his perception, is racked by Marxism, Positivism and other similar philosophies which proclaim the atheistic dominance of the objective, material world over the spiritual, religious world – or even the nonexistence of the latter. This is expressed in the religiously indifferent or atheist character of the Russian intelligentsia:

> Известная образованность, просвещенность есть в глазах нашей интеллигенции синоним религиозного индифферентизма и отрицания [...] Этим пропитана насквозь, до дна, скудная интеллигентская культура, с ее газетами, журналами, направлениями, программами, правами, предрассудками, подобно тому как дыханием окисляется кровь, распространяющаяся потом по всему организму.[204]

This sort of worldview is expressed in doctrines, such as those of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) and of Marx, which are perceived to suggest the advent of the man-god, who becomes a god purely according to his immanent, material capacities, rather than of the God-man, the man who, through his spiritual make-up, contains within himself the image of God, and is thus a likeness to God.[205]

Intellectual crisis is thus an integral element of contemporary crisis because it brings with it significant religious consequences:

> Нетрудно нам, детям XIX в., понять сущность этой проблемы. XIX в. в умах многих разрушил или по крайней мере расшатал старое верование и старые представления об этой, земной, жизни как приготовлении к будущей, небесной.[206]

Therefore, what this intellectual crisis seems to amount to is, rather, a *spiritual* crisis, and it pervades Bulgakov's experience of his present context in the same way that

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[204] Bulgakov, 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo', in *Dva grada*, p. 279.
[205] This is an important theme in Russian philosophy more broadly, which can be traced back to the 1870s with Dostoevskii and Solov'ev. For a characteristic exploration of this subject, see Vladimir Solov'ev, *Chteniia o bogochelovechestve* (St Petersburg, 1994).
[206] S. Bulgakov, 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip', *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii*, 1902. Published in Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma*, pp. 463-91 (p. 477).

his awareness of social and national cataclysm disturb him to proclaim historical crisis. Kornblatt has recently noted how a common aspect of a broader spiritual crisis pervading Silver Age philosophy consisted in a perceived tension between similar problems, in this case concerning the relationship between faith and the modern world:

> …[there was in Silver Age Russia an] uneasy coexistence of faith in salvation and a pervading fear of the dramatic ending toward which the modern world seemed to be hurtling.[207]

What is significant here is how uneasiness relating to the relationship between faith and modern life brought the future into question.

For Bulgakov, this sense of intellectual or spiritual crisis is a gathering historical process. For example, in 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia L. Feierbakha' (1905), he writes:

> Ибо ведь в течение всего XIX века до наших дней – и чем дальше, тем быстрее, – растет количество людей, обходящихся без потусторонних идеалов и целиком перенесших их сюда, в «царство мира сего», и фактически для этих людей политика стала религией.[208]

The suggestion of *acceleration* – 'the further [along], the faster' – will be dealt with below, when analysis turns towards Bulgakov's interpretation of crisis in the light of more widely held notions of modernity. What this statement suggests more broadly is again a certain historical narrative that has led up to the present critical situation of intellectual degeneration. The religious aspects of this crisis are the most worrying

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[207] Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, 'Eschatology and Hope in Silver Age Thought', in G. M. Hamburg and Randall A. Poole, *A History of Russia Philosophy 1830-1930: Faith, Reason, and the Defense of Human Dignity* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 285-301 (p. 286).

[208] S. Bulgakov, 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u L. Feierbakha' *Voprosy zhizni*, 1905. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 15-50 (p. 27).

aspects of the problem, and characterise most distinctly Bulgakov's perception of the nature of the present condition, as the below quotation eloquently demonstrates:

> В этом смысле наша историческая эпоха не имеет себе подобной в истории, ибо всегда встречались отдельные антирелигиозные течения, но не было такого сознательного и убежденного, такого фанатического и непримиримого стремления свести человека на землю и опустошить небо. Если бы нужно было выразить духовную сущность нашей эпохи в художественном образе, в картине или в трагической мистерии, то эту картину или мистерию следовало бы назвать «Похороны Бога, или Самоубийство человечества».[209]

Again the dramatic rhetoric of Bulgakov's writing captures the fact that he is deeply troubled by the intellectual and spiritual condition of the society around him, and that the tendencies exhibited by his contemporaries demonstrate to him a growing crisis which prevails in the current world. He worries about where these growing, accelerating forces are leading. This leads us on to the question of modernity.

Modern crisis

The final aspect of Bulgakov's sense of temporality consists in his experience of the present as *modern*. This sense of modernity further creates the impression that the world is pregnant with, or in a state of, crisis. Thus far the word 'modern' has been avoided as it has some specific connotations which need to be explored further. Recent scholarship concerned with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russia has identified a common disquiet regarding the pace, direction, and consequences of modern – frequently scientific – progress. Beer, for example, comments:

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[209] S. Bulgakov, 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u russkoi intelligentsii', *Russkaya mysl'*, 1908. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 248-68 (p. 253).

> Inherent in the notion of progress as espoused by the apostles and practitioners of science was a nagging doubt that Russia might be forging ahead in the wrong direction...[210]

A concern with the direction of modern development is not, however, something unique to Russian fears surrounding the modern world. Indeed, Berman has identified a broader 'paradox of modernity', in which there exists the 'promise of growth' alongside the 'terror of destruction'.[211] This suggests that whilst in many interpretations of modernity there is celebration of the successes of progress, there also exists a parallel and pervasive fear that these modern successes have been bought at the cost of inevitable demise. Traces of this same mix of trepidation and a sense of possibility are identifiable in Bulgakov's work, and contribute to the development of his experience of time: the question of modernity thus adds another aspect to his sense of the crisis of the present, or *temporality as crisis*.

In accordance with Berman's thesis, the experience of modernity is fundamentally ambivalent. This is vindicated in Bulgakov's work: whilst he evinces a deep concern about modern life, Bulgakov also wants to find something positive in it. This is most clearly demonstrated in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912). Given the choice of subject matter – economy – this text demonstrates particularly clearly Bulgakov's sense that the modern world needs to be better understood:

> Своеобразную остроту проблема философии хозяйства получает и для современного религиозного сознания. В эпоху упадка догматического самосознания, когда религия всего чаще сводится к этике, лишь окрашенной пиэтистическими «переживаниями», особенно важно выдвигнуть онтологическую и космологическую сторону христианства, которая отчасти раскрывается и в

[210] Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity, 1880-1930* (Cornell, 2008), p. 33.
[211] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York, 1982).

> философии хозяйства.[212]

Despite the obvious notes of caution regarding the negative elements of the modern epoch, then, the sense of a need to engage with the modern problem of economy exists. We will not find such a positive engagement with the modern world in Berdiaev: he will castigate the rise of the machine and declare that mankind needs to return to the 'new middle ages'.[213]

In his reflection on modernity, Bulgakov also tries to establish the religious, Sophiological basis of modern economy and development. This again is directed towards finding positive value in modernity:

> Итак, хозяйство софийно в своем метафизическом основании. Оно возможно только благодаря причастности человека к обоим мирам, к Софии и к эмпирии...[214]

A sense of dialogue with the modern world is a particularly useful notion. Valliere has put forward the idea that the notion of Sophia itself provides a means for dialogue with the modern world:

> My thesis is that Sophia, in the works of modern Russian sophiologists, is best seen as a conceptual representation of the dialogue between the Orthodox theological tradition and modern civilization…[215]

The idea of elements of Bulgakov's thought being in dialogue with the modern

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[212] S. Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (Moscow, 1990), p. 5.
[213] See, for example, N. Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e. Razmyshlenie o sud'be Rossii i Evropy* (1924), in N. A. Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii. Novoe srednevekov'e* (Moscow, 2002), pp. 219-310; N. Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka. Opyt paradoksal'noi etiki* (1931), in N. A. Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka. Opyt paradoksal'noi etiki* (Moscow, 1993) pp. 19-252 (pp. 197-201).
[214] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, p. 115.
[215] Paul Valliere, 'Sophiology as the Dialogue of Orthodoxy with Modern Civilisation', in Kornblatt, Gustafson (eds), *Russian Religious Thought*, pp. 176-92 (p. 176). Sergeev also looks at Sophiology as being a response to the calamitous existence of people at the turn of the twentieth century, and notes: 'Highly sensitive to the cataclysmic events of the 20th century, Russian thinkers felt a strong need to re-examine the very foundations of human existence. They attempted to rethink the Divine-human relationship…' See Sergeev, *Sophiology in Russian Orthodoxy*, p. 91.

condition of the world can be extended here to include his work specifically concerned with the present. This provides some orientation when we come to look at his conceptualisation of history.

This having been said, across Bulgakov's work a large amount of material shows his much deeper engagement with the second half of Berman's modern paradox, demonstrating the 'terror of destruction' that exists in the modern world. Due to the objectifying, mechanical character of much economic development, Bulgakov fears the human cost of modern development and its ultimate consequences:

> Несомненно, что эта [современная] цивилизация, в своих высших проявлениях, бесспорно, достигшая небывалых успехов, создает страшный для всего индивидуального механизм, захватывающий своими шестернями, зубцами, маховиками индивидуальную жизнь и практически провозглашающий принцип: не суббота для человека, а человек для субботы.[216]

The vivid, industrial and altogether menacing imagery of this statement demonstrates the visceral fear Bulgakov feels when faced by modern scientific development. It appears that it is specifically the material aspects of modern development that he perceives to be threatening, and that he sees in the rapid development of science a struggle being waged between the material and the spiritual worlds:

> Антагонизм между материальной и духовной цивилизацией неискореним, и мещанин всегда будет удерживать свободный полет человеческого духа [...] Нельзя не признать вместе с Герценом, что головокружительный материальный прогресс XIX в. до известной степени нарушил равновесие не в пользу духовного человека, а европейско-американская цивилизация обнаруживает некоторый

[216] S. Bulgakov, 'Dushevnaia drama Gertsena', *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii*, 1902. Published in Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma*, pp. 538-70 (p. 569).

> наклон в сторону мещанства.[217]

There is a fear, then, that the extent of modern development has unbalanced the equilibrium existing between material and spiritual forces, meaning that the present epoch is felt to be unstable and in a condition of tumult.

Bulgakov's understanding of the crisis of specifically modern development therefore focuses on the objective, divisive qualities that science is perceived to promote. This is manifested in the broken, divided and unhappy modern consciousness:

> Совремменое сознание, разорванное, превращенное в обрывок самого себя в системе разделения труда, не перестает болеть этой своей разорванностью и ищет целостного мировоззрения, которое связывало бы глубины бытия с посведневной работой, осмысливало бы личную жизнь...[218]

Modern life and modern people are understood to be in a particularly difficult, critical condition due to the overwhelming impetus modern progress puts upon material, economic and objective scientific values, which do nothing to satisfy mankind's spiritual and religious needs. This crisis is perceived to be accelerating, along with the steadily intensifying pace of scientific thought. In this way, modern crisis blends into Bulgakov's understanding of intellectual and spiritual crisis which pervades the present historical epoch:

> Но мы слышим уже, как против нас выдвигается главный логический идол нашего времени – «научность», перед которым пасуют, склоняют свои колени многие даже смелые умы, слышим хриплый, скрипучий, мертвенный голос ее оракулов, говорящий: как можно говорить о воскресении, о чудесах, вообще о таких вещах,

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[217] Ibid., p. 569.
[218] Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladmira Solov'eva?', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 571.

которые давно упразднены наукой и отнесены к числу отживших суеверий![219]

Conclusions

Looking at Bulgakov's experience of time or experience of the present has revealed a number of important themes. The first of these is clearly that Bulgakov demonstrates a well-defined experience of the present condition, of *temporality*, and that the key characteristic of this experience is crisis. There is a prevailing sense that Bulgakov lives with a continual feeling of impending or unfolding catastrophe, that he fears for the future path of mankind. Furthermore, this understanding comes with a significant historical dimension. His *historical* understanding of the present – that is, of it representing a distinct, critical historical epoch – demonstrates a historicising tendency which will be informative for analysing the rest of his work. Beyond this, he finds that the prevailing condition of the modern crisis is manifested in the intellectual or spiritual orientation of modern society. People are overwhelmingly focused on the material aspects of life, rather than on its spiritual or religious aspects. He finds this atheistic, materialist tendency reflected in the catastrophic changes that are overtaking Russian and European society.

Understanding this aspect of Bulgakov's thinking is valuable, because, as has already been stated, it provides a context in which we can better understand his thinking about history. Given his estimation of the historical significance of the present, and of the great crises overtaking society, we can better understand his proclivity to think in grand, historicised terms. We will see how in his philosophy of history he will eventually formulate a conceptualisation of history which rationalises

[219] S. Bulgakov, 'Voskresenie Khrista i sovremennoe soznanie', *Narod*, 1906. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 269-74 (p. 272).

the great crises of the present and restores the spiritual basis of the modern world. This allows him to proclaim the eventual and inevitable victory of the good and divine. In this way he is able to assuage somewhat the sense of despair which arises from the cataclysms taking place in the present.

3. Conceptualisations of history

Что же значит найти смысл истории?

Problemy idealizma, 1902.[220]

The exploration of Bulgakov's thought about history, which occupies the rest of the chapter, considers the entire corpus of Bulgakov's philosophical work (1901-17). We will see how his engagement with the problem of history began with a number of separate, historicised concerns and how these gradually came together to form a more comprehensive philosophy of history, which is first presented in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912). Bulgakov's final and most significant strictly philosophical work, *Svet nevechernii* (1917) will then be analysed in depth, taking the preceding years of development into account.

Ot marksizma k idealizmu *(1897-1903)*

Bulgakov lost faith in Marxism whilst finishing his Magister thesis, *Kapitalizm i zemledelie*, in 1900. As Meerson recounts:

> The discovery, made by Bulgakov the economist, that Marx's philosophical antipersonalism is the weakest point of his economic theory, is a departing point for Bulgakov's philosophical research.[221]

Bulgakov's internal revolution, which was both philosophical and religious, and quite all-encompassing in terms of a shift in worldview, reoriented his thought first towards a refutation of his previous faith. This refutation of Marxism, which was initiated in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*,[222] took on many aspects that dealt with the question of

[220] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 521.
[221] M. A. Meerson, 'Sergei Bulgakov's Philosophy of Personality,' in Kornblatt and Gustafson (eds), *Russian Religious Thought*, pp. 139-53 (p. 139).
[222] A collection of ten articles written across 1897-1903. The first three were written when Bulgakov was still a 'Legal' Marxist.

history. As his thought eventually moved on beyond this negative goal of refutation, these aspects dealing with history would then become significant elements in his fuller worldview. However, despite Bulgakov's intensions, we will see how elements of Marxist thought, specifically relating to determinism, were still at work within his mind.

It should be noted that rather than presenting a well formulated conceptualisation or philosophy of history, *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* instead demonstrates the development of the philosophical elements or concerns needed to construct a fuller philosophy of history. Together, these various elements first evidence Bulgakov's *historicising* incline of thought. Later they are assembled together in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) and *Svet nevechernii* (1917). Voronov, a contemporary of Bulgakov, accordingly describes the 'idealism' of this collection in 1904 as follows:

> …это направление [идеализм] является перед читателем еще несовершеннолетним, и, может быть, не вышедшим из горнила сомнения.[223]

This collection thus demonstrates the seeds of Bulgakov's historical thinking, but is also strongly coloured by his ongoing intellectual transition.

'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' *(1901)*

Bulgakov's first essay written after his departure from Marxism, 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' (given as a speech in Kiev, in 1901, and then published in *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii* in 1902) enjoyed great popularity. It was a significant essay as it laid out some of his new concerns and the new, more emotive way he

[223] Evg. Voronov, 'Sergei Bulgakov. Ot marksizma k idealizmu' (1904), in Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma k idealizmu,* pp. 815-16 (p. 815).

wanted to broach intellectual problems. In terms of the theme of history, we see in this essay an engagement with the first and perhaps most significant of his 'historicised' problems, the problem of evil, which is dealt with through the idea of *theodicy*. As Bulgakov would comment two years later in 1903, theodicy inevitably led to thought about eschatology:

> Всякая теодицея переходит необходимо в открытую или прикровенную эсхатологию, и в этом сходятся все философские и религиозные учения...[224]

Bulgakov's work more broadly offers discussion on the meaning of evil and its relation to God. However, as the above hints at, theodicy may be linked to history, as eschatology can take on a historical dimension.

In 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' (1901) Bulgakov explains how theodicy is linked to the greater rationality of the 'world order':

> Вопрос, который с такой трагической силой и безумной отвагой ставит здесь Иван, вопрос о происхождении и значении зла в мире и разумности мирового порядка, есть вековечный вопрос метафизики, старый как мир, вопрос, который со времени Лейбница, стал называться проблемой теодицеи.[225]

This indicates that Bulgakov's principal grasp of the concept of theodicy relates to the genesis and meaning of evil. Through the assertion of its connection to the 'rationality' of the world order, it can be understood how later this 'rationality' is translated into the 'meaning' of history and the world: it provides a reason for why and perhaps how everything is taking place. Engagement with the theme of theodicy is developed in 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' through an attempt at negating what Bulgakov holds to be an incorrect history-theodicy, which consists in 'the theory

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[224] Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladmira Solov'eva?', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 605.
[225] Bulgakov, 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 476.

of progress' or the positivistic-socialist conceptualisation of history. According to this schema, future harmony is bought at the expense of present suffering:

> Примером такого [атеистического] мировоззрения может служить современное материалистическое понимание истории и основанное на нем учение социализма: будущая гармония социализма покупается здесь неизбежно жертвой страданий капитализма; «муки родов» нового общества, по известному сравнению Маркса, неустранимы.[226]

Present evil is therefore justified by future good. This conceptualisation of history greatly troubles Bulgakov, as it would likewise trouble Berdiaev. It is apparent through the rest of the essay that Bulgakov believes that contemporary Russian acceptance of this unsatisfactory and sacrilegious theodicy posits a spiritual malaise analogous to the one which racked Ivan Karamazov. In such a way criticism of Ivan opens out into a broader attack on modern values.

Bulgakov carries on to argue in 'Ivan Karamzov kak filosofskii tip' that the question of theodicy in the contemporary mindset is resolved through a reliance on Eudemonism, that is, on the idea that the goal of history is dictated by the achievement of the greatest level of material happiness for the greatest number of people. This resolution, he finds, is inadequate:

> Мы лично думаем, что проблема теодицеи, как она поставлена Иваном, неразрешима с точки зрения эвдемонистического понимания прогресса, видящего в последнем увеличение счастия наибольшего числа людей. Проблема эта разрешима или устранима только путем метафизического и религиозного синтеза.[227]

This atheistic materialism, furthermore, engenders a belief in constant progress

[226] Ibid., pp. 476-77.
[227] Ibid., p. 477.

forwards, progress which is justified only by itself, rather than from elsewhere – i.e. from the metaphysical or from God. It emerges that Bulgakov finds this idea problematic, because he demands a higher, metaphysical sanction to history:

> Основная вера этого века – вера в бесконечный прогресс человечества; в этой вере сходятся все теории прогресса, как бы различны они ни были. Прогресс этот является сам себе целью, нет какого-либо внешнего императива, который бы эту цель оправдывал или превращал в средство для иной высшей цели.[228]

If it is to be meaningful, progress, or the historical development of humanity, therefore demands a 'higher aim'. Otherwise it just reduces to an infinite movement.

Thus we see the beginnings of Bulgakov's engagement with the problem of history. Primarily, he discusses the contemporary conception of history, which he finds spiritually unsatisfactory and philosophically flawed. This is therefore a part of his attempt to negate positivism and socialism: through his use of Ivan Karamazov as a philosophical 'type', Bulgakov intends to demonstrate the inadequacies of such contemporary beliefs. More broadly, however, we see the identification of a number of *historicised* concerns: firstly, we see that the problem of evil is connected with the problem of history; secondly, that present evil cannot be justified by future good; and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, there is the suggestion that historical movement – progress – should not be justified by itself, but rather that it requires external sanction. This immediately places Berdiaev squarely within the Russian 'historiosophic' tradition, looking for theurgic meaning within history. As Malinov comments:

> Кроме того, историософский подход проявляется в теургизме, т.е. поиске в истории тайны, подлинного смысла, сокрытого за эмпирическим покровом событий. Историософия предполагает в истории своеобразную "глубину",

[228] Ibid., p. 484.

> “смысловое измерение”, в котором и определяется ее подлинный ход.[229]

The sorts of questions that Bulgakov identifies as being significant to the theme of history mark him out as a thinker who wanted to identify a greater, metaphysical meaning to history, rather than a purely immanent, empirical meaning. Berdiaev, like many other Russian thinkers, was also interested in these sorts of historiosophic problems.

‘Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa’ *(1902)*

Following the success of ‘Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip’, Bulgakov continued with the essay ‘Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa’, which was published as the opening article to the ground-breaking collection *Problemy idealizma* in 1902.[230] This essay is essential to our appreciation of Bulgakov’s understanding of history, and it also demonstrates the extent to which at this point his own thought regarding history relied on negative thinking concerning the Marxist or positivist position on the same topic, showing how Marxist categories of historical thought are still deeply engrained in his mind. ‘Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa’ also introduces the problem of ‘mechanical causality’ (*mechanicheskaia prichinnost’*) relating to Bulgakov’s understanding of the historical process.[231] This essay is a thorough attack on what Bulgakov believes to be the positivist or Marxist understanding of history identified in the previous essay – the ‘theory of progress’ – and the consequent theodicy this worldview entails. The popular belief in this theory relates to Bulgakov’s aforementioned sense of *intellectual crisis*. Read has noted:

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[229] A. V. Malinov, ‘Istoriia filosofii kak filosofiia istorii’, in A. F. Zamaleev (ed.), *Russkaia Filosofiia. Novye issledovaniia i materialy. Problemy metodologii i metodiki* (St Petersburg, 2001), pp. 191-195 (p. 194).

[230] For a recent translation and introduction to *Problemy idealizma*, see Randall A. Poole, *Problems of Idealism: Essays in Russian Social Philosophy* (New Haven, 2003).

[231] Bulgakov will later understand ‘mechanical causality’ in broader terms relating to purely immanent world processes.

> [*Problemy idealizma*] was attacking Marxist positivism in areas which had been ignored because Marxism was mainly a social and political movement and, like the intelligentsia as a whole, largely ignored philosophical issues…[232]

Bulgakov's essay, by taking such philosophical concerns as the nature of history and theodicy, was a key part of this attack.

In 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', we see Bulgakov's thorough-going attempt to describe what he believes does *not* constitute the true nature of the historical process. It is closely related to his interpretation of the conceptualisation of history presented by positivism and Marxism:

> В мире царит, по этому [современному] воззрению, механическая причинность. Начавшись неведомо когда и как, а может быть, существуя извечно, мир наш развивается по закону причинности, охватывающему как мертвую, так и живую материю, как физическую, так и психическую жизнь. В этом мертвом, лишенном всякого творческого смысла движении нет живого начала, а есть лишь известное состояние материи; нет истины и заблуждения – и та и другая суть равно необходимые следствия равно необходимых причин, нет добра и зла, а есть только соответственные им состояния материи.[233]

As the above quotation indicates, modern faith in 'mechanical causality' presents to Bulgakov a world in which there is no living source or principle guiding life and history – historical movement thus conceived is nothing but the lifeless sequence of causes and effects. There is no great reason existing behind human existence and there is no goal directing human activity. History, according to this reckoning, would be nothing more than a systematic, regular movement of events, and within this the terms 'good' and 'evil' have no meaning.

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[232] Christopher Read, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia, 1900-1912* (London, 1979), p. 41.
[233] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 497.

Although Bulgakov was perhaps somewhat vulgarising Marxist and positivist thinking here, it is of little importance at this moment: it is clearly evident that whatever its relation to the 'real' Marxist philosophy, he clearly held his interpretation of Marx to be accurate.[234] In attempting to refute this understanding of history, Bulgakov would need to establish the existence of what he held to be greater, more meaningful influences than the pure mechanical causality he interpreted in Marxism. As Evtuhov comments:

> …Bulgakov's thought contains an implicit philosophy of history that refutes positivism's linear conception of the historical process.[235]

Bulgakov will therefore later argue that metaphysical forces exist, free from regular causal relations, and that their action is key to the broader movement of the historical process. In this way, the imposition of the spiritual – or metaphysical – is a means of refuting the rule of the purely material.

A further interesting aspect of this essay is the way in which Bulgakov's approach to the 'theory of progress' focuses upon its historical dimension. He understands that the question of progress is bound to the broader question of history:

> Первая и основная задача, которую ставит себе теория прогресса, состоит в том, чтобы показать, что история имеет смысл, и исторический процесс есть не только эволюция, но и прогресс. Она доказывает, следовательно, конечное тождество

[234] Looked at in a broader context, many European scholars were disgruntled by such sweeping simplifications of Marxist doctrine. For example, Antonio Labriola (1843-1903), as Blackledge notes, railed against such readings of Marx: 'In his Essays on the Materialist Conception of History (1896), Labriola explicitly challenged traditional historiography's factoral approach to the explanation of historical causality. This approach […] lent itself to a misrepresentation of Marxism as a type of economic determinism. Indeed, Labriola insisted, it was only because the critics of Marxism held a reified conception of the economic that they could so misunderstand historical materialism.'[234] Paul Blackledge, 'Leon Trotsky's Contribution to the Marxist Theory of History', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 58 (March 2006), no. 1, pp. 1-31 (p. 8). Bulgakov's above commentary on Marxism was, at least in the wider European context, thus typical of a larger trend; however, in assimilating aspects of Marxist thought into his arguments (as later analysis will show), Bulgakov perhaps also carries over elements of Labriola's thesis.

[235] Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle*, p. 182.

> причинной закономерности и разумной целесообразности, является в этом смысле, как мы уже сказали, теодицеей.[236]

Bulgakov thus continues to attack the conceptualisation of history offered by the 'theory of progress'. In this way a critique of the Marxist understanding of history constitutes a key element in the development of Bulgakov's understanding of history, as Iakovets similarly argues:

> Возражения С.Н. Булгакова против социального детерминизма, строго определнных законов исторического прогресса, являются реакцией разуверившегося марксиста на преувеличение экономическим материализмом роли объективных факторов, законов развития производительных сил и их определяющей роли в динамике экономических и социальных отношений, духовной жизни общества, на игнорирование роли личности и ее свободного выбора в прогрессе общества.[237]

Bulgakov's understanding of history is therefore being formed in opposition to the positivist reading; where it suggests the rule of mechanical causality, Bulgakov wants to find spiritual impetus.

Although arguing that it is not within the capacity of positivist thinking to reach its goal, Bulgakov also notes that the straining of positivist thought towards establishing the meaning of history demonstrates an inevitable disposition of the 'philosophising mind':

> Но самая задача поставлена совершенно правильно, и она неизбежно является философствующему уму, ищущему постоянного бытия в потоке преходящих событий и не согласному видеть в истории лишь мертвую причинную связь.[238]

Bulgakov himself – possessing a 'philosophising mind' – is also looking for this

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[236] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 519.
[237] U. V. Iakovets, 'Paradoks S.N. Bulgakova: Otritsanie istoricheskikh zakonov i predskazanii – ili dar predvideniia?', in Osipova et al. (eds), *Preodolenie vremeni*, pp. 33-41 (p. 38).
[238] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 520.

constant presence within the flow of transient events, and he will, clearly, not agree to see only dead, causal connection in the passage of history. This testifies to an innate historicism rooted deep within Bulgakov's consciousness which highlights again *how* he arrives at the idea that time must be history in order for it to make sense: there needs, he feels, to be some sort of constant being within the flow of events. We will also see later how this idea, suggesting a certain *need* to understand history, is built into an assertion of humanity's universal religious or spiritual thirst.

Towards the end of 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa' Bulgakov, led on by the above considerations, begins to discuss the metaphysics of history. The identification of this problem is significant, as is the description of his present configuration of the metaphysics of history:

> Метафизика истории является раскрытием абсолютного в относительном; она стремится увидать, как вечное сияние абсолюта отражается в ограниченной рамке пространства и времени.[239]

History, thus conceived, is a process in which the absolute or eternal imprints itself upon and reveals itself through the relative. Indeed, Losskii notes that Bulgakov believes in the 'providential importance' of the historical process,[240] and Bulgakov's assertion indeed implies that history, as a whole, is invested with absolute meaning, meaning which is reflected and revealed within the limits of time and space (i.e. in history). The presence of Hegelian teleology is thus obvious: the idea of an Absolute revealing itself through the course of history is deeply Hegelian. Furthermore, it constitutes a structure for thinking about history which suits Bulgakov's mind. He reasserts this conceptualisation of history, arguing,

> Что же значит найти смысл истории? Это значит, прежде всего, признать, что

[239] Ibid., p. 520.
[240] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, p. 217.

> история есть раскрытие и выполнение одного творческого и разумного плана, что в историческом процессе выражена мировая, провиденциальная мысль.[241]

Considered in these terms, then, the historical process is never fully divided from the eternal and absolute, and is a process which possesses real, providential value, and it is the development of a 'creative' – i.e. not immanent – plan which is leading towards the final arrival of the metaphysical and eternal. We will see that this idea of the 'creative plan' is developed at much greater length in later work, particularly in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), but also that, specifically regarding the question of creativity, it becomes increasingly deterministic. Here, however, is the kernel of Bulgakov's historically determinist and teleological thought: history is viewed as the unfolding of some great metahistorical, metaphysical plan, which plays out across the relative but is orientated towards a metaphysical end.

'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa' thus presents us with a number of important developments in terms of Bulgakov's understanding of history. It builds upon 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' by continuing to assert the importance of theodicy as an historical mode of thinking. This is achieved by arguing that positivism and Marxism, in presenting a vision of historical progress and its conclusion, also construct an implicit theodicy. Furthermore, this essay testifies to the significance of the historical aspects within Bulgakov's thinking. It introduces the theme of mechanical causality – something he will later try to refute according to the principle of 'freedom' – as a fallacious mode for understanding the historical process. By asserting that history is the unfolding of the eternal and absolute – something which bears strong resemblance to Hegelian thinking about history – Bulgakov also attests to the possibility of the determined nature of the historical process: as Losskii (above)

[241] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 521.

notes, Bulgakov sees the ‘providential’ in every event, and therefore throughout history.

There are the makings here of unitary, almost monist thinking, as Bulgakov is beginning to tend toward a description of how the metaphysical or absolute ties together both the physical and the metaphysical realms, giving history a determined endpoint and process. This type of thinking will later become troublesome for the broader goals of Bulgakov’s philosophical thinking, as it elaborates in greater detail a pattern of determinist thinking in which the idea of freedom is challenged. Such problems become more pronounced in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) and *Svet nevechernii* (1917).

‘Chto daet filosofiia Vladimira Solov'eva sovremennomu soznaniiu?’ *(1903)*

Bulgakov’s essay ‘Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladimira Solov'eva?’, first published in *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii* in 1903, but also given as a public lecture in Kiev, Poltava and Kishinev, deserves mention. A meditation upon the importance of Solov'ev’s thought, it sets the stage for the growing influence of his thinking over Bulgakov more generally. There is extensive discussion of the theme of all-unity and universalism, making clearer the attraction of these ideas to Bulgakov. This essay offers, however, important engagement with the themes of evil and eschatology, which, as we have already noted, are both connected to Bulgakov’s understanding of history. It therefore elucidates how Solov'ev offers subtle direction to his historical thinking.

An important moment in this essay comes when Bulgakov offers his first attempt at an explicit definition of evil. Evil, he attests, paraphrasing but also concurring with Solov'ev, is ‘egoism’:

> Источником его [зла] является *эгоизм*, стремление к исключительному самоутверждению...[242]

This assertion is significant, as it will become a definition of evil that understands any turning away from man's communion with the metaphysical as fundamentally evil. Bulgakov also makes an interesting point regarding eschatology in this essay, demonstrating the centrality it plays in his thinking regarding history:

> ...подобно тому, как каждый сознательный человек имеет свою философию (какова бы она ни была) и свою религию, так же точно *каждый человек имеет и свою эсхатологию*, живет не настоящим только, а будущим и для будущего, от которого он ждет осуществления своих лучших надежд. Самое ужасное для человека – потерять веру в будущее.[243]

By asserting that thinking about eschatology – an idea which often carries a historical dimension – is rudimentary to every 'conscious' person, Bulgakov again hints at the innate historicism in his thinking.

Eschatology, Bulgakov argues further, is also connected to the problem of evil and of theodicy. He therefore becomes more explicit in describing what he believes the historical process is destined to reveal, and therefore how exactly evil and history are tied together:

> Мы сказали уже, что в эсхатологию гонит нас проблема теодицеи, потребность найти в этом лежащем во зле мире, а следовательно, - что для нас здесь всего важнее, - в нашей собственной жизни разумный смысл, оправдать добро, которому мы служим.[244]

What becomes obvious more broadly, evident both in the above quotation and the

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[242] Bulgakov, 'Chto daet sovremennomu soznaniiu filosofiia Vladimira Solov'eva?', in *Ot marksizma*, p. 599.
[243] Ibid., p. 606.
[244] Ibid., p. 606.

essays which have been discussed so far, is that Bulgakov is fundamentally searching for some greater *meaning* (razumnyi smysl'), which *justifies* and possibly even *orders* that which is taking place across history and the historical process itself. Again, then, we see the operation of a mode of thinking also present in Marxism – by looking for evidence of the 'providential' (broadly understood) in the relative, Bulgakov continues to see evidence of a greater plan that is unfolding within history. This demonstrates his continuing susceptibility towards historical determinism and teleological thinking, a tendency which will be expressed more fully in his later work.

Other essays from 1903

In 1903 Bulgakov wrote two further essays also containing important elements relating to the question of history – 'Ob ekonomicheskom ideale' and 'O sotsial'nom ideale'. The central thesis of 'Ob ekonomicheskom ideale', which was first given as a lecture and then published in *Nauchnoe slovo*, is that as a discipline political economy is not able to provide itself with meaning or direction. Bulgakov thereby argues that scientific endeavour must look higher than itself in order to understand itself. Meanwhile, this essay also continues to refer to some of Bulgakov's historicised concerns. Most importantly we see the reassertion that human life, and thereby history, has meaning and direction given to it not by itself, but from above itself:

> Человеческая жизнь имеет абсолютной смысл и ценность не в себе самой, а вне себя и выше себя, получает ее не в качестве эмпирического или биологического факта, а как служение высшему, идеальному началу, сущему добру.[245]

Thus, as was mentioned in 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip', the historical process

[245] Bulgakov, 'Ob ekonomicheskom ideale', in *Ot marksizma*, p. 649.

does not possess meaning in and for itself, but rather is meaningful in terms of its higher aspiration and metaphysical importance.

'O sotsial'nom ideale', published in *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii* in 1903, presents us with another important development in Bulgakov's historical thinking. It introduces the question of freedom, a problem which will develop increasing importance within Bulgakov's historical thought over his philosophical work, and which will be discussed on a number of occasions throughout this chapter as it is relevant to our claim that he demonstrates a deterministic pattern of thinking. Since identifying the problem of 'mechanical causality' in 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa' as a mode of historical development in which there was no freedom, it has been anticipated that he would identify a contrasting mode of causality. Bulgakov begins this essay by claiming:

> Человек сознает себя свободным. Настоящее и будущее представляется для него не как ряд причин и следствий, при данных условиях единственно возможный, а как ряд различных возможностей, причем осуществление той или другой возможности зависит от его воли, от его поступков.[246]

Freedom is of special importance to Bulgakov with regards to the question of history, as it allows him to refute the sort of iron-clad *material* determinism that is proposed by Marxist and positivist systems. Otherwise, history would be fully predetermined:

> Все будущее, с точки зрения последовательного детерминизма, равно необходимо. Необходимы, следовательно, все гадости и мерзости, которые еще имеют быть совершены в истории, наряду с подвигами любви и правды.[247]

However, Bulgakov goes on in this essay to make a series of assertions

[246] S. Bulgakov, 'O sotsial'nom ideale', *Voprosy Filosofii i Psikhologii*, 1903. Published in Bulgakov, *Ot marksizma*, pp. 662-90 (p. 662).
[247] Ibid., p. 666.

which appear limit man's freedom of choice in a different way. He begins by suggesting:

> Способность оценки, различие добра и зла, в большей или меньшей степени свойственна всем, по крайней мере взрослым и здоровым людям.[248]

He establishes the metaphysical root of this capacity of choice: man is given, through his divine likeness, a set of values which constitute the criteria by which he makes his choices. These principles are the ideal basis which serves to motivate man's strivings, as Bulgakov highlights with respect to the principle of equality:

> Люди не равны в порядке натуральном, как эмпирические существа, но равны в порядке идеальном, как умопостигаемые сущности, как духовные субстанции. Но при этом порядок идеальный дает норму, естественное право, для порядка натурального.[249]

Freedom, therefore, is inherently circumscribed: metaphysical principles function to *inform* man's decision making and endeavour. These exist on the ideal, rather than material, plane. Man is therefore 'free', as it were, to be influenced by these metaphysical principles. The metaphysical nature of man's various aspirations is reasserted in this essay:

> Отсюда следует, что учение о равенстве людей и абсолютном достоинстве человеческой личности, составляющее нравственный фундамент новейшей демократической цивилизации, необходимо подразумевает transcensus за пределы опытно данной действительности, в область сверхопытную, доступную лишь метафизическому мышлению и религиозной вере...[250]

It thus becomes possible that history and the future no longer depend solely on meaningless mechanical causality, but are rather driven by man's need to pursue

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[248] Ibid., p. 665.
[249] Ibid., p. 675.
[250] Ibid., p. 675.

certain metaphysical precepts. This suggestion of man's innate metaphysical or religious qualities, driving his action within history, is made much more obvious in later work, and constitutes a central element of the determinist pattern evident in Bulagkov's thought. In this essay, we see a groundwork laid down according to which metaphysical impulses, rather than material impulses, inform human activity.

Conclusions

How might we describe the engagement, presented across the collection *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*, with the question of history? Thus far we have encountered a number of 'historicised' problems that all relate to it – theodicy, eschatology, meaning, freedom, causality – although there is no single conceptualisation or philosophy of history offered. At present there is therefore no obvious label to bring these together, although we can see evidence of Christian, Hegelian, Marxist and eschatological thought. This is all phrased in the context of Solov'evan and at times Kantian considerations. Together, it demonstrates the importance of the historicising proclivity within Bulgakov's mind, as he perceives in a range of different problems a historical dimension. Time is not (yet) a concern, as he perceives the world in terms of developmental patterns and historical forces, rather than in the more individual concerns of time and experience.

Initially, we can suggest that Bulgakov's thinking has, over 1901 to 1903, taken on two basic aspects: the first concerned with the historical process – the actual movement of history and events – and the second with the destination and meaning, or sanction, of this process. The central elements of Bulgakov's thought about the historical process concern the fact that he is keen to demonstrate, in a variety of ways, that mechanical causality – or material, immanent necessity – does

not constitute the basis of historical movement. This is partly a product of his attack on Marxism and positivism, and partly comes from the religious elements of his thinking, which aspire to see the 'providential' in every event. The rule of mechanical causality would extinguish the possibility of freedom, a profoundly important Christian precept, and would make the historical development and movement of humanity meaningless, as it would be encompassed by nothing more than lifeless, purely immanent, material causality. By extension, Bulgakov's second concern, engaged with the problem of historical meaning and history's destination, demands that history is something that is guided by a higher, metaphysical and providential force. Through this guidance, suffering and evil can be understood as part of a broader and, moreover, morally good process. Theodicy is therefore deeply tied to Bulgakov's fuller thinking about history.

Notwithstanding his turn against Marxism, an intellectual heritage including Marxism and Hegelianism may be considered to continue in the development of Bulgakov's thought about history in this period. We see this particularly in 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa' (1902) where it is suggested that in the historical process a providential, world meaning is expressed.[251] This Hegelian idea, imbued with a Christian ethical drive, will be central to Bulgakov's developing thought about history. A Hegelian-Marxist legacy is also further evident in Bulgakov's continual concern with the nature of historical process. Keen to assert that not just history as a whole but also history as a process possesses meaning, Bulgakov is driven to refute the positivist thesis which, in his mind, wishes to see in history only dead, causal connection.[252] Such Marxian-Hegelian continuity is also expressed in a susceptibility to determinist thinking built upon man's relation to certain metaphysical principles or

[251] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 521.
[252] Ibid., p. 520.

forces. Over his following works, the scope of this deterministic bent of thought will expand.

Dva grada *(1911)*

Dva grada covers essays written by Bulgakov over a longer period, from 1904 to 1910. The focus of the collection is vaguer than that of *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*, and we see him explore a variety of religious, intellectual and social themes. Broadly speaking, the desire to refute Marxism and positivism is still obvious, but the nature of Bulgakov's attack has changed. Although implicitly suggested across a number of the essays in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* – including 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa' (1902), 'Ob ekonomicheskom ideale' (1903) and 'O sotsial'nom ideale' (1903) – in *Dva grada* Bulgakov's identification of the religious character of Marxism and positivism, a key element in his critique, is much more direct. Through this argument it will emerge how he aims to establish mankind's metaphysical characteristics or eternal strivings, the elements of man which are independent from the material conditions of a particular society. This demonstrates a continued development towards metaphysically determinist thinking, as he describes how these strivings inform man's activities. *Dva grada* also demonstrates the deepening of Bulgakov's specifically Christian consciousness and the first steps of a movement towards theology.

In terms of engagement with the problem of history, we do not see quite as much useful material across these years, although we do see a continuation and some development of the historicised elements presented in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*. The essay 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm' (1909-10) is particularly relevant for our concerns. Christian eschatological thinking will play a greater role in this collection, and we will continue to see an engagement with the question of historical destination and meaning, as well with the question of causality within the historical process. Rather than looking at this collection on an essay-by-essay basis, it will be

more constructive to take a thematic approach and focus on those essays which best demonstrate these themes.

Christian framework

A key aspect of the essays offered in *Dva grada* is that they are written in a more decidedly Orthodox Christian key, which assimilates the other characteristics of Bulgakov's thinking which have been discussed up to this point. It is expressed clearly in respect of his discussion of the theme of history, as demonstrated by the first essay of the collection, 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u L. Feierbakha', written in 1905.

'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u l. Feierbakha' *(1905)*

'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u L. Feierbakha' demonstrates both Bulgakov's increased engagement with Christian themes and his prevailing interest in history. The increased Christianisation of his worldview is evident in the way he chooses to describe the historical process:

> Рост человечества от темной тварной стихии до светлого богообщения и богопознания, от зверечеловечества к богочеловечеству и наполняет собой исторический процесс. Для этого процесса одинаково необходима и свободная человеческая стихия, активно усвоящая открывающееся божественное содержание, и необходимо это откровение Божества, многочастное и многообразное.[253]

These Christian elements are presented with absolute, determinist language – the word 'necessary' (*neobxodimo*) is notably repeated – but are accompanied by the

[253] S. Bulgakov, 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u l. Feierbakha', *Voprosy zhizni*, 1905. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 15-50 (p. 40).

word ‘free’, perhaps indicating Bulgakov’s recognition of the growing tension existing between freedom and necessity in his thought. Further, there is also a Hegelian twist: Bulgakov discusses a ‘self-revealing divine content’ (*otkryvaiushcheesia bozhestvennoe soderzhanie*) using a present active reflexive participle, putting emphasis on the Hegelian idea of an active, presently self-revealing absolute. This is though juxtaposed against the separate activity of man, which is ‘mastering’ this content. Divine, absolute activity and free, human agency are thus placed together; both, however, are still discussed in terms of ‘necessity’, and a flavour of determinism remains.

In this essay Bulgakov continues to discuss other Christian elements which also tend towards a pattern of metaphysically determinist thinking, built upon ontology. He mentions how the revelation of the absolute ‘presupposes’ certain characteristics which emancipate man from the rule of the material and demonstrate his communion with the metaphysical:

> Очевидно, что возможность откровения абсолютного, возможность богочеловеческого процесса предполагает в человеке известные способности, известное духовное сродство, «образ и подобие» абсолютного.[254]

Bulgakov also returns to the problem of freedom, which has both Christian and historical dimensions. He argues that man’s potential for free choice explains why history is at present divided, why there still exists evil in the world:

> Источник этого дуализма – *свобода*, в которой наше высшее достоинство – образ Божий. Где есть свобода, там есть и выбор и разделение, там есть борьба, и не для ленивого прозябания, но для борьбы непримиримой и безостановочной посланы мы в этот мир, для создания царствия Божия путем свободной

[254] Ibid., p. 40.

борьбы.[255]

Freedom is again understood in a somewhat determined sense, and is cited in the context of it being driven towards a specific goal – the creation of the Kingdom of God. We are *sent* into the world, and our freedom is then placed in the context of a struggle *for* something: it is not simply posited. With 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u L. Feierbakha', the stage is thus set in *Dva grada* for a similar engagement with the various problems connected with history identified in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*, but in the context of a clearer Christian framework.

'Voskresenie Khrista i sovremennoe soznanie' *(1906)*

A Christianised vision of history is evident in other essays from *Dva grada*, for example 'Voskresenie Khrista i sovremennoe soznanie' of 1906:

> В воскресении Христа решался вопрос о смысле жизни, истории, о правде мира. В нем все бы умерло, и с Ним все воскресает, исполняется разумом, становится светоносным, и даже та теория эволюции и прогресса, которою теперь человечество отгораживается от религии, получает высший смысл и значение.[256]

This Christian framework to the problem of history continues to inform the other historicised themes we have discussed. These specifically relate to the question of causality that operates within history:

> И вот на основании того же самого понятия естественной необходимости, с каким оперирует научная мысль и в дарвинизме, и в марксизме, и вообще в эволюционизме, мы постулируем, утверждаем необходимость чуда – Воскресения Христова, а за ним и всеобщего воскресения и преображения как высшего и заключительного звена космической эволюции. Центр вопроса состоит именно в том, где же искать мирового демиурга, творящего эту «естественную

[255] Ibid., p. 50.
[256] Bulgakov, 'Voskresenie Khrista i sovremennoe soznanie', in *Dva grada*, p. 274.

> необходимость»? Видеть ли его в полуфантастическом, полумифологическом, совершенно чуждом нашему внутреннему, непосредственному опыту представлении о косной материи или же видеть ее в светлой силе человеческого и мирового духа?[257]

In the context of Christian concepts such as miracle, resurrection and transfiguration, this quotation demonstrates Bulgakov's inclination to understand both his and others' conception of the historical process by means of necessity. Identifying a distinguishing feature of his contemporaries' understanding of necessity to be its 'natural', and thereby material character, Bulgakov then reveals a temptation to replace one deterministic system – the determinism of Marxist historical materialism – with the trappings of a determinism of another sort, a kind of religious or metaphysically styled determinism, expressed here in the notion of the 'necessity of the miracle' that is 'Christ's resurrection'.

Ongoing patterns of determinist thinking

As we have already noted, a pattern of metaphysically determinist thinking occasionally appeared in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu*. Although it should not be overplayed at this point and should be understood alongside the other, non-determinist elements in his thought, it can be noted that these determinist trends also emerge in *Dva grada* and continue shape Bulgakov's thinking on history. In *Ot Marksizma k idealizmu*, this pattern of thought was exposed in the assertion that the possibility of the revelation of the absolute supposes certain special characteristics in man's ontological make-up, and that these characteristics, which inform his activity, lead man to make history in a certain way. This idea is most obviously suggested in

[257] Ibid., p. 273.

‘Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa’ (1902):

> Итак, человек не может удовлетвориться одной точной наукой, какой думал ограничить его позитивизм; потребности метафизики и религии неустранимы и никогда не устранялись из жизни человека.[258]

This means that man, in his historical activity, tries to satisfy these ‘needs’ or ‘demands’ (potrebnosti), allowing history to be directed by whatever source lies behind these needs.

In *Dva grada*, the scope of the ontological dynamic existing between mankind and the metaphysical or divine is defined to a greater extent. For example, in ‘Karl Marks kak religioznyi tip’ (1906), we read:

> По моему убеждению, определяющей силой в духовной жизни человека является его религия – не только в узком, но и в широком смысле слова, т.е. те высшие и последние ценности, которые признает человек *над* собою и *выше* себя, и то практическое отношение, в которое он становится к этим ценностям.[259]

This theme of innate metaphysical qualities, compelling men to reach beyond the material, beyond the present, is a common theme, and particular attention needs to be drawn to it.

In 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u russkoi intelligentsii', written in 1908, the theme is phrased differently:

> Человек рожден для вечности и слышит в себе голос вечности, он слышит его тонким ухом своих величайших мыслителей, ученых и поэтов, своим чистым сердцем праведников, творческим гением своих художников. Жить во времени для вечности, переживать в относительном абсолютное и стремиться дальше всякой данности... к этому призван человек, и это стремление [...] есть живое

[258] Bulgakov, ‘Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa’, in *Ot marksizma,* p. 497.
[259] S. Bulgakov, ‘Karl Marks kak religioznyi tip’, *Moskovskii ezhenedel’nik*, 1906. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 51-70 (p. 51).

богооткровение в нас.[260]

An interesting formulation of time and eternity – which since Plato has been central to discussion of time and is prominent in Berdiaev – is thus also found here. In the above arrangement – 'to live in time, for eternity' – it relates to the sort of formulation that, after Plotinus, was taken on by Patristic fathers such as Augustine of Hippo, who suggested that whilst we live in time the goal of history is the end of time and the passage into eternity.

In the above quotation and other essays included in *Dva Grada* tensions may be observed around the problem of man's relationship to the metaphysical, and his relation to freedom and necessity within this, which continue to suggest a pattern of deterministic thinking that is slightly at odds with other aspects of Bulgakov's thought. Elements of Hegelian-Marxist (and also Christian) thought that have a determinist colouring – evident in the discourse of necessity and of 'calling' – are juxtaposed with Christian ideas about the metaphysics of freedom that Bulgakov also assimilates. Bulgakov is at this point still cognisant of a conflict between metaphysical freedom and the constraints the material world presents to this freedom, admitting in 'Khristianstvo i sotsial'nyi vopros' (1906):

> …человек призван одновременно жить в двух мирах: в царстве неодходимости и в царстве свободы, нося в душе постоянную загадку, противоречие, антиномию, обусловливающую постоянную борьбу, призываюшую к постоянному подвигу. Пред человеком всегда два пути, хорошо или дурно отличаемые, путь освобождения от мира силой его отрицания и путь порабощения его пустым и мертвым стихиям.[261]

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[260] S. Bulgakov, 'Religiia chelovekobozhiia u russkoi intelligentsiii', *Russkaia mysl'*, 1908. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada*, pp. 248-68 (p. 253).
[261] S. Bulgakov, 'Khristianstvo i sotsial'nyi vopros', *Voprosy religii*, 1906. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada,* pp. 126-40 (p. 128).

Nonetheless, despite describing these 'two paths', in actuality Bulgakov does not provide conditions in which man could end upon the wrong path: as he describes it, through his metaphysical freedom man is *called* to a divine path. He therefore does not doubt the final, religious end to history:

> …истории, которая все же представляет собой необходимый, хотя и трагический путь к высшей стадии бытия…[262]

History is frequently understood as the *necessary* path to a definite goal – whatever this path may be, the endpoint is inevitable. Freedom exists along the way, however a determined, 'necessary' framework structures the path of the journey.

The elements of Bulgakov's thought suggesting a type of metaphysically-styled determinism in *Dva grada* do not, however, lead him to undermine the reality of the material world or the material aspects of the historical process. Man is, Bulgakov understands, compelled to live within the material realm, despite the fact that he possesses metaphysical qualities. Therefore, he argues in 'Khristianstvo i sotsial'nyi vopros':

> Возделывание «земли», т.е. сил природы (которое включает, конечно, не одно только земледелие, но все виды промышленного труда), составляет естественную задачу человечества, и было бы странно предположить – одинаково и с религиозной, и с человеческой точки зрения, – чтобы эту задачу разрешал человек изолированно.[263]

Bulgakov therefore asserts that, whilst living in the material world, man should not become blinded by the material aspect of his life: he should remain aware of the fact that he does not lead his material life in *isolation* – he remains in contact with the

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[262] S. Bulgakov, 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm', *Russkaia mysl'*, 1910. Published in Bulgakov, *Dva grada,* pp. 207-47 (p. 236).
[263] Bulgakov, 'Khristianstvo i sotsial'nyi vopros', in *Dva grada*, p. 129.

divine.

At a number of points in *Dva grada*, then, we see the problem of determinist traits in Bulgakov's thinking. These are more fully expressed in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), where he discusses the themes of creativity and history, and creativity and freedom.

'Apokaliptika i sotsializm' *(1909-10)*

For our purposes the essay 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm', written across 1909-10, is the most significant essay in *Dva grada.* In this piece Bulgakov extensively explores the themes of history and eschatology, and it is the first instance in which he offers some more explicit formulations on a philosophy of history. Coming as it does at the end of the period in which the essays of *Dva grada* were written (1904-1910), it demonstrates how he is, in 1910, finally beginning to arrive at a fuller conceptualisation of history. In this essay, Bulgakov discusses in depth the problem of apocalyptic thought – specifically Jewish apocalyptic thinking – and reveals how notions of apocalypse and by extension crisis are prevalent elements in his own conceptualisation of history. This substantiates the observation made earlier which suggested that a sense of *temporality as crisis* orientates a broader conceptual approach to history.

'Apokaliptika i sotsializm' also continues to demonstrate Bulgakov's more nuanced approach to his refutation and exploration of Marxism, and in this refutation he continues to develop his own thought by offering an ontological commentary on the universal religiosity of mankind which is coloured by determinism. This thinking significantly depends on his treatment of history. Where in his 1909 contribution to *Vekhi* ('Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo') Bulgakov had identified the underlying

religiosity of the intelligentsia,[264] in 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm' he similarly describes the religious basis of the Marxist and socialist philosophy of history:

> В основе социализма как мировоззрения лежит старая хилиастическая вера в наступление земного рая (как это нередко и прямо выражается в социалистической литературе) и в земное преодоление исторической трагедии.[265]

'Apokaliptika i sotsializm' begins with the statement that two interpretations exist concerning how history unfolds. Both, significantly, relate to theology and the religious world. The first is *chiliasm*:[266]

> Возможна вообще двоякая ориентировка в истории. В одном случае история рассматривается как процесс, ведущий к достижению некоторой запредельной, однако истории еще имманентной и ее силами достигаемой цели – условно назовем это рассмотрение *хилиастическим* [...] Хилиастична в этом смысле всякая теория прогресса, как религиозная, так и нерелигиозная...[267]

Chiliastic interpretations therefore consider history to be a process that unfolds according to the influence of the forces that exist inside it – there is no room for metahistorical forces (i.e. forces which exist outside the realm of history) to channel the historical process. Socialism, based upon the above, understands history in a purely chiliastic sense:

> В социализме хилиазм, естественно, заполнил собой весь исторический план и окончательно заслонил всякий эсхатологический горизонт.[268]

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[264] 'Рядом с антихристовым началом в нашей интеллигенции чувствуются и высшие религиозные потенции, новая историческая плоть, ждущая своего одухотворения.' S. Bulgakov, 'Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo', in *Dva Grada*, p. 298.
[265] Bulgakov, 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm', in *Dva grada*, p. 241.
[266] Chiliasm, the Greek term for Millenarianism, derives from early Christian theology. It consists in the belief in a coming paradise on earth.
[267] Ibid., pp. 218-19.
[268] Ibid., p. 242.

This vision of history, trapped within the immanent world, to Bulgakov seems fundamentally limited. Such an understanding of history focuses only on 'horizontal' movement,[269] further demonstrating its limitation:

> Но он [хилиазм] есть средство ориентирования лишь в горизонтальной плоскости, лишь в историческом разрезе, в области дискурсивного, имманентного содержания истории, и об этом значении и его ограниченности никогда не следует забывать.[270]

This chiliastic understanding of history is thus fundamentally impoverished in Bulgakov's descriptions, as it offers no room for the metaphysical.

In Bulgakov's reckoning a need for something higher than chiliasm will thus always exist. This again determines mankind's aspirations: in history, man demands the metaphysical. He thereby introduces the second historical orientation, which is *eschatological*:

> Человек не может, даже если бы хотел, остаться исключительно в области имманентного и временного и совершенно устранить всякую мысль о возможном перерыве – не времени, но самой временности – о переходе за ее предел, хотя бы неведома куда.[271]

(The brief mention of *vremia* and *vremennost'*, not explored here, will become a problem later for Bulgakov in *Svet nevechernii*). History, understood in this eschatological sense, is thus a movement of transcending history, moving beyond the boundaries of the time that operates within it, into the eternal. He therefore argues:

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[269] Berdiaev will later similarly attach pejorative value to 'horizontal' manifestations of temporal movement.
[270] Ibid., p. 220.
[271] Ibid., p. 220.

> Если в хилиазме человечество видит впереди себя историческую цель, то в эсхатологии оно усматривает над собою и за пределами этого мира с его историей сверхприродную цель.[272]

A proper historical orientation therefore inevitably takes on this metaphysical perspective.

This is not to say, however, that Bulgakov wants to focus purely on the metaphysical aspect of history. Indeed, he asserts that history is about the proper simultaneous experience of *both* the immanent and the metaphysical dimensions of history. A proper orientation in history requires that one works immanently in history whilst at the same time feeling the presence of the divine and metaphysical within and beyond it. This is a crucial distinction for Bulgakov's breed of eschatology: he still maintains a degree of focus on the immanent, whereas as we will see for Berdiaev eschatology is orientated towards total transcendence. Bulgakov elucidates this argument when discussing the differing role of the *prophet* and the *apocalyptic*:

> И пророк и апокалиптик глядят в будущее и ищут в нем ответа на «проклятые вопросы современности». Но пророк живет и действует в настоящем в гораздо большей степени, чем апокалиптик.[273]

We see then immediately that the prophet has a greater grounding in *reality* – he works and acts in the present. The prophet, existing in this way, understands history in the proper, eschatological sense:

> Черта первого настроения [настроение пророка] – мужественная активность, чувство Бога в истории – побуждает служить Ему историческими деяниями, творить историю; это – субъективное, творческое, антидетерминистическое, или, выражаясь по-современному, «прагматическое» отношение к истории. Недаром

[272] Ibid., p. 221.
[273] Ibid., p. 215.

> пророки являются вместе с тем и крупнейшими общественными, а иногда и государственными деятелями и патриотами; с величайшим подъемом религиозного чувства они соединяют трезвый реализм, я готов сказать – практичность [...] их взор остается не затуманенным открывающейся пред ними всемирно-исторической и эсхатологической перспективой, они сохраняют и гармонию душевных сил, и душевное здоровье.[274]

Both antideterministic, creative, subjective, possessing the feeling of God within history – but at the same time practical, real, and working within history to *create* history: the prophet thus seems to represent Bulgakov's first explicit assertion of how history works, and how one should relate to it. This understanding suggests that history is driven from within and guided from without by the metaphysical and the divine, which is consequently both within and outside history. *All is providential* to the prophet: every immanent event possesses metaphysical value. However, the above should also be treated cautiously: the assertion of the *antideterministic* element of the prophet's orientation within history is disingenuous, as there are still clearly deterministic ideas at work. It is best to understand 'antideterminism' in the context of his definition of positivism, which prescribes a material determinism. The prophet, understanding history in the eschatological sense, looks to overcome and transcend the material rather than work only within the material and be determined by it. So it is that Bulgakov's rather narrow description of determinism is linked only to the material – he seems not to have understood, despite his reading of Hegel, how it could operate at a metaphysical level.

Contrary to the antideterministic line, we see further suggestions of a deterministic pattern, operating at a metaphysical level, emerge in 'Apokaliptika i sotsializm'. These are most evident in a description of 'obligation' before history:

[274] Ibid., p. 215.

> Обязанность перед этой общечеловеческой и космической жизнью, а следовательно, и перед историей, вместе с «талантами», вверенными в наше распоряжение, налагаются на нас одновременно с рождением. История для религиозного есть также священное тайнодействие, притом имеющее смысл, ценность и значение во всех своих частях, как это глубоко было почувствовано в германском классическом идеализме, особенно у Гегеля.[275]

A clear reference to Hegel testifies to Bulgakov's constant awareness of Hegelian thought. This sense of calling and responsibility towards history recalls our interpretation, presented earlier, that in Bulgakov's mind man is called by his metaphysical or divine nature to act a certain way and follow a certain path within history.

Conclusions

We can see, then, that in *Dva grada* a number of the same elements continue to be dealt with regarding the question of history, alongside the development of a much stronger Christian focus. A concern with emancipating the process of history from the inert rigidity of purely immanent processes is pronounced, and we see an ongoing attraction to a metaphysically styled determinism. This latter pattern of thought has been identified by other scholars, most notably Rodnianskaia, who argues that it demonstrates the lasting influence of Marx's thought over Bulgakov:

> …обратимся к булгаковской теории исторического прогресса, которая строилась в сознательном и воинственном отталкивании от марксизма и вместе с тем, с определенной поры, в бессознательном притяжении к нему.[276]

An attraction towards determinist solutions is particularly significant in terms of

[275] Ibid., pp. 243-44.
[276] I. B. Rodnianskaia, 'Bulgakov v spore s marksistskoi filosofiei istorii: ottalkivaniia I pritiazheniia', p. 894.

the further development of Bulgakov's thought. As will be seen, he continued to deal with the material in its concrete form in later work, a preoccupation which led to criticism from contemporaries. Berdiaev, in particular, damningly suggested that Bulgakov was a materialist through and through:

> Он [Булгаков] остался экономическим материалистом и перенес свой экономический материализм на небо...[277]

Whether or not the criticism is justified, the need to deal with the material world demonstrates the influence Marxism continued to assert on Bulgakov's thought regarding history. This desire to find the providential within the material, along the lines of an idealism, also demonstrates the beginnings of a *cosmology* – i.e. the idea that all that occurs within the physical world is infused with the energy and power of the metaphysical or Logos. Indeed, Zen'kovskii goes as far as to assert:

> …основы философских построений Бугакова лежат в его космологии. Религиозный перелом не оторвал его от мира, а сам определялся (во всяком случае в значительной степени) потребностью глубже понять мир и проникнуть в его сокровенную жизнь, сокровенный смысл.[278]

In this sort of historical worldview the themes of eschatology and theodicy are also both still very influential. Cosmological thinking will appear most clearly in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, where it is argued that history-as-economy is the process whereby man vivifies the natural, material world: he imbues it with divine wisdom through *Sophiological economy* – through his deliverance of Sophia to the natural realm.

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[277] N. A. Berdiaev, 'Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii: Vozrozhdenie pravoslaviia', *Russkaia mysl'*, 1916. Published in *S.N. Bulgakov: pro et contra*, pp. 748-81 (p. 756).
[278] Zen'kovskii, *Isoriia russkoi filosofii*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 207.

Filosofiia khoziaistva *(1912)*

Filosofiia khoziaistva, published in 1912, is the product of Bulgakov's movement through a number of philosophical and religious ideas, and is his first attempt at expounding a comprehensive worldview. As is made clear in the preface, a desire to deal with positivist and Marxist thought still figures prominently in Bulgakov's mind:

> Для автора настоящая работа имеет еще и совершенно особое значение, ибо в ней подводится внутренний итог целой полосы жизни, окрашенной экономическим материализмом, и она есть долг философской совести автора по отношению к своему собственному прошлому.[279]

Presenting a fuller development of many of the ideas which had been prominent across his earlier work, *Filosofiia khoziaistva* also introduces the religious-philosophical concept of Sophia. This idea provides a greater unity to Bulgakov's thinking, which was perhaps lacking in his earlier work. As Garaeva asserts:

> Сознание С.Н. Булгакова было настроено на потребность синтетической философии, философии всеединства, а потому он без труда приемлет Софию как идеальную основу тварного мира…[280]

This text is thus deeply significant in a variety of respects – although introducing new concepts, it is the result of long philosophical meditation. Indeed, Evtuhov suggests that it was the fruit of the previous decade (if not more) of philosophical searching.[281]

The central problem of *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, the problem of economy, is taken in a broad sense. In the tradition of Kant, Hegel, and other nineteenth-century philosophers, and along with many of his European and Russian contemporaries,

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[279] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* p. 3.
[280] Garaeva, *Sofiinyi idealizm*, p. 253.
[281] Catherine Evtuhov, 'Introduction', in Sergei Bulgakov, *Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household,* trans. C. Evtuhov (New Haven, 2000), pp. 1-32 (p. 3).

Bulgakov was interested in the broad dynamic of the relationship between man and the material world, and thereby also the revived Neo-Kantian problem of the subject-object relation. Indeed, as Kołakowski, cited here by Styczński, notes, the general renewed movement of Kantian thinking aimed at wresting the broader concerns of philosophy away from dominant positivist consensuses:

> Kantianism was more than a philosophical trend. Above all it was an effort to vindicate philosophy as it was directed against the scientistic orientation of the positivists. […] They [the positivists] assumed that methods used in natural sciences were the only means of achieving reliable knowledge […] [yet] Kantianism delivered a method of thinking according to which philosophy was not only a legitimate, but indispensable form of intellectual existence…[282]

In view of this, economy for Bulgakov represented the way in which mankind interacted with and shaped the material world – it was not just a prosaic concern with the scientific study of economics. Drawing together his background of teaching political economy and his active opposition to Marxist economic thought, Bulgakov thus aimed to ascribe metaphysical and religious meaning to the notion of economic activity.

Friedrich Schelling's (1775-1854) *Naturphilosophie* was also particularly influential in the formulation of the thesis presented in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, which, looking at the relationship between man and nature, identified a mutual *identity* existing between the inert matter of the material world and the active, enlightening matter of divine humanity. Pustarnakov has argued that the influence of Schelling in Russian philosophy after Solov'ev tends to be overlooked,[283] and Bulgakov's

[282] Citation from Leszek Kołakowski**,** *Główne nurty marksizmu. Powstanie – rozwój – rozkład* (Paris, 1977), in Marek Styczński, 'Sergei Hessen, Neo-Kantian: Dedicated to Professor Andrzej Walicki', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 56, no. 1 (2004), pp. 55-71 (pp. 57-58).
[283] V. F. Pustarnakov, 'O zamysle knigi, xode raboty nad nei i nekotorykh itogakh issledovaniia', in V. F. Pustarnakov (ed.), *Filosofiia Shellinga v Rossii* (St Petersburg, 1998), pp. 3-12.

Filosofiia khoziaistva demonstrates how Schelling's influence was still very much present in early twentieth-century Russian thinking. Indeed, Vaganova in her comprehensive overview of Bulgakov's Sophiology asserted a broad similarity in Schelling's and Bulgakov's intellectual development:

> Если для аналогии (а аналогия, вернее, *типология* развития мысли, несомненно, прослеживается) взять творческую эволюцию Шеллинга, от натурфилософии к теософии (философии откровения), то булгаковская амплитуда куда круче: она начинается политэкономией земледелия, а заканчивается догматическим богословием.[284]

The closeness between Schelling and Bulgakov is thus quite significant, and perhaps extends beyond their mutual espousal of the notion of a man-nature identity.

Regarding the specific problem of history within Bulgakov's work, *Filosofiia khoziaistva* offers some crucial advances in terms of the exposition and development of his thinking. Most importantly, we see in this text a more sustained treatment of the problem of history. Indeed it could be argued that history is amongst its most significant elements. In *Filosofiia khoziaistva* Bulgakov presents a full conceptualisation of history, describing how it plays out at both a cosmic and an anthropological level. The ideas behind it, being centred upon the question of the *meaning* of economy, perhaps inevitably unfold across the framework of history. For Bulgakov, as we will see, engagement with the question of economy unavoidably results in thought about history; indeed, the two become almost coterminous:

> Хотя эмпирически, непосредственно она [деятельность хозяйства] и выражается в мириадах разрозненных актов, но динамически она есть единая и связная деятельность, которая субъектом имеет не индивид, но род, и развертывается во

[284] N. A. Vaganova, *Sofiologiia protoiereia Sergiia Bulgakova* (Moscow, 2010), p. 280.

> времени, т.е. в истории.[285]

Economy and history thus exist in very close connection, the former 'unfolding' in the latter. We will continue to see the historicised themes of theodicy, causality and freedom in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, as well as the introduction of the question of creativity. This is all done alongside an integration of Christian ideas into a philosophical context. The specific problem of metaphysical determinism, evident at both cosmic and anthropological levels, becomes yet more obvious in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, and a fuller discussion of this determinism will be an important element in our understanding of the evolution of Bulgakov's historical thought to this point. I begin with an attempt at capturing the central tenets of his conceptualisation of history presented in this work.

Cosmic philosophy of history

The first thing we notice about *Filosofiia khoziaistva* is the great expansion in the scale of Bulgakov's historical thinking. According to its wider scope and the broader terms arising from his engagement with economy as a philosophical problem, Bulgakov's thought now aspires to a – literally – more universal level:

> Всякий живой организм, как тело, как организованная материя, находится в неразрывной связи со всей вселенной в качестве ее части, ибо вселенная есть система сил, взаимно проникаюших одна другую, и нельзя сдвинуть песчинку, уничтожить хотя один атом без того, чтобы не подвиглась – в той или иной форме и степени – вся вселенная.[286]

This cosmic scope is reflected in a similarly epic impression of history. *Filosofiia khoziaistva* describes how the two great cosmic forces of 'life' and 'death' are locked

[285] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* pp. 90-91.
[286] Ibid., p. 64.

in conflict. The resolution of this conflict, which occurs through economy, takes on the shape of history. There is a distinct religious character to this process:

> Мир мертвой и косной материи разрешается в мир энергий, за которыми скрываются живые силы. Пелены постепенно спадают с трехдневного и смердящего уже Лазаря, который ждет повелительного слова: Лазаре, иди вон![287]

The cosmic principles of life and death are associated with multiple meanings. Life is associated with good, creativity, the subject, the *natura naturans* (nature in its ideal condition) and ultimately with Sophia and the divine, whereas death is characterised in terms of mechanism, evil, inertness, lifelessness and is associated with the *natura naturata* (nature in its present condition), the object and the terrestrial. This means that through the expansion of this life-death opposition Bulgakov is able to explore many of the problems with which he had dealt previously, and also to talk more broadly about the basic subject-object divide.

In the cosmic antagonism between life and death, these principles are not antinomiously opposed to one another, but are, rather, only opposing ‘conditions’ or ‘states’ of life:

> В теперешнюю мировую эпоху устойчивость не достигнута ни в ту, ни в другую форму – ни в сторону Хаоса, Пустоты и Механизма, ни в сторону Организма, бессмертной Жизни, Полноты. Между Жизнью и Смертью идет поединок [...] Точнее следует сказать, что это борьба не двух начал, но *двух состояний* одной и той же Вселенной, причем самая эта борьба есть лишь симптом болезненного состояния бытия, хотя и болезни роста...[288]

As they are not antimoniously opposed, Bulgakov, following Schelling’s lead in his *Naturphilosophie*, suggests the inevitable resolution of the life-death contradiction by

[287] Ibid., p.125.
[288] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

identifying their mutual identity:

> Возможность борьбы между одущевленным и неодущевленным обусловливается их существенным тожеством при различии их как состояний.[289]

This identity makes possible the transformation of the inert, deathly world into a divine, vivified organism – it makes possible the victory of the principle of life over the principle of death. This is very close to Schelling's thesis in *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1803), where he writes:

> Man is not born to waste his mental power in conflict against the fantasy of an imaginary world, but to exert all his powers upon a world which has influence upon him, lets him feel its forces, and upon which he can react. Between him and the world, therefore, no rift must be established; contact and reciprocal action must be possible between the two, for only so does man become man.[290]

Bulgakov understands that there is no such rift between man and the world, between life and death, and therefore along with Schelling follows a thesis of identity.

The process whereby this conflict between the two principles or conditions of life and death is resolved constitutes the basis of history. Problematically, due to the emphasis that is placed not just on *identity* but also on the *primacy* of life, it will emerge that, despite the new terminology, this historical process is, at a cosmic level, deterministic. This primacy of life is formulated explicitly below:

> Этот монизм жизни, панзоизм, в противоположность монизму смерти, или пантанатизму, материалистов, вслед за древними мыслителями (Платоном и особенно Плотином), Бёме и Баадером, Шеллингом и Вл. Соловьевым, мы считаем метафизической гипотезой, единственно способной вывести из

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[289] Ibid., p. 70.
[290] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, Second Edition, 1803. translated by Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 10-11.

> затруднения...[291]

An opposition between life and death thus forms the basis of the world and history, but in this opposition life is primary and death secondary. In his interpretation of Plato and Plotinus, along with mystics such as Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) and Franz von Baader (1765-1841), he clearly detects the sort of mystical predisposition towards a negation of the 'deathly' or inert, material principle in the same way that, as we shall see later, Berdiaev would. In Bulgakov's thinking, then, the ultimate imbalance between the two principles of life and death will drive the economic process taking place across history and create a teleology to the historical process.

The historical narrative of Filosofiia khoziaistva

The historical narrative of *Filosofiia khoziaistva* is a description of the steady vivification of the inert natural world by the divine force of life – the process of economy. This narrative, therefore, accounts for the victory of life over death:

> Задача космического и исторического процесса в том и состоит, чтобы этот [божественный] огонь проник, согрел, осветил всю тварь, всю природу.[292]

History, then, is immediately given a much clearer structure and goal than it had been previously, with teleology therefore much more evident. This historical process is possible, Bulgakov argues, due to economy, as economy is the means by which man interacts with the world:

> Хозяйство есть деятельность человека над природой; обладая силами природы, он творит из них, что хочет.[293]

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[291] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, p. 67.
[292] Ibid., p. 116.
[293] Ibid., p. 110.

In this economic-historical process, humanity takes its content, its life, and fills inert nature – the object world – with it. This narrative states that nature, in its *present* state (*natura naturata*) is in a death-like, mechanical condition, but that this is not a permanent state. The subject (humanity) in the historical process overcomes the object (nature), and fills it with life. The type of eschatological thinking evident in this text thus recalls the 'inaugurated' eschatology discussed in the Introduction to this thesis: the bringing about of the end is presented as *in process* and already in motion.[294]

Returning to the Schellingian identity, Bulgakov argues that the economic-historical process is possible because everything, both nature (the object) and humanity (the subject), possesses the same metaphysical basis:

> И там [хозяйство] и здесь [познание] по-своему преодолевается противопоставление субъекта и объекта, в обоих процессах обнаруживается одна и та же метафизическая основа, именно *тожество* субъекта и объекта, и жизнь раскрывается как постоянное выявление, углубление и обнаружение этого тожества вместе с преодолением этой полярности.[295]

The economic aspect of history is thus the agency by which inert nature is vivified, or by which history happens. The subject, or agent, in this process is humanity as a whole which thus becomes responsible for the process of history:

> Истинным и притом единственным трансцендентальным субъектом хозяйства, олицетворением *чистого хозяйства*, или самой функции хозяйствования, является *не человек, но человечество.*[296]

Since, in this conceptualisation of history, it is humanity that drives the process of

[294] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 540.
[295] Ibid., p. 85.
[296] Ibid., p. 94.

history, the various ontological limitations to which man is subject will be of great significance. This ontological element in the conceptualisation of history will be discussed below.

Thus far, then, Bulgakov's conceptualisation of history in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* offers both a cosmic scope and a clear narrative through which the historical process will take place. History, in this text, is the process in which mankind transforms deathly, object nature into a world full of life and divinity. However, this description has revealed two moments where determinism may emerge: the first concerns the fact that the metaphysical force of life is portrayed as primary, and the objective force of death secondary; the second concerns the fact that man, who is invested with responsibility for the passage of history, may be subject to limitations or conditions in this historical activity. These problems arise from a number of older concerns.

Causality and theodicy

As has been suggested, the older 'historicised' problems in Bulgakov's thinking come together in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* to help formulate a fuller philosophy of history. Similarly, the question of causality is also still significant in the historical narrative of *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, as it describes *how* history moves. Bulgakov's thought on causality has developed further: whilst now admitting the existence of mechanical causality as a process occurring within history, he asserts that this form of causality represents only anticipation of another. This ties the theme of mechanical causality to the broader terms of the life-death opposition. The mechanical (objective) form of causality thus is described as only awaiting the organic (subjective) form:

> Поэтому природа извне есть механизм сил, в недрах же своих, потенциально, она есть живой организм.[297]

The causal process at the roots of the world thus runs deeper than the principle of mechanism, recalling the fact that earlier, in *Dva grada* (1911), Bulgakov had suggested a metaphysical necessity in the place of immanent historical necessity. He is, indeed, still driven to underline again exactly why such a 'mechanistic' interpretation of the world is mistaken, explaining that mechanical causality offers no greater *meaning* to history:

> Оно [чисто материалистическое воззрение] ставит в качестве объяснения ряд новых загадок, и в основу всего полагает абсолютный и всемогущий Случай, т.е. начало, которое ничего не объясняет, а только закрывает отсутствие объяснения. Каким образом мог сам собою из мертвого механизма природы возникнуть человек, каким образом косная и слепая материя может отдаваться его творческим замыслам, выдавать ему свои тайны и секреты и каким образом далее он может перерастать себя – все это вопросы, на которые нет и не может быть ответа.[298]

It is evident that the problem of historical causality still preoccupies Bulgakov in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), as it did in *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* (1903) and *Dva grada* (1911), and the primacy in history of metaphysical processes over mechanically causal processes continues to be asserted.

Similarly, the historical narrative of *Filosofiia khoziaistva* is also built upon the demand for a theodicy, an apprehension of evil. This is because it demonstrates how the 'evil' forces of the world – those of death, inertness, mechanism and chaos – are overcome by the divine force of life, thereby reducing evil to something transient and

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[297] Ibid., p. 100.
[298] Ibid., p. 110.

non-substantial. The historical dimension of theodicy is thus still prominent. However, in the broader cosmic balance of the relationship between good and evil, the quandary of the *primacy* of good over evil re-emerges. Above, it was revealed how Bulgakov, when trying to overcome the problem of evil, was led to describe a schema in which the divine and metaphysical offer the ultimate grounding and basis for everything that takes place in the world. As both subject and object, good and evil all share a metaphysical basis in good, the relationship between life and death is fundamentally skewed: it can only be assumed that the historical process will result in the revelation of this self-evident truth that life, good, is universal and primary. Therefore, as Gavrilyuk contends, Bulgakov's thought becomes a kind of 'ontological universalism', in which everything is determined by this basic ontological quality of goodness running through the universe:

> For Bulgakov, in contrast, creaturely freedom, no matter how radical and far-reaching its revolt against God, could not possibly become a permanent barrier to the power and goodness of God. Because of its emphasis upon God as the source and power of being and its methodological shift from juridical to ontological categories, Bulgakov's eschatology may be termed ontological universalism.[299]

The primacy of life (or the metaphysical-divine) over death (or the object-material) thus expresses the cosmic dimensions of the type of metaphysically determinist thinking that exists in Bulgakov's thought. This problem will re-emerge in *Svet nevechernii* (1917). Meanwhile, the sense of theodicy offering a *dialogue* with the contemporaneous world, with the crisis of modern times, is also still very apparent in this text: it is clear how the problems of the present relate to an improper balance between good and evil at a cosmic level, but that, due to the essential metaphysical basis of all, these crises will be eventually resolved for the victory of good.

[299] Gavrilyuk, 'Universal Salvation in the Eschatology of Sergius Bulgakov', p. 128.

Historical humanity

Having looked at the cosmic aspects of Bulgakov's treatment of history, we can now move on to the ontological aspects. A key development of *Filosofiia khoziaistva* is Bulgakov's identification of mankind as a universal, historical whole. This whole, humanity, which is variously described as the *transcendental subject of economy (transtsendental'nyi sub"ekt khoziaistva),* the *Demiurge (Demiurg)*, and also the *World Soul (Mirovaia Dusha)*, carries out economic activity. Through this *unified* activity mankind is thus responsible for the fate of economy and history:

> Единство их [людей] выражается в объективном единстве истории и хозяйства, в общности их дела.[300]

Humanity acquires an historical aspect, and its activity acquires transcendental importance in the movement of economy and history forwards. The question, however, arises – how free is this *transcendental subject of economy* in the direction of its activity? Why does humanity engage in the spreading of the 'flame of life' and not in creating a mechanism to bring death to the world and end history with the victory of death? A return to the question concerning the capacities by which mankind acts, and thereby creates history, is thus necessary. It is in this problem, as has been contended above by Gavrilyuk, that we find the elements in Bulgakov's thought which exhibit an historical determinism.

As has been suggested throughout Bulgakov's earlier works, a key aspect of humanity is its possession of certain metaphysical and transcendental qualities that allow man to exist free from mechanical causality, to be transcendent to the object world. Bulgakov demonstrates this whilst discussing the theme of *freedom*:

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[300] Ibid., pp. 108-09.

> Свобода есть не беспричинность, но *самопричинность*, способность действовать от себя [...] из себя начинать причинность, по-своему преломлять причинную связь и тем нарушать принцип всеобщего механизма.[301]

Freedom is thus ability to be independent from the material world and to make one's own causality. This freedom constitutes a powerful force within the historical dynamic, and its genesis – originating in the metaphysical, coming from God – again demonstrates the primacy of the metaphysical over the material. In *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, this ontological-historical problem of man's freedom to create history is advanced in Bulgakov's formulation of the question of creativity.

The historical problem of creativity

The historical ramifications of the determined nature of man's ontological make-up are demonstrated when Bulgakov addresses the problem of creativity, a question which possesses a significant historical dimension. It is a new 'historicised' problem arising in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. Creativity will also be integral to Berdiaev's philosophy of time – more important than it is for Bulgakov's philosophy of history – but his thought on this problem will differ from Bulgakov's. Reemphasising the almost coterminous nature of history and economy, Bulgakov begins his exploration of creativity by detailing his perception of the dynamic whereby history moves:

> Человеческое хозяйство развивается не только экстенсивно, но и интенсивно, так что в каждом данном звене исторической цепи интегрируется если не весь предыдущий процесс, то некоторая его часть; настоящее вырастает из прошлого, его в себя поглощая, органически его усвояя…[302]

In this discussion of the way in which history moves, Bulgakov evinces the Hegelian-

[301] Ibid., p. 168.
[302] Ibid., p. 93.

Marxist idea that any historical progress contains within itself at least some elements of the past. However, he continues then to make a very important assertion:

> ...но вместе с тем новый вид, этот интеграл предыдущего исторического ряда, содержит в себе и нечто качественно новое в сравнении со всем предшествующим, и в этом состоит историческое развитие в природе и в человеческой истории.[303]

This identification of newness as a key component of historical development allows the way in for metaphysical, rather than immanent, processes to guide the movement of history. This recalls the idea that where the 'chiliastic' reduces to immanent processes, proper 'eschatological' interpretations focus on the transcendental in history. Bulgakov concludes that:

> Возможность истории, исторических процессов, а в том числе хозяйства (и знания), основана на этой способности к новому творчеству, идущему дальше простого воспроизведения или повторения старого...[304]

Asserting that creativity, through the advent of newness, makes history possible is a significant step in the development of Bulgakov's thinking about history, as he is offering a thesis on how history works.[305] As well as discussing history and a historical narrative at a cosmic level, he is also thus demonstrating how history moves at a more particular level.

If the path of history (and economy) is based on creativity, then how, and according to what impetus, does humanity create? The solutions Bulgakov arrives at

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[303] Ibid., p. 93.
[304] Ibid., p. 93.
[305] It should also be noted that Bulgakov perceives the same creativity in economic activity as he does in artistic creativity, meaning that 'creativity' is used in a broad sense. For example, in reference to the Dostoevskian idea that 'beauty will save the world', Bulgakov writes: 'Демиург в хозяйственном процессе организует природу, превращая ее механизм снова в организм [...] и тем превращает мир в художественное произведение [...] Поэтому победа хозяйства выражается в космической победе красоты. Отсюда пророчественное значение искусства как прообраза: «Красота спасет мир».' Ibid., pp. 101-12.

offer the most comprehensive evidence available thus far of how a determinist pattern of thinking in his philosophy establishes a teleology in the historical process. Man's capacity to create, Bulgakov argues, invests in him the responsibility for directing history, but this creative ability is circumscribed and directed by certain metaphysical criteria. He writes:

> Творчество требует, для своего существования, двух условий: наличности, во-первых, замысла, свободы изволения, и, во-вторых, мощи, свободы исполнения.[306]

Human creativity, therefore, requires a free 'will' (*izvolenie*) to create, and also the freedom of ability to effect creation.

However, this brings into contention questions surrounding the *source* of this ability – where does it come from? Bulgakov claims:

> Если он [человек] может творить, то не из ничего, а из созданного уже […] мира. В нем он может отпечатлевать свои идеи, воплощать свои образы [...] [Но] откуда же рождаются в человеке эти образы, эти идеи-модели?[307]

Human creativity is thus set a first limitation – it cannot create from nothing, which is the very opposite, as we shall see, of what Berdiaev believes. This statement is further qualified by the fact that the capacity of human creativity is also limited by the determination of its source:

> Оно [человеческое творчество] есть выявление того, что метафизически дано, оно в этом смысле *не есть* творчество *из ничего*, но лишь *воссоздание, воспроизведение данного*, *сделавшегося заданным*, и это воссоздание становится творчеством постольку, поскольку оно есть свободное и трудовое

[306] Ibid., p. 111.
[307] Ibid., pp. 111-12.

> воспроизведение.[308]

Indeed, he goes further, asserting that,

> Человеческое творчество не содержит поэтому в себе ничего *метафизически нового,* оно лишь воспроизводит и воссоздает из имеющихся, созданных уже элементов и по вновь находимым, воссоздаваемым, но также наперед данным образцам.[309]

Creativity is therefore nothing but a capacity freely to re-create that which is already given to mankind by God. Thus far, then, if history is possible due to creativity, and creativity is only the recreation of ideas provided to man by God with material already given to him, it is not difficult to see how a certain metaphysically determinist pattern of thought is established inasmuch as man creates history according to plans and impulses rendered unto him by God.

These considerations lead Bulgakov on to the question of man's creative freedom. Here he makes the most remarkable statement, revealing his deepest intuition concerning life and history:

> Человек свободен – а постольку и оригинален – лишь в направлении своих сил, в способе использования своей природы, но самую эту природу, основу своего я, он имеет как данную, как сотворенную.[310]

We see then that man appears *not* to be free to choose his nature, that it is rather determined for him. Thus man is *given* a metaphysical nature and is *endowed* with a set of spiritual capacities which allow him to re-create that which is given to him. Furthermore, mankind is provided with a model of history that through his creativity he is called to recreate:

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[308] Ibid., p. 114.
[309] Ibid., p. 114.
[310] Ibid., p. 114.

> Человеческое творчество создает не «образ», который дан, но «подобие», которое задано воспроизводить в свободном, трудовом, историческом процессе то, что предвечно есть, как идеальный первообраз.[311]

In this way mechanical causality, even the object world itself has no real sway over man, but he is instead forced to work *through* them in order to spread the flame of life – the life he has been endowed with – throughout creation.

This conceptualisation of history affords mankind, in its creation of history through economy, neither the choice nor the potential to envision its own form of history. Indeed man, whether he wants to or not, whether consciously or unconsciously, works to realise aspirations which aim to manifest the 'likeness' (*podobie*) of what is given, rather than to create something fundamentally original or metaphysically new. The extent to which this thesis on creativity rests on a deterministic teleology is demonstrated in a concluding statement:

> Защита и расширение жизни, а постольку и частичное ее воскрешение и составляет содержание хозяйственной деятельности человека. Это активная реакция жизнетворного принципа против смертоносного. Это работа Софии над восстановлением мироздания, которую ведет она чрез посредство исторического человечества, и ею же устанавливается сверхсубъективная телеология исторического процесса.[312]

A 'meta-subjective' or 'supra-subjective' teleology – carried out through the work of Sophia – that reigns over the historical process is conspicuously identified. Leskov, amongst others, also sees this conceptualisation of history as intrinsically deterministic and even goes so far as to speak of a 'mechanistic type of rationalism'

[311] Ibid., p. 114.
[312] Ibid., p. 125.

and a 'harsh, one-dimensional and linear determinism'.[313]

The historical dimensions of Bulgakov's Sophiology now demand exploration, as Sophia is the basic device that allows this transmission of divine knowledge from God to man and then from man to the world.

Bulgakov's Sophiology

Up to now we have avoided engaging with the nature of the Sophiology and theological thinking that is evident across *Filosofiia khoziaistva.* The intention was first to demonstrate the historical structure and the various 'historicised' elements that Bulgakov describes in this text, as without this it would be harder to determine the more exact role of Sophia. Developing from his previous works, we have seen how Bulgakov has been keen to detect within the process of history a greater providential meaning as well as evidence of the fact that empirical reality does not in its own inert, mechanical processes hold the key to history. Alongside this Bulgakov has also demonstrated that he is still keen to find in a conceptualisation of history a solution to the problem of evil, which he now also understands to exist in mechanism, inertness and death. As we have also seen, in Bulgakov's reckoning man, in his creation of history according to his metaphysical abilities and capacities, is able (only) to *re-create* that which is given to him as an ideal model. Bulgakov has further asserted that history is *driven by a teleology rooted in Sophia*. Sophia thus completes the determined teleology of Bulgakov's historical thought offered in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. What this actually means demands further elaboration.

[313] See L.V. Leskov, 'Sofiinost' filosofii khoziaistva Bulgakova: sinergeticheskaia interpretatsiia', in T. G. Trubnitsyna, N. P. Nedzvetskaia (eds), *Dva Bulgakova. Raznye sud'by.* vol. 1 (Moscow, 2002), pp. 71-82 (p. 75).

First a short description is needed. Sophia is Divine Wisdom. She issues from God at the moment of creation but is present within all creation: she is the intermediate force which functions to imbue creation – specifically humanity – with divine capacity and aspiration, despite the fact she too exists in the immanent world. As Garaeva asserts:

> София – это посредник, связывающее начало разных сфер – тварного мира и мира Божественного.[314]

Indeed, as Louth summarises:

> The fundamental intuition of Sophiology is relatively easy to enunciate; it is that the gulf between the uncreated God and creation, brought into being out of nothing, does not put creation in opposition to God, rather Wisdom […] [sits] between God and us/creation, for Wisdom is that through which God created the universe, and it is equally through Wisdom that the human quest for God finds fulfilment.[315]

This intermediary concept of Sophia thus offers a means of allowing the divine and metaphysical to exist within the empirical realm as well as outside it. Sophiology therefore facilitates, as discussed earlier, a degree of dialogue between the metaphysical and the present (unpleasant) condition of the world.[316] Sophiological thinking helps find metaphysical value in calamity, and can be linked back to the idea of *temporality as crisis*: it allows for an appraisal of current crises in the light of divine value. Sophia therefore provides greater unity to Bulgakov's philosophical project, as she describes a religious or metaphysical force which is the same in the metaphysical dimension as it is in the material dimension, bringing about a degree of

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[314] Garaeva, *Sofiinii idealizm*, p. 255.
[315] Louth, 'Sergii Bulgakov and the Task of Theology', p. 255.
[316] "Русская софиологическая мысль так же как немецкий мистик ищет метафизческие причины недолжного состояния мира." E. A. Korol'kova, 'Ia. Beme i russkaia sofiologicheskaia mysl'', in E. M. Anan'eva et al., *Russkaia i evropeiskaia filosofiia: puti skhozhdeniia. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp. 9-11 (p. 10).

harmony. The search for this unifying principle has been a continuous element of Bulgakov's thinking. Indeed, regarding the theme of *all-unity* issuing from Sophiological thinking, Evtuhov comments:

> Творчество Булгакова этой эпохи [эпохи *Философии хозяйства*] с удивительной легкостью причисляет к «философии единства» и к квази-мистическим полетам мысли, присущим Серебряному веку русской культуры.[317]

Sophia, as the Divine Wisdom, is the divine basis behind the cosmic 'vivifying principle' existent in man and the world, and thus is the energy which drives man in his quest to realise the kingdom of God. It demonstrates the deep influence of Solov'ev over Bulgakov's developing thinking, as was discussed earlier.[318]

Sophia acts as a channel or mechanism whereby man receives, and is then in part defined by, the metaphysical aspects of his character. Man is driven to create and strive in a certain way, because man partakes of Sophia, of the Divine Wisdom, and is thereby unwittingly driven by it. Economy therefore becomes a *Sophiological* process – it is the process whereby man delivers the Sophiological energy of his subject to the object of the world. The Sophiological nature of economy is its most important feature in the historical dynamic, as economy is, just as history is, a Sophiological process:

> Поэтому окончательная цель хозяйства – за пределами его, оно есть только *путь* мира к Софии осуществленной, переход от неистинного состояния мира к истинному, трудовое восстановление мира.[319]

Sophia, lying at the base of everything, also completes the cosmic aspect of

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[317] Evtukhov, 'O snoskakh Bulgakova', p. 141.
[318] Vaganova has described how Solov'ev was of growing importance for Bulgakov between 1900-11, specifically evident in the latter's thought on Sophia. She also, however, points out that there is a broader background to Bulgakov's Sophiology in this period, extending well beyond Solov'ev. See Vaganova, *Sofiologiia protoiereia Sergiia Bulgakova,* pp. 281-85.
[319] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* p. 125.

Bulgakov's assertion, a key element in the deterministic pattern in his thought, which relates to the identity of subject and object in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. This is because Sophia is the energy, or potential which equally illuminates object (or nature) as it does the subject, providing for their same metaphysical basis:

> В софийности природы обосновывается и объективно-логическая связь вещей, ее закономерность, которая установляется в науках.[320]

Sophia therefore allows for the ontological aspects of Bulgakov's thought, because it represents the channel through which divine capacity is transferred to mankind, and similarly provides for the cosmic aspects of his vision for the transformation of the material world, because it represents the metaphysical basis of nature. Therefore, Bulgakov is able to assert:

> София правит историей, как Провидение, как объективная ее закономерность, как закон прогресса... Только в софийности истории лежит гарантия, что из нее что-нибудь выйдет и она даст какой-нибудь общий результат, что возможен интеграл этих бесконечно дифференцирующихся рядов. То, что история не есть вечное круговращение или однообразный механизм или, наконец, абсолютный хаос, не поддающийся никакой координации, – то, что история вообще есть как единый процесс, преследующий разрешение единой творческой задачи, в этом нас может утвердить только метафизическая идея об ее софийности, со всеми связанными с нею метафизическими предположениями.[321]

Bulgakov's use of words such as '*zakonomernost*'', '*garantiia'* and so forth is characteristic of a more *Sophiological* style of determinist thinking, which thereby becomes a part of the broader *metaphysical* pattern of determinism which has already been identified in Bulgakov's thought.

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[320] Ibid., p. 127.
[321] Ibid., pp. 126-27.

In this Sophiological-metaphysical dimension of historical thinking we can still see the lasting presence of Hegelian-Marxist thinking about history, in which human activity becomes nothing but a *necessary* substratum of a greater historical process, where everything corresponds to the grand providential movement of events. Commenting on the passage just quoted, Zen'kovskii instructively makes a similar assertion, arguing that:

> У Булгакова не исчез тот исторический детерминизм, который у Маркса (от Гегеля) гарантирует, что в «конце истории» наступит «царство свободы», – только теперь У Булгакова «София правит историей, как объективная ее закономерность; только в софийности истории лежит гарантия, что из нее что-нибудь выйдет». Но как же тогда, при этом софийном плане истории, при этом внутреннем ее детерминизме, осмыслить начало свободы в человечестве? Эта тема занимала всегда Булгакова...[322]

Sophia, then, for Bulgakov provides history with an ultimate plan and also justification: it brings divine, historical meaning to the vicissitudes and crises of life. This plan, constructed at a cosmic level, is carried out through mankind, who as the bearer of the Sophiological light will bring about the end of the historical process, transforming the object world, transcending mechanical necessity and causality, infusing all with the divine and metaphysical.

Sophiologically determinist thought about history raises certain fundamental problems. As we have mentioned, Bulgakov's historical thinking in part answers to a need to establish a proper *theodicy*. The thesis of Sophia responds to this, as it argues for the *good* that is existent in everything – that the whole world is pregnant with the divine, and that current evil and calamity is nothing but an improper

[322] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 2, part 2, p. 219.

condition awaiting correction and revelation. However, regarding the Sophiological, universal value of all, Copleston has raised doubts over the *possibility* of evil in a world in which such all-unity is the dominant principle:

> The difficulty is to see how, if God is the Absolute, the total-unity, disunity and disorder can have arisen in the first place.[323]

This will become a very real problem for Bulgakov. He tries to explain that the root of evil lies in the metaphysical events of the Fall, lying outside history. This does not, however, really address the difficulty raised by Copleston:

> Для философии хозяйства «метафизическое грехопадение» есть гипотеза, принятие которой проливает свет на основные ее проблемы, поскольку объясняет мировой и в нем исторический процесс. Конечно, это «событие» совершилось не во времени, и тщетно стали бы мы искать его следов в анналах истории или палеонтологических раскопках, где теперь ищут следов доисторического человека.[324]

This is all well and good, but it does not explain – in the terms of Bulgakov's broader, universal philosophy – why this evil occurred, nor why evil has proved to be so tenacious. If 'all is providential', if everything – be it the impetus behind Marxism or a political revolution – is urged on by a deep religiosity which is good and Sophiological by nature, and if life and the Divine are absolute, then why has this Sophiological impulse become perverted, or at least non-absolute – why has it not already triumphed? Bulgakov does not give a convincing answer as to why this is so – as to why the historical process itself must take place over such a protracted period. This problem will be better dealt with in *Svet nevechernii* (1917) as it deals in more depth with cosmogonic problems and the origin of evil.

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[323] Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy*, p. 84.
[324] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* p. 121.

Conclusions

Filosofiia khoziaistva (1912) is thus the most significant text that has been discussed yet regarding Bulgakov's philosophy of history. First, it continues to demonstrate his inclination to look at philosophical problems from a historical perspective, as his discussion of economy as a historical problem plays out across a clear narrative. Furthermore, this historicising bent of thought, as has been suggested earlier, contains within itself a further proclivity towards determinist thinking. The historicised problems in Bulgakov's work clarify in turn this determinist bent of thought: the need to deal with evil and an exploration of creativity made much clearer how determinist patterns emerge and function in Bulgakov's thinking.

This determinist thinking is built on a *metaphysical* rather than *material* imperative. This operates at two levels: cosmic and ontological. In the cosmic dimension, the determinist line of thinking is not as obvious in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* as it will be in *Svet nevechernii* (1917). Depicting a cosmic battle between good and evil, waged across history, Bulgakov offers the inevitability of the victory of good by establishing the metaphysical, Sophiological basis of everything (both good and evil, object and subject, mechanism and organism). This means the basic cosmic relationship between good and evil is imbalanced to such an extent that it is not possible for good to fail. This idea is rendered with much more exactitude in *Svet nevechernii*. At the ontological level, Bulgakov introduces the problem of creativity, another widespread theme in Silver Age thought. He describes how the kernel of economic activity, which creates history, consists in the emergence of newness, which itself is the product of creativity. However, he then immediately goes on to explain that this creativity is not genuine Divine creativity, but is rather only a re-

creation of something already given to man by God, which exists within man by merit of his participation in Sophia. Thus man creates, and then drives history according to a metaphysical impetus and according to a plan that is delivered to him from the metaphysical – he does not freely create these plans, nor is he able to disregard them, as he is not free to choose his own nature, which is divine. A metaphysical teleology is thereby established through these twin cosmic and ontological dimensions.

Berdiaev, in the journal *Russkaia mysl'* (1916), commented witheringly on the way in which Bulgakov engaged with the question of creativity and with the implications this had for his ontology. He commented:

> Булгаков – богослов в экономике и экономист в богословии [...] [По Булгакову] Человек не имеет своей собственности. И он может лишь управлять, возделывать, хозяйничать на господской, хозяйнской земле, но не может быть творцом, не может быть оригинальным художником жизни.[325]

It was clear to Berdiaev, as it is to us, how Bulgakov's restricted understanding of human creativity fundamentally restricts man's broader relationship with the world. The question of creativity therefore polarises Berdiaev in his relationship to Bulgakov's thought, as he sees in Bulgakov's work the same determinism and limitation that he finds in Marxist thought. Whilst this a is no doubt a simplification and possible misrepresentation of Bulgakov's thought, Berdiaev's own presentation of the creativity-history dynamic, by placing an emphasis on the primacy of the subject's internal life, will provide a contrasting interpretation of the relationship between creativity and history (or, moreover, the relationship between creativity and *time*).

[325] Berdiaev, 'Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii: Vozrozhdenie pravoslaviia', p. 756.

Svet Nevechernii *(1917)*

Svet nevechernii demonstrates a significant change in Bulgakov's thinking. It expands beyond the boundaries of *Filosofiia khoziaistva* and his earlier work, and demonstrates his continuing movement towards theology. Written between 1911-16, it is a complicated text, whose guiding focus is also not as clear as in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. Bulgakov notes in the introduction:

> Книга эта писалась медленно и с большими перерывами (в течение 1911-1916 годов), а заканчивалась она уже под громы мировой войны.[326]

The cataclysmic context in which he was writing therefore still figured overtly in his consciousness whilst he was writing it. Opening in a Kantian style, he identifies 'how is religion possible?' as the central problem for investigation.[327] Indeed, *Svet nevechernii* might be best described as his philosophical exploration of religion, along with an attempt to express a proper Orthodox *weltanschauung.* It is thus a synthesis of the various phases of thinking Bulgakov has moved through. Notably, both ancient Greek philosophy and early Christian apophatic theology take a more prominent place in this work.[328]

The ideas presented in this text are complex, and they reflect a long and difficult genesis:

> Лично для автора эта книга представляет собой род духовной автобиографии или исповеди. Она является обобщающим постижением, как бы итогом *всего* мною пройденного, столь ломаного и сложного – слишком сложного! – духовного пути, я

[326] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii,* p. 5.
[327] Ibid., p. 8.
[328] The second section of *Svet nevechernii* ('II. Otritsatel'noe (apofaticheskoe) bogoslovie') is dedicated to an exhaustive survey of apophatic thinking, from the early Greeks right through to the seventeenth century. This includes the Patristic fathers, medieval theologians, Jewish Kabala mysticism, as well as an overview of German and English mysticism.

> в ней благодарно его озираю.[329]

Inasmuch as it is a 'confession' for Bulgakov, this text, similarly to *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* will still look to overcome 'guilt' relating to his Marxist past. The ideas presented in *Svet nevechernii* are also no longer simply philosophical, they are also in many ways theological: this book sits somewhere between theology and philosophy. After it, as is widely accepted, Bulgakov moves into the field of pure theology. As the last of his philosophical works it is therefore an immensely important text:

> Книга «Свет Невечерний», вне всяких сомнений, является главным философским трудом Булгакова.[330]

Perhaps, as he looked at this work as a kind of spiritual autobiography, after completing it Bulgakov felt happier to leave philosophical concerns behind and move fully into the Church.

The central philosophical-religious focus of *Svet nevechernii* is the concept of *antinomy*:

> …антиномия религиозного сознания должна быть раскрыта и осознана до конца в своих последствиях.[331]

Blank has contended that it was Florenskii who first developed the Russian interest in antinomy,[332] and, given the closeness between Florenskii and Bulgakov it is certainly possible that this influenced Bulgakov's interest in this theme in *Svet nevechernii*. For Bulgakov, antinomy consists in the notion of simultaneous

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[329] Ibid., p. 6.
[330] Evlampiev, 'Religioznyi idealizm S. N. Bulgakova: "za" i "protiv"', p. 36.
[331] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 89.
[332] Ksana Blank, 'The Rabbit and The Duck: Antinomic unity in Dostoevskij, the Russian religious tradition, and Mikhail Bakhtin', *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 59, no. 1 (June 2007), pp. 21-37 (p. 25).

transcendence and immanence. This issues from the contradictions which arise through religious experience:

> Основное содержание *религиозного* переживания, как касания миру трансцендентному, запредельному, божественному, явным образом содержит в себе противоречие для рассудочного мышления. Объект религии, Бог, есть нечто, с одной стороны, совершенно *трансцендентное*, иноприродное, внешнее миру и человеку, но, с другой, он *открывается* религиозному сознанию, его касается, внутрь его входит, становится его имманентным содержанием. Оба момента религиозного сознания даны одновременно…[333]

This concept of simultaneous transcendence and immanence is an important feature of Bulgakov's thinking. As discussion of his earlier thought has demonstrated, specifically regarding the identity of subject and object, he had already been entertaining the idea of a metaphysical or Sophiological force operating both transcendentally and immanently within history. However, in *Svet nevechernii* identity gives way to antinomy, and Bulgakov tries to apply this antinomic principle to a number of philosophical concerns, including creation, time, space, Sophia, humanity and history. This focus on antimony makes his thinking more complex and makes the conclusions he draws in this text more difficult to apprehend. This is because antinomy, which then often becomes 'mystery', tends to rely on faith more than philosophical reason.

The nature of Bulgakov's engagement with history in this work is expansive but requires some effort to be understood. Despite engaging with the problem of history overtly, namely in the fifty-page section entitled 'Human history' ('Chelovecheskaia istoriia'), Bulgakov's thinking about history is at times a little opaque. Whereas in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) history was a central organising

[333] Ibid., p. 88.

theme of the text, historical thinking in *Svet nevechernii* is more subsidiary, and other concepts occupy centre stage. Nonetheless it is still a very important intellectual concern; indeed, we see in this text the most consistent demonstration of historically determinist thought, and continued engagement with 'historicised' themes, including theodicy, freedom and necessity, and creativity. *Svet nevechernii* also develops upon *Filosofiia khoziaistva* by providing fuller cosmic and anthropological accounts of history.

Significantly, in *Svet nevechernii* Bulgakov also introduces the philosophical problem of *time*. Time constitutes a frequent concern in this work, although this is not to say that within the internal hierarchy of Bulgakov's thought time has become more important. He still understands time to be approximate to history, meaning that history is for him still dominant. He therefore still writes:

> …во власти временности, т.е. истории.[334]

Instead, it will become evident how Bulgakov's conceptualisation and understanding of time is itself *historicised*, and that despite his attempts to differentiate between time and history he nonetheless inexorably inclines towards a description of time which is innately historical.

Finally, *Svet nevechernii* also offers the most extensive dealing with the manifold 'historicised' problems that we have identified across Bulgakov's work. This means we can, in view of our analysis of Bulgakov's thought up to this point, discuss these various themes in full.

[334] Ibid., p. 305.

Bulgakov's Conceptualisation of History in Svet nevechernii

Overview

Up to this point we have described Bulgakov's conceptualisation of history as an account of how mankind goes about establishing the rule of the metaphysical and divine through a number of processes, primarily economy. Man does this according to the impetus of divine characteristics existing within his nature, characteristics which demonstrate his transcendence to the world despite the fact that he is immanent to it. Critical to this schema is the fact that man and the world participate in Sophia, the Divine Wisdom. Sophia works as a nexus between man and God, and through her a divine teleology is transferred to the world, informing and stimulating human activity, and thereby shaping the historical process. History thus becomes the process of the divine enlightenment of the world by man through Sophia. As has been asserted, this discussion of history takes on a deterministic colouring in a number of instances.

Most obviously, Bulgakov in *Svet nevechernii* has moved on from focusing on history as economy, however broadly undersood. History is now described according to the nature of its transcendental subject, historical humanity:

> *История есть*, прежде всего, *рождение человечества*, объективное время, наполненное рождениями, а потому и смертями, и внутренно связанное их последование.[335]

Humanity is placed squarely at the centre of the historical drama. Bulgakov goes on to suggest that through this cycle of human generations, which, as is asserted above,

[335] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 301.

connect ‘objective’ time, history arises as ‘concrete time’:

> …но именно в чередовании поколений возникает история как конкретное время.[336]

Such ‘concrete time’ allows him to establish an order (or *zakonomernost’*) in history, according to which the flow of history proceeds in a regular way:

> Подобно тому как в Америку нельзя проехать из Европы, минуя океан, так и в 19 век дорога лежит только чрез 18-й, и именно конкретная наполненность времени и создает «историческую закономерность» в том условном смысле, в каком можно о ней говорить. Время есть вполне соотносительно пространству...[337]

Bulgakov is thus increasingly interested by the role of time in history, whereas earlier he had chiefly been engaged with the broader dynamic of history and of the forces which governed its movement. The historical process is also ‘regular’: history is, in this reckoning, some sort of inviolable, linear process. This is important as it continues to testify to the sort of regular developmental patterns described in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. Berdiaev, however, will in contrast suggest a highly non-linear conceptualisation of the historical process. History in *Svet nevechernii* is still eschatological, as we shall see, but there is less focus on the process of what goes on within history – i.e. economy – and instead Bulgakov considers the metaphysical in greater detail.

Bulgakov also continues to describe the teleology he identified in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. He writes:

> Если история вообще есть рождение человечества, то оно осуществляется с внутренно определенным планом и последовательностью. История связана

[336] Ibid., p. 301.
[337] Ibid., p. 302.

> «временами и сроками», имеющими основание в духовной организации человечества. Поэтому она не есть «дурная бесконечность», естественно присущая формальному времени, но имеет грани, а, в частности, необходимо предполагает и начало, и конец, которых совершенно не знает абстрактное время.[338]

History is thus still discussed in terms of being a 'plan'. Bulgakov also overtly distinguishes between 'formal' or 'abstract' time and history or the time which he perceives to have its root in the spiritual organisation of humanity. Time of the latter type is much more closely related to history, whereas the former – at least for Bulgakov – appears to possess much less meaning or content.

Bulgakov also still posits a meta-historical schema, transcending the beginning and end of history. The importance of this sense of meta-history is implied by his greater focus on the finite nature of history:

> Напротив, конкретное время, которым и является история, имеет и начало, и конец; иначе говоря, оно представляет собой *эон*, некую завершенность, последовательно раскрывающуюся во времени. Полнейшую аналогию историческому эону имеем и в своей собственной жизни, также представляющей собой конкретное время.[339]

In this way, then, history is conceptualised as a discrete process, with the implication that forces are at work beyond these boundaries. A degree of antimony will be introduced later when he asserts that these forces are also at work within history. Furthermore, there is also a significant development regarding the connection that exists between a historical eon and a single human life: whereas in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* he had focused upon the collective body of humanity, here he opens up a

[338] Ibid., p. 302.
[339] Ibid., p. 302.

connection between individual life and history.

What has become evident in *Svet nevechernii*, then, is that greater focus is placed upon the nature of the connection between man's life cycle and history. New themes are discussed in the context of history, and older notions are either assimilated into the newer interpretations or left behind.

The Beginning and the End

A focus on the end and the beginning of history is a prevalent characteristic of Bulgakov's historical thought in *Svet nevechernii*, and represents an extension of the sort of cosmic historical thinking which appeared in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*. This bears similarity to Berdiaev, who had much to say on these questions. As Zen'kovskii has mentioned, the concept of antinomy is a philosophical focus for Bulgakov at this point:

> ...принцип антиномизма имел коренное значение длы Булгакова...[340]

We see this reflected specifically in his thinking regarding the end and beginning of history, where immanence and transcendence coincide. First of all, it is evident in Bulgakov's concern with the goals or aims that he perceives to be governing the historical process:

> Цель истории ведет *за* историю, к «жизни будущего века», а цель мира ведет *за* мир, к «новой земле и новому небу». Лишь в царстве славы, когда окончится время, осуществится цель мироздания, а все теперешнее есть только муки рождения.[341]

[340] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 2, part 2, p. 206.
[341] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii,* p. 351.

This consequently puts less emphasis on the 'middle' of history: all Bulgakov appears interested in – at least from the above – is the end. It could be argued that *Filosofiia khoziaistva* was conversely much more interested in the middle process of history – economy – rather than just its beginning and end. There is the same Christian substance to these assertions, but the focus is different. In this new orientation eschatology is more evident, and has moved from the 'inaugurated' type of *Filsofiia khoziaistva* onto a more 'futurist' type.[342] An increased reliance on apophatic thought also becomes more manifest: the here and now appears of diminished consequence, as the end, the transcendence is more significant.

The End

The antinomy of the end arises over the fact that whilst the meta-historical aims of history lead *beyond*, they nonetheless must also exist *within* the historical-temporal process, despite the fact that they do not belong *to* history. This problem is highlighted through Bulgakov's exploration below. He asserts:

> И хотя историческое время, как конкретное, должно иметь не только начало, но и конец, однако, если держаться исторической поверхности, оно как будто не имеет своего конца и, не достигая свершения, обречено на дурную бесконечность.[343]

This negative concept of a 'bad infinity' – the infinity of directionless, meaningless, non-teleological movement – is an idea lifted directly from Hegel. Bulgakov aims to establish a sense of direction by moving from the historical 'surface' to its depths, and looks to the 'ontological' aspect of history:

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[342] These categories of eschatological thought were discussed in the introduction to this thesis. See McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 540.
[343] Ibid., p. 350.

> Однако так кажется, лишь если оставаться в области исторической феноменальности, но под нею лежит глубокая почва исторической онтологии. Если там, на поверхности, история как будто не умеет закончиться, то здесь она идет путем свершений, близясь к своей зрелости и концу.[344]

'Historical ontology' most likely relates to Bulgakov's intuition that history belongs to man's internal life rather than existing purely as a phenomenon imposed upon him. He thus argues that the end of history can only be understood by looking at the 'deeper', and by implication metaphysical or divine process which is at work beneath the tangible surface of historical developments.

This solution focuses upon the religious aspects of Bulgakov's worldview and therefore draws back to his understanding of the primary religious antinomy in which God and the metaphysical are both immanent and transcendent to the world. Bulgakov looks for an antinomic and determinist principle to guide history, and tries to establish the metaphysical grounding of material, outward historical developments. In this way he perceives that beneath material progress lies a developing spiritual, metaphysical or divine process. He thus continues to investigate the aim, meaning or destiny which guides history, leading him on to a revealing assertion:

> Но наступление исторической зрелости измеряется, конечно, не достижениями прогресса, это есть лишь симптом, преломленное отражение того, что совершается на глубине […] Созревает же она [история] в богочеловеческих актах богооткровения и боговоплощения: судьбы истории прямо или косвенно определяются судьбами Церкви. Церковь есть душа мира и душа истории. Онтология истории и есть *церковная* история […] [судьбы церкви] сплетены с общим ходом истории, но эта связь лежит так глубоко, что недоступна природному, непросветленному благодатию Божией человеку; она раскрывается

[344] Ibid., p. 350.

> в откровении, но и она остается запечатленной тайной.[345]

History, then, as the reflection of the spirit of the world, is ecclesiastical, or of the church (*tserkovnaia*), and therefore is subject to all the antinomies that exist within religious experience.[346] Revelation in this reckoning is as important as human activity in the historical process, implying that God's role in history is more direct. This statement that the church is the spirit of history further establishes the sense that the divine and metaphysical constitute the driving force in the historical process.

A final theme that arises regarding the end is Bulgakov's repeated use of the notion of 'maturity' and of 'ripening' with regard to the end. In the above quotation he had discussed 'historical maturity' (*istoricheskoi zrelosti*), and below this is repeated in the image of a 'budding fig tree' (*raspuskaiushcheisia smokovnitse*) and also in the repetition of 'maturation' or 'ripening' (*sozrevat'*):

> Близок ли конец? Только Отец ведает времена и сроки, Ему принадлежит свершение, но по распускающейся смоковнице судим о близости лета, и в нас самих должна созревать жертвенная готовность к концу и жажда конца. Из человеческого сердца должна исторгнуться молитва конца: ей, гряди, Господи Иисусе![347]

This concept of maturation or ripening could be read as being a reflection of the historical process, but it also adds to the deeper sense of eschatological expectation in *Svet nevechernii*, providing an enhanced anticipation of divine revelation ('come,

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[345] Ibid., p. 350.
[346] Compare this to Solov'ev, who tied the end of history to the reunification of the church. As Courten notes: '[For Solov'ev] the goal of history consists in "the reunification of humanity and the world with the absolute, integral principle", or put in moral terms a complete reconciliation with God [Solov'ev, *Chteniia o Bogochelovechestve*]. This implies overcoming inner division, the most radical of which Solov'ëv saw in the great schism between the Christian churches since 1054. From this perspective, it was crucial for Solov'ëv that the Orthodox and Catholic Churches reunite.' Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation*, p. 81.
[347] Ibid., p. 351.

Lord Jesus!'). There is thus a stronger eschatological 'mood' in *Svet nevechernii* that was not as prevalent in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, which had been more focused on the nature of the process whereby the eschatological horizon would be reached. This may testify to a stronger sense of temporality as crisis: given the current upheavals in Russia and the world whilst this book was being written, it is to be expected that this catastrophic context would manifest itself in a heightened eschatological tone.

Beginnings

Bulgakov's focus on beginnings in *Svet nevechernii* represents newer subject matter for him. Centrally, it offers a number of answers regarding the problem of the 'why' of history: why, if the divine and metaphysical is universal, both immanent and transcendent, must the historical process take place at all. It also completes the determinist aspect of his understanding of the historical process by providing a structure which embraces history from beginning to end. In his work on beginnings, Bulgakov deals with two different problems – the first being the beginning of human history, and the second concerning the cosmogonic problem of the beginning of the world – specifically discussing God's act of creation. This is similar to Berdiaev, who also identified two such cosmogonic moments or events. Through discussion of these problems Bulgakov concludes that there is a meaning and direction which pervades both material creation and history *right from its inception*; that history and the world are together processes which are fully pre-conceived and ultimately directed – determined – from beginning to end. Bulgakov's work on cosmogony is much richer than his writing about the beginning of human history. The latter relies heavily on standard Christian tenets dealing with Adam and Eve and the Fall:

> Иначе сказать, человеческая история, как рождение и вместе творческое саморождение человечества, как некий завершенный эон, протекала бы и в раю, и в жизни прародителей до грехопадания мы имеем уже это райское начало истории.[348]

Consequently here only Bulgakov's cosmogonic thinking needs to be explored, as we can make more extensive reference to his ideas surrounding the Fall when we look at the problem of evil.

Bulgakov affirms the ultimate purpose and meaning of the world (and thereby of history) by asserting first and foremost the religious principle that both the world and man are *created*:

> Перед лицом мировых неисследимостей, в беспредельности мировых пространств и безбрежности мировых времен, в неизмеримости мировых глубин и необъятности мировых громад, – звучит он, этот чудесный голос, властно шепчущий: миру, во всей его безмерности, *не* принадлежит его бытие, – оно ему *дано*. И в сердце человека слышится тот же неумолчный шепот: ты не в себе имеешь корень своего бытия, – ты сотворен.[349]

He then continues by asserting the miraculous nature of creation, arguing that this process cannot be understood in a purely empirical manner or by using purely immanent cognitive means:

> Идея творения мира Богом поэтому не притязает объяснить возникновение мира в смысле эмпирической причинности, она оставляет его в этом смысле необъясненным и непонятным; вот почему она совершенно не вмещается в научное мышление, основывающееся на имманентной непрерывности опыта и универсальности причинной связи, она остается для него бесполезна и ему чужда,

[348] Ibid., p. 303.
[349] Ibid., p. 156.

> – есть в этом смысле заведомо ненаучная идея.[350]

This serves to establish the transcendental nature of the process through which the creation of the world took place.

Bulgakov's descriptions of process by which the relative is generated focus on how the 'Absolute' (God) divides itself to give space to and create the relative, non-Absolute:

> Абсолютное, не теряя абсолютности своей, полагает в себе относительное как самостоятельное бытие – реальное, живое начало. Тем самым вносится двойственность в единстве неразличимости...[351]

This explanation of how it is activity within the Absolute that leads to the creation of the relative therefore establishes how everything is, at its most fundamental level, dependent on the Absolute, God, for existence.[352]

Bulgakov also understands the process of cosmogony as being antinomic, as is to be expected:

> Это самораздвоение Абсолютного как абсолютно-относительного образует предельную антиномическую грань для мысли (Grenzbegriff).[353]

The antinomic character that Bulgakov ascribes to God's act of creation – i.e. its simultaneous absoluteness and relativity – then imprints itself upon creation, specifically upon mankind:

> В недрах своего духа сознает человек метафизические последствия этого (если

[350] Ibid., p. 156.
[351] Ibid., p. 158.
[352] This description of the emergence of the relative dimension bears a typological similarity to Plotinus' account, in which a spiritual activity in the One, the Absolute, led to the creation of the relative world. See Gerson, *Plotinus*, p. 124.
[353] Ibid., p. 158.

> можно выразиться) события в Абсолютном, сотворения мира Богом, в двойственности своей природы, в своей абсолютно-относительности. Ибо человек ощущает себя относительным бытием, […] Но в себе же находит он столь упругое сознание своей абсолютности, вечности, божественности….[354]

This statement is central to Bulgakov's mature philosophical thought, in that it establishes how humanity, in the deepest roots of its createdness, is subject to the same tension that has been identified to exist within the antinomy of creation. It is possible to see why it is that human being is simultaneously transcendent and immanent to the world, as this nature is established at the *very beginning* of the cosmogonic process, at the genesis of the world. As has already been argued, human nature is a key element through which Bulgakov is able to describe a historical schema, coloured by determinism, in which humanity is called to carry out the divine plan by merit of its own divine-metaphysical nature. We can see here, then, in Bulgakov's cosmogony, that this human nature is created through the nature of the creative act itself by means of which God called the world into existence.

We also see in Bulgakov's cosmogony a description of why the world process must occur – why it is that history must take place. This aspect of his thinking specifically recalls Hegel. Explaining that God, in creating the world from *nothing*, created the relative alongside the absolute, Bulgakov further argues that this creates something which is *becoming* alongside something which is already complete:

> Творением из ничего Абсолютное установляет как бы два центра: вечный и тварный, в недрах самодовлеющей вечности появляется «становящееся абсолютное» - второй центр.[355]

This depiction of the world as *becoming absolute* is of course both deeply

[354] Ibid., p. 159.
[355] Ibid., p. 170.

deterministic and deeply Hegelian, as was discussed earlier: it suggests that the world is pre-determined, pre*destined* for one purpose and for one goal – for becoming absolute. Although describing this process in religious terms, the Hegelian overtones to this understanding of the broad world-historical process are obvious:

> Рядом со сверхбытийно сущим Абсолютным появляется бытие, в котором Абсолютное обнаруживает себя как Творец, открывается в нем, осуществляется в нем, само приобщается к бытию, и в этом смысле мир есть становящийся Бог.[356]

Bulgakov, in *Svet nevechernii*, therefore accounts more fully for some of the deeper questions surrounding his philosophy of history – namely why it is history began in the first place, and why it must continue – that were until this point unanswered, or at least not answered in sufficiently clear terms.

Conclusions

Thus far we can see, then, that the world, and by extension the history that will occur on this world, begins in antimony and will exist in an antinomic condition until the end. While it is only between these two antinomic poles of beginning and end that we see a form of historical progress which is empirically cognisant for the human mind (causal progress), man is instead called to look to the depths of his being, to his soul, to understand the true, almost ineffable nature of the process which is at work in 'the depths'. This excludes the possibility that any teleological force could arise within the limits of the historical process, other than by human-divine creation, as anything else would be limited by its necessary immanence. This human-divine work, we understand from Bulgakov's earlier works and *Svet nevechernii*, will be influenced by humanity's inherently divine character, and will therefore conform to the historical

[356] Ibid., p. 170.

plan that is held by God or in the metaphysical. The teleological force acting on history, which, as will be discussed, is variously described – God, Sophia, the Absolute – must therefore stand *above* the historical process, embracing it at both its beginning and end, whilst at the same time being antinomiously present *within* it, allowing it to reach is eschatological conclusion through its simultaneously transcendent and immanent capacity.

Having examined, then, the development of Bulgakov's conceptualisation of history, we can move on to discuss the question of determinism in Bulgakov's historical thinking in more detail, specifically with regards to the 'historicised' problems identified across Bulgakov's earlier works – those of theodicy, freedom, and creativity.

Determinism in the historicised themes of Svet nevechernii

In *Svet nevechernii* Bulgakov formulates the determinist aspects of his thought in simple terms:

> Закономерность существует лишь для твари и в конце концов только одна – воля Божия.[357]

Bulgakov expresses the by now familiar teleology of religious-historical experience as theurgy:

> Христианская теургия[358] есть незримая, но действительная основа всякого духовного движения в мире на пути к его совершению. Без ее освящающего и

[357] Ibid., p. 182.
[358] Theurgy – the working or manifestation of God in the world. It was also an important element in the thought of Plotinus. Majumdar notes: 'The hypostasis soul does not commit a transgression when it descends from the divine realm to continue the generation of the realm of process, for this efflux occurs by necessity. In contradistinction with the Gnostics, Plotinus extols the beauty of the universe, for it indicates the beauty of its underlying intelligible beings.' Majumdar, *Plotinus on the Appearance of Time*, p. 7.

> животровящего воздействия человечество не могло бы близиться к разрешению тех творческих задач, которые правомерно ставятся перед ним на этом пути, и в этом смысле *теургия есть божественная основа всякой софиургий*.[359]

Mankind's unified activity determines the passage of history, which thereby becomes the gradual revelation of God or the Absolute. However, in *Svet Nevechernii* Bulgakov demonstrates that he is aware of the possible accusation of determinism, and attempts to counter such a claim:

> Единственная абсолютная закономерность мира есть Божия воля, т.е. *чудо*; мир не закономерен в каком бы то ни было детерминистическом смысле: механическом ли, оккультном или метафизическом, – но чудесен.[360]

He therefore asserts that idea the world should *not* be understood in any deterministic sense: neither mechanical, 'occult' (i.e. defamatory to God), nor metaphysical determinism operates in the world. Rather, the world order is 'miraculous' – it transcends the boundaries which determinism proscribes. However, what is noticeable here, and what continues to suggest an underlying pattern of deterministic thinking, is the language and the concepts Bulgakov uses to highlight this. He still reaches towards the word *zakonomernost',* which underlines a more restricted, ordered and regulated understanding of the world. Although attempting to transcend determinism as a category of thought, the broader pattern of his expression still implies gravitation towards it.

Scholars have identified the deterministic aspects of Bulgakov's thought, although some have treated it in a more even-handed way than others.[361] The

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[359] Ibid., p. 321.
[360] Ibid., p. 182.
[361] For example Rodnianskaia saw a strong connection with Marxism in Bulgakov's thought (Rodnianskaia, 'Bulgakov v spore s marksistkoi filosofiei istorii: ottalkivaniia i pritiazheniia', pp. 887-89), and likewise Zen'kovskii has argued that the historical determinism which "guaranteed" the end of

argument we have sought to develop thus far is that whilst it would be going too far to call Bulgakov an outright determinist – his thought is too subtle for such a simple description – he nevertheless demonstrates a pattern of thinking which is frequently coloured by deterministic language and concepts. Evtukhov is accurate when she looks at this historicising tendency in Bulgakov in a broad fashion:

> Понимание соблазна абсолютной закономерности имело глубокие корни в интеллектуальном развитии Булгакова; в попытке найти альтернативное решение он стремился ответить не только «кетлетистам» или «марксистам», но и самому себе.[362]

Caution should therefore be exercised when describing the deterministic elements in Bulgakov's thought. It perhaps demonstrates quite simply Bulgakov's continued attraction towards absolute solutions to world problems: 'determinism' need not be understood as a dominant or exclusively Marxist theme.

This type of thought reveals itself particularly clearly in Bulgakov's discussion of a number of different philosophical problems. These 'historicised' problems directly or indirectly contribute to a conceptualisation of how the historical process unfolds, and demonstrate how the intellectual problem of history is reflected or refracted in the broader scope of Bulgakov's philosophy.

Theodicy and evil

The question of evil in history, and its apprehension through theodicy, is amongst the deepest historical problems that Bulgakov encounters: it directs much of his thought and is the most significant of his 'historicised' problems. His

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history for Marx and Hegel did not disappear in Bulgakov's thought (Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 2, part 2, p. 219).

[362] Evtukhov, 'O snoskakh Bulgakova', p. 148.

engagement with this problem has been marked since his first essay following conversion from Marxism, 'Ivan Karamazov kak filosofskii tip' (1901), and evil continues to be a significant theme in Bulgakov's historical worldview whilst he was writing *Svet nevechernii* (1911-16). The frequently historicised way in which he writes about evil continues to demonstrate a deeply deterministic incline of thought, as the resolution of the problem of evil is described in frameworks that speak of necessity and inevitability:

> Мир не может вовсе не удаться…[363]

Bulgakov's earlier works demonstrate that he perceives the conflict between good and evil to constitute a key element of the historical drama. There is the further implication that the resolution of this conflict represents a, if not the, central aspect of the historical process, by means of which the Absolute, God, reveals itself. This is most evident in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), in which history is presented as enlightenment of the 'evil' condition of the world by the 'good' force of man's Sophiological-economic activity. This historical overcoming of evil is also apparent, to a certain extent, in *Svet nevechernii*:

> И Слово Божие дает надежду, ибо противопоставление добра и зла, рая и ада, не есть еще предельная цель мироздания.[364]

The deterministic tone of Bulgakov's choice of words – *predel'naia tsel'* – should be noted, although this is juxtaposed to the word 'hope', which does not have the same deterministic connotation. However, deterministic thinking arises over the way in which he conceives of the balance between good and evil, as the greater precedence he gives to good removes any sort of equilibrium between the two.

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[363] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 180.
[364] Ibid., p. 357.

Bulgakov's meditations upon evil in *Svet nevechernii* focus on attempting to prove the metaphysical impotence of evil whilst accepting the troubling pervasiveness of evil in history and in the material condition of the world. This bears similarities to the thesis propounded in *Filosofiia khoziaistva,* which described evil as a *condition* rather than a reality or principle.[365] However, in *Svet nevechernii* Bulgakov advances the new idea that evil is a product of the freedom man is given as a result of his being made in part from the cosmic 'nothing' (nichto), and in so doing he marks the relevance of both ancient Greek philosophers (specifically Plato and Aristotle, both of whom are discussed extensively in the opening chapters of the work) and the seventeenth century German Christian mystic theologian, Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), to his thinking.[366] Bulgakov's central assertion regarding evil in *Svet nevechernii* is that it is not metaphysically substantial and that it consequently can triumph neither in history nor in the world. History is presented as a resolution of evil – or the revelation of evil's groundlessness. A determinist pattern of thought is evidenced in Bulgakov's description of the apparent inevitability of the process by which evil is overcome, in his claims that 'the world cannot fail' (above), and it is therefore instructive to examine more closely Bulgakov's thesis on evil in *Svet nevechernii*.

The concept of evil in Svet nevechernii

First of all we need to look at Bulgakov's understanding of evil, as it has taken on new aspects in this text. Bulgakov first argues – in a conventionally Christian manner – that evil and thereby sin did not exist before the Fall of man. This

[365] 'Точнее следует сказать, что это борьба не двух начал, но *двух состояний* одной и той же Вселенной…' Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, pp. 69-70.
[366] Bulgakov had made some reference to Boehme in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, but had not explored his thought in the same way he does in *Svet nevchernii*.

establishes the historical character of evil:

> Мир *до* грехопадения и представлял собою такую безгрешную потенциальность софийности, метафизическую «землю», на которой мог произрасти Эдем.[367]

However, the original possibility of sin and evil exists due to the fact that God created the world and man from *nothing*. The curious phenomenon of *nothing* in *Svet nevechernii* requires some exploration, as it is a complex idea, bringing us back to the problem of cosmogony.[368] Bulgakov argues:

> *Мир создан из ничего,* – учит христианское откровение. – Между Богом и трарью, Абсолютным и относительным, легло *ничто*. *Ничто*жество – вот основа твари, край бытия, предел, за которым лежит глухое, бездонное небытие, «кромешняя тьма», чуждая всякого света.[369]

This appears to demonstrate a degree of equality between nothing and creation: it seems that creation and nothingness sit side by side before God. As the above suggests, nothing and nonbeing (nebytie) exist in close, albeit ambiguous connection. We will take the two as approximately coterminous, as Bulgakov does not offer much in the way of further distinction.[370] Bulgakov suggests that nothingness exists (or just 'is') contingent upon the existence of being. Referring to Plato's *Parmenides* dialogue, he explains:

> Творением Бог полагает бытие, но в небытии, иначе говоря, тем же самым актом, которым полагает бытие, Он сополагает небытие, как его границу, среду или тень [...] Поэтому, хотя и прав остается Парменид, что в Абсолютном, как пребывающем выше бытия, не существует и небытия, но Бог, полагая

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[367] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 226.
[368] Usachev has written about the role of *nichto* in Bulgakov's thought, although disappointingly only offers limited analysis based upon incomplete reference to the theme in *Svet nevechernii*. See A. V. Usachev, 'Funktsii poniatia Nichto v knige S. Bulgakova "Svet nevechernii",' in *Dva Bulgakova,* pp. 197-213.
[369] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 160.
[370] For example: '…чрез призму ничто, небытия.' Ibid., p. 177.

> относительное, т.е. бытие, косвенно дает бытие и небытию. *Бог есть виновник не только бытия, но и небытия*...[371]

Nonbeing was therefore *posited* itself, and is dependent on being for its existence: God's intention was to create being but by this act of creation he also posited nonbeing. Being is thus above nonbeing in this formulation, as nonbeing is contingent upon being for its existence.

Returning to the problem of evil, this positing of nothing creates the possibility of evil:

> *Ничто* не ощущалось в мире как актуальный принцип мироздания, но пребывало как его темная, немая основа [...] Но эта основа мироздания в себе таила возможность актуализации и вмешательства в судьбы мира, т.е. греха и зла.[372]

The possibility of evil thus consists in the actualisation or interference of nothing in the world. However, despite describing this possibility of evil actualising itself, Bulgakov also fundamentally limits its scope for activity: he describes evil as *secondary* to the primary foundation of being. This means it lies, in the cosmic hierarchy, beneath good:

> Что же такое зло? Очевидно, что оно не может быть понято как *второе* начало бытия, существующее рядом с добром: такое манихейство, помимо религиозной абсурдности своей, представлял бы собой и метафизический non-sens.[373]

Evil, as far as Bulgakov is concerned, is not substantial in the way that good is. We can assume that this is due to evil's dependence on nothing and nothing's inherent non-substantiality, although Bulgakov does not make this connection directly:

> Вообще онтологически не существует ни зла, ни ада, он есть своего рода

[371] Ibid., p. 163.
[372] Ibid., p. 226.
[373] Ibid., p. 228.

галлюцинация, закономерно возникающая в больных душах.[374]

If we connect Bulgakov's thesis on nonbeing and nothingness with his thought about the connection between evil and nonbeing, this offers a cogent explanation for why evil is not a second 'source' of being, why it is not ontologically substantial in the way being and good are. In this reckoning good will therefore overcome evil due to the fact that good and evil are unequal forces: by the logic of their metaphysical imbalance good will necessarily triumph.

Such, then, is the formulation of a theodicy in *Svet nevechernii*. Evil, fundamentally, issues from nothing or nonbeing, and thus does not possess the true ontological being as good, as evil is not metaphysically grounded in creation – it appears as only a necessary by-product of God's creative act, a mere shadow of being. History, as was discussed above, is still discussed in *Svet nevechernii* in terms of its 'aim' and its 'plan', in which the divine and good will come to reign.[375] We thus return to the determinist thesis made in this text which claims that the world cannot but succeed.[376] History, then, as the propagation of the divine good, cannot but succeed, because of the cosmic correlation of the metaphysical force of good and the impotent force of evil. This is the opposite formulation to Berdiaev: he posited the fundamental *power* of evil: man, in Berdiaev's reckoning, was truly free to evil, meaning evil was not fettered in the way it was for Bulgakov. This is another fundamental point at which the two diverge, and it relates to their very different conceptualisations of the historical process.

[374] Ibid., p. 353.
[375] Ibid., p. 351.
[376] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 180.

Freedom and freedom to evil

Freedom is a crucial question within any deterministic framework, as James commented in *The Dilemma of Determinism* (1884):

> In other words, our first act of freedom, if we are free, ought in all inward propriety to be to affirm that we are free.[377]

Freedom, although probably comprising the most opaque of Bulgakov's 'historicised' problems, nonetheless poses important questions for the construction of a philosophy of history. Freedom can be either a chaotic or deterministic force in history, depending on its intellectual apprehension: in Bulgakov's philosophy it is limited, in Berdiaev's it is unbridled. The question of freedom in *Svet nevechernii*, whilst being a contentious one, will thus be connected to his understanding of the way in which history unfolds:

> ...мы должны еще считаться с различными возможностями при наполнении объективного времени, связанными с существованием человеческой свободы. Последняя вплетается в ткань времени в качестве одной из образующих ее сил, причем, однако, и при наличности вносимых ею вариантов сохраняет свою силу общий закон исторического ряда.[378]

Bulgakov revealingly posits its influence within the historical process, but does not permit it to affect the 'general law' of the historical order: he wants to assert the importance of freedom, but not fully liberate it. Freedom as a religious concept also necessarily possesses significant axiological value, as, in a Christian-Orthodox worldview, it is crucial that man is free, not only in his choice to love or serve God, but also in his capacity to profane against God, in his freedom to choose evil.

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[377] William James, 'The Dilemma of Determinism',1884. Published in William James, *The Will to Believe and other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York, 2006), pp. 145-83 (p. 146).
[378] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 302.

Bulgakov's description of human freedom, however, is as the above implies deeply problematic, and the problem arises in both his broad description of freedom and more specifically in his discussion of man's freedom to do evil. Both of these aspects relate to history.

Regarding the question of freedom more broadly, it has already been established that from Bulgakov's historicised perspective, unified mankind's (or historical humanity's) 'divine-human' activity is the central means through which history reveals its absolute meaning. It follows that the suggestion of man's relative (non-absolute) freedom vis-à-vis the 'general law' of history is deeply significant, as, in the above reckoning, how man chooses to direct his activity determines the path of history. Therefore, any suggestion of the curtailment, limitation, or 'directedness' of this freedom of activity will lead to the eventual determination of the historical process according to these limitations or restrictions. A *non*-determinist historical worldview would seek to demonstrate to the greatest possible extent genuine, *unbounded* freedom – as, for instance, Berdiaev does – whereas a determinist viewpoint would construct laws to which freedom must subject itself. For example, Marx constructed his historical materialism on the principle that man's freedom is, at its most rudimentary level, subject to the demands of material existence and consequent modes of economic production which ensure survival in the material world:

> The nature of individuals […] depends on the material conditions determining their production.[379]

Lenin suggested a simplistic vision of freedom in his 1908 *Materializm i empiriokrititsizm*, directly quoting from Engels in his infamous *Anti-Dühring.* He

[379] Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, *The German Ideology* (1844), in David McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 175-211 (p. 177).

maintained that the greatest 'freedom' is achieved through understanding the nature of natural 'necessity':

> Свобода воли означает, следовательно, не что иное, как способность принимать решения со знанием дела. Таким образом, чем *свободнее* суждение человека по отношению к определенному вопросу, с тем большей *необходимостью* будет определяться содержание этого суждения.[380]

Whilst by no means being as crude as the examples above, Bulgakov's descriptions also place a number of limitations upon the scope of human freedom, which suggest some of the trappings of a deterministic schema.

First, in *Svet nevechernii* Bulgakov describes freedom as a fundamentally *relative* concept:

> Самое противопоставление свободы и необходимости связано с ограниченностью и относительностью, свойственной твари. Свобода есть вообще понятие относительное, абсолютная свобода есть столь же противоречивое понятие, как и абсолютное бытие.[381]

As was demonstrated by the discussion of the non-absoluteness of evil, freedom (and similarly necessity), then, in its relativity, will be subject to the same limitations that evil encounters. Furthermore, by relegating freedom to the level of relativity, Bulgakov is implying that there is a greater framework – an *absolute* framework – in which freedom fits in the manner of a lesser force. This consequently suggests the subjection of freedom to absolute forces, and the possibility of an absolute teleology working above it. This is reaffirmed by Bulgakov's suggestion that freedom is encompassed and defined according to God's original cosmogonic act of creation:

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[380] V. I. Lenin, *Materializm i empiriokrititsizm*, in V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5th edition, vol. 18 (Moscow, 1961), pp. 7-384 (p. 196).
[381] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 179.

> …эта свобода [твари] онтологически, в своем источнике, вовсе не свободна, не есть causa sui, не субстанциальна, ибо всецело определяется из творческого *да будет*; космологически же, как основа мирового бытия, она есть именно то, в чем тварь чувствует себя собою.[382]

Freedom, therefore, in its deepest ontological basis is not free: it is entirely defined by God's initial creative act. Also, in view of this profound curtailment of freedom, Bulgakov has gone even further to suggest that man feels himself to be himself *namely in this curtailed freedom*, freedom which he has just described as not properly free. And yet, in an antinomy, this freedom, which ontologically is a lack of freedom, is simultaneously the basis of worldly being, cosmologically. It is, however, the restriction of freedom that Bulgakov reiterates:

> Тварная свобода необходимо ограничена...[383]

Freedom is therefore still formulated in such a way that a thinker of Berdiaev's disposition, who placed ultimate emphasis upon true freedom, would have found unsatisfactory: it is not free from limitation.

Whilst admitting the presence of human freedom, Bulgakov indicates that freedom is itself subject to the greater laws of historical teleology and determinism – whilst he admits that freedom is 'interwoven into the fabric of time', this is later qualified by the assertion:

> Поэтому-то для Божества остается прозрачна и человеческая свобода, открыто будущее, нет в нем разных возможностей, а есть только действительность, реальные судьбы твари.[384]

Metaphysically freedom is *transparent*, it is guided or rather defined and possibly

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[382] Ibid., p. 180.
[383] Ibid., p. 181.
[384] Ibid., p. 184.

orientated by the original *da budet*, and is furthermore restricted by its relativity. Man cannot wield this freedom in a way God would not expect, as to God it is open, see-through. Freedom, in its metaphysical transparency and relativity will never be able to rule over the historical process, as the historical process is the unfolding of the absolute, *through* the relative but not *of* the relative. In this way, freedom is encompassed by the greater meaning which is revealed through history, and becomes only a human condition which is pre-directed to contribute to this process.

Moving on to the problem of mankind's freedom to do evil, we are confronted with a similar problem concerning man's ability to decide affirmatively whether or not he wants to pursue evil, and thereby direct the historical process towards an evil end. If human freedom was beyond metaphysical coercion, mankind's freedom to evil would be as profound as his freedom to do good. However, we read:

> Свобода же в зле совсем не имеет той устойчивости, как свобода в добре, она лишена онтологической скрепы, свойственной последней: нельзя забросить якорь и утвердиться на нем в пустоте небытия. Поэтому свобода в зле предполагает судорожное волевое усилие непрерывного бунта, почему с нее и можно сорваться.[385]

Furthermore, Bulgakov asserts that only good (*dobro*) resides *above* freedom and above the freedom-necessity distinction, implying that good is the only force that can ultimately triumph:

> Несомненно одно: только добру и неразрывно с ним блаженству принадлежит онтологическая сущность, только оно пребывает выше различения свободы и необходимости.[386]

This therefore again serves to demonstrate a pattern of religiously-styled historical

[385] Ibid., p. 356.
[386] Ibid., p. 357.

determinism, worked out upon philosophical grounds: the freedom to evil is fundamentally deprived of any real ontological potency, as both freedom and evil are relative concepts lying below the absolute force of good, which presides *above* the distinction of freedom and necessity. Only good can thus provide an absolute teleology for history.

Creativity

Creativity (*tvorchestvo*), as was noted in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), becomes an increasingly important aspect of Bulgakov's historical thinking. In *Svet nevechernii*, he explicitly states the identity of history and creativity:

> Жизнь есть творчество, а поэтому и *история есть творчество*.[387]

While the highlighting of creativity, as already noted, begs comparison with Berdiaev, its interpretation in Bulgakov can be expected to reflect (albeit somewhat problematically or even paradoxically) a much more deterministic style of thinking. Although the history-creativity-determinism connection has been identified in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, it has become more pronounced and explicit in *Svet nevechernii*.

The pattern of creative-historical determinism evident in Bulgakov's thinking centres upon both the limitation of mankind's creative ability and the directedness of this creativity. By establishing that human creativity is not creativity from nothing but creativity from a divine basis, Bulgakov limits human creativity. For him it cannot be considered the same as the true, free creativity with which God created the world:

> Тварное творчество, которое является актуальным выражением тварной свободы,

[387] Ibid., p. 303.

> есть не *творчество из ничего*, *но творчество в ничто из божественного что*.[388]

Although he allows creativity 'into' nothing (which, however, we already know is secondary to being), creativity is still dependent on the divine 'something', and this will provide for an ultimate direction towards God. This immediately presents a different thesis to Berdiaev, who argues that human creativity *is* creativity from nothing. In Bulgakov's thought, however, creativity is only possible for mankind due to its engagement with the divine, the metaphysically substantial (the *bozhestvennoe chto*).

Human creativity, in its historical aspect, is however more deeply determined by the fact that it is fundamentally *directed*. This recalls the thesis presented in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, where it was argued that creativity is indeed only *re*creation, but in *Svet nevechernii* Bulgakov further develops this idea, suggesting that the 'task' of creativity is fundamentally predetermined and pre-directed:

> То, что́ тварь сознает в себе как задачу творчества, вложено в нее Богом, другими словами, задача эта предвечно разрешена, но она должна быть разрешена во времени.[389]

The divine is therefore presented as providing both the basis and goal of everything that emerges in the process of becoming, and is further described as providing the exact *formula* for the definition of worldly freedom:

> В этой свободе твари, опирающейся на тварное ничто, божественные начала бытия не в силе и славе своей, не в лике вечности, в которой они не ведают развития и восполнения, ибо не нуждаются в них, но во временном становлении, как тема и вместе задача мирового процесса, его *данность-заданность*, что́ дает

[388] Ibid., p. 180.
[389] Ibid., p. 180.

> наиболее точную формулу для определения и тварной свободы, и тварного творчества.[390]

It is apparent, then, that the divine principles (*nachala*) of being serve to define not only the application of human freedom, but also the conditions which make human creativity possible, by requiring the use of the 'divine something' (*bozhestvennoe chto*) in the creative process and by setting the 'task' and 'providing a most accurate formula for the definition of both human freedom and creativity'. The meaning of creativity as history thus becomes clear.

In this formulation, then, Bulgakov does posit freedom – indeed, he also emphasises its importance – but goes on to limit it through the structure of his thought. Mankind appears to be directed and defined not only by God's initial plan for the world but also by the nature of the cosmogonic act whereby the balance between the transcendent and immanent was established and creativity made possible. In this way, the nature of the world and of the historical forces within it permits only one historical path. Like the Hegelian and then Marxist systems before him, but also in concurrence with the Christian thesis which sees the will of God as singularly potent in history, and despite his efforts to describe freedom (both to evil and to creativity) within history, we are left with the impression that the only tenable solution to history as Bulgakov sees it is the triumph of God, of the divine and the Absolute. Anything else it is not philosophically conceivable based on the ideas he is propounding in *Svet nevechernii*. Berdiaev would, no doubt, also believe in the ultimate victory of God, but the structure and emphasis are quite different in his thinking.

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[390] Ibid., p. 180.

Sophia and history

As was discussed in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* the idea of Sophia functions in Bulgakov's thought as a medium which allows for the active engagement of God or mankind-directed-by-God in history. Humanity, through its participation in Sophia (Divine Wisdom), is imbued with the divine light of God. Sophia, while leading towards the simultaneous and antinomic expression of both immanent and metaphysical categories, is also transcendent to them altogether:

> Итак, метафизическая природа Софии совершенно не покрывается обычными философскими категориями: абсолютного и относительного, вечного и временного, божественного и тварного.[391]

Beyond a description of Sophia's intermediary role in the passage of history, *Svet nevechernii* does not offer anything significantly new to *Filosofiia khoziaistva* regarding the problem of Sophia and history. This is not true, however, with regards to the question of Sophia and *time*.

Conclusions

Svet nevechernii presents a rich and complex engagement with the question of history. The multifaceted apprehension of this problem has taken on a number of new features which all demonstrate Bulgakov's accelerating movement from philosophy to theology. The determinist colour to his thinking continues to be clearly expressed in this text, although he seems at times to be obdurately unaware of this element of his philosophy. This has been demonstrated at a number of different levels in *Svet nevechernii*: in the historical conflict between good and evil, where it is

[391] Ibid., p. 189.

argued that good cannot fail; in relation to freedom where he admits that absolute freedom is absurd; and in creativity when he argues that whilst 'history is creativity', the task of creativity is established and directed by God. When considered alongside the corpus of his work, *Svet nevechernii* thus helps complete the discussion of the determinist patterns and tendencies that have been identified in Bulgakov's thought. Although back in 1901 he had vehemently rejected the immanent, material determinism of Marxism he had, by 1917, returned to a style of thinking about history – and about connected historical problems – that, whilst not necessarily Marxist, still clearly demonstrated determinist features.

Bulgakov's Philosophy of Time in Svet nevechernii

As this chapter on Bulgakov's philosophy approaches its conclusion, it is a fortunate turn that the principal focus of the next chapter on Berdiaev, namely time, comes to the fore in Bulgakov. Indeed, the introduction of the theme of time in *Svet nevechernii* is noticeable. Although the word 'time' has been mentioned with some frequency in earlier works, in this text it has become a substantial intellectual concern. Time is taken up as a problem both related to other philosophical questions – specifically history and Sophiology – and also as an independent problem in its own right. Bulgakov's wider thinking about time in *Svet nevechernii* is an attempt to subject it to the broader logic of his philosophy: time, which is immanent, is determined by eternity, which is metaphysical. This work on the time-eternity relationship brings him close to Berdiaev, for whom the time-eternity divide was also central. Previously Bulgakov seems to have satisfied himself with the time-history correlation expressed in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912) – 'in time, i.e. in history',[392] and as we have seen he makes a similar assertion in *Svet nevechernii* (1917) –

[392] '…времени, т.е. в истории…' Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, pp. 90-91.

‘temporality, i.e. history’.[393] However, in *Svet nevechernii* he devotes more space to the question of time and appears to be aware of a distinction between time and history, even if the exact terms of the distinction remain elusive. All of Bulgakov’s discussion related to time demonstrates a degree of uncertainty or discomfort, something that is quite revealing as to his deeper intuitions about the nature of time.

Indeed, the first thing that strikes the reader about the question of time is Bulgakov’s remarkably confusing – or perhaps confused – approach. This is first and foremost reflected in the number of different ways in which he refers, without any explanation, to different categories or types of time. There are no less than ten categories of time mentioned in *Svet nevechernii:* ‘объективное время’; [394] ‘конкретное время’; [395] 'формальное время'; [396] 'абстрактное время'; [397] ‘отвлеченное время'; [398] 'историческое время'; [399] ‘онтологическое время'; [400] ‘софийное время'; [401] 'вечное время'; [402] and even ‘злое время'; [403] and only ‘concrete’ and ‘Sophiological’ time receive any further elaboration. This is very different to Berdiaev’s work, which pays considerable attention to the accurate distinction between different categories of time (namely *cosmic, historical* and *existential* time).[404]

This problem is compounded further by a number of other opaque comments

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[393] ‘…временности, т.е. истории'…’ Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 305.
[394] Ibid., p. 301.
[395] Ibid., p. 301.
[396] Ibid., p. 302.
[397] Ibid., p. 302.
[398] Ibid., p. 302.
[399] Ibid., p. 350.
[400] Ibid., p. 351.
[401] Ibid., p. 189.
[402] Ibid., p. 189.
[403] Ibid., p. 177.
[404] See in particular: N. Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka (Opyt personalisticheskoi filosofii)* (1939), in N.A. Berdiaev, *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 3-162 (pp. 154-61).

Bulgakov makes about time. There is mention of the 'density or saturation' of time,[405] but there is no further explanation offered as to what these somewhat cryptic terms mean, despite the fact that these concepts could potentially have significant repercussions for the broader formulation of thought about time. Similarly, and possibly most problematically, when dealing with the philosophical problem of time specifically, in a section subheaded 'Time and eternity' (Section 2.4 of *Svet nevechernii*, 'Vremia i vechnost'', pp. 175-79), ambiguity is compounded by Bulgakov's willingness to move between the terms *vremia* and *vremennost'*, two words which clearly express different meanings, but for which he again does not account. Compared to time, *vremia*, *vremennost'* is akin to *time-ness*, or possibly temporality or even temporariness. *Vremennost'* perhaps relates to a broader experience of time or to the general conditions engendered by time. Bulgakov does not offer any guidance for what he means by these contrasting terms. For instance:

> Тайна тварности проявляется в противоречивом самосознании твари о *вечности и временности* своего бытия. Время есть актуальный синтез бытия и небытия...[406]

He therefore seamlessly jumps between the two with nothing in the way of qualification.

These noticeable ambiguities in Bulgakov's thought concerning time complicate an attempt to explore his conception of the broader relation of time to other problems, specifically to history. The ambiguity itself also inevitably leads to speculation. Is Bulgakov's lack of clarity in his temporal nomenclature representative of a lacuna in his thinking – is he perhaps unsure as to how time fits into the broader

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[405] '…густота или насыщенность времени бывает различна…' Bulgakov, *Svet neverchernii*, p. 351.
[406] Ibid., p. 175.

patterns of his philosophy? Does it demonstrate that Bulgakov has not really thought beyond the rudimentary formula suggesting that time is roughly approximate to history? Although we see him attempt to subject time to the broader antinomic categories of his thinking in the 'Vremia i vechnost'' section, this does not remove these broader questions. We can best explore these by exploring the relationships Bulgakov establishes between time and other problems – namely history and Sophia – and also by looking at his descriptions of time itself.

Time and History

The relationship between time and history presented in *Svet nevechernii* is troublesome. This is particularly evident in Bulgakov's discussion of the categories of 'objective' and 'concrete' time. The problem arises over the fact that although he distinguishes between time and history at a lexical level, it appears that at a philosophical or intellectual level there is little to distinguish them, in that time still appears to be history. This means that the contemplation of time always takes on an historical dimension. We can refer back to a quotation cited previously:

> *История есть*, прежде всего, *рождение человечества*, объективное время, наполненное рождениями, а потому и смертями, и внутренно связанное их последованием.[407]

In this statement, objective time appears to be the 'temporal material', as it were, of history: history is the way in which objective time, history's material, is connected together by the cycle of human lives. Time, then, could be an ontological category, as mankind's cycle of life and death connects and fills it. However, history too is

[407] Ibid., p. 301.

depicted as arising through man, as history is also ‘the birth of humanity’. Therefore neither time nor history appears to have any independence from humanity: time, man, and history all appear to be inextricably linked.

A similar idea is reiterated on the following page:

> Объективное время содержит достаточное основание для порядка поколений и смены исторических народов, чем и определяется скелет истории […] История связана «временами и сроками», имеющими основание в духовной организации человечества…[408]

Here we see the same assertion that objective time provides a sort of temporal material for the passage of history, although the emphasis is slightly different: it is suggested here that *history* is connected together *by* times, rather than time being connected together by human life which then creates history. There is possibly a degree of tautology at work here, but the same central idea is conveyed: namely, time and history are both organised and connected by the cycle of human lives, and by means of this a time-history identity is reinforced. However we look at the above quotations, both history and time appear to be temporal matter that requires humanity to link them together, and the cycle of human lives will provide an ultimate teleology for both. In such a reckoning neither time nor history would arise without humanity, as both are grounded in man,[409] meaning that the basis of both is identical. Despite the formal distinction, then, the thesis of ‘time, that is, history’ still holds in this text.

Time is therefore addressed as linked to the human life cycle, but is also not disconnected from history:

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[408] Ibid., p. 302.
[409] Furthermore, in an unrelated section we read: ‘...слышится неумолчный шепот [...]: ты – вечен и только родился для времени, - оно в тебе, а не ты в нем...' Ibid., p. 176.

> …но именно в чередовании поколений возникает история как конкретное время,[410]

This is important, as it testifies to the fact that Bulgakov still continues to look at time in a *historicised* manner: that is, he looks at time and temporal problems through the prism of historical thinking. However, there is more to the theme of time than just this.

Time and Eternity

Bulgakov's main exploration of the theme of time is, as mentioned, carried out in the 'Vremia i vechnost'' section of *Svet nevechernii*. This discussion is intriguing not only in its continuities with Bulgakov's broader thinking, according to which time appears determined by eternity, but also in the fact that Bulgakov betrays his uneasiness in relation to time. Although it could be deduced that if time is history, and if history is 'good', time, by extension, must also be good, it appears that when disengaged from historical discussion, time acquires an ambivalence to match its ambiguity:

> Завистливый Хронос ревниво жирает детей своих, все умерщвляя, обесценивая, низвергая; жизнь есть какое-то торжество всеобщего умирания.[411]

It becomes apparent, then, that as with the broader problem of evil in Bulgakov's work, there is a similar demand for a 'theodicy of time', as it were, offering some sort of reason for the ineluctable, deathly process of time. Indeed, time seems to be portrayed as the root of evil; time becomes the means or process through which nothingness (which can be 'actualised' as evil) rears its head:

> Злое время, «распаленный круг бытия», есть огненное колесо, схваченное

[410] Ibid., p. 301.
[411] Ibid., p. 175.

тисками жадного ничто.[412]

Here then time is described as ‘evil’, a quality which, as this quotation implies, is most likely the product of its connection with nothingness. This tension between describing, on the one hand, time as almost terrifying and, on the other, as something that can be neutralised according to a grander logic is a key aspect of Bulgakov’s thinking about time.

Moving to an analysis of some of the specific aspects of Bulgakov’s descriptions of time, his opening statements in ‘Vremia i vechnost’’ demonstrate his closeness to the contemporaneous European tradition and also Berdiaev. He begins by arguing that:

> Время есть актуальный синтез бытия и небытия, бывание, Werden. Настоящее, которое всегда поглощается прошлым и устремляется в будущее, есть как бы не имеющая измерения точка, движущаяся в океане меонального бытия: полубытия прошедшего и будущего, - уже-не-бытия и еще-не-бытия.[413]

Bulgakov presents here a formulation of time in relation to being and non-being, and the procession from past to present to future. The solution he offers, which focuses on finding cognisable but also organic, human (rather than empirical) coherence in seemingly constant change, demonstrates some similarity to a European contemporary, Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Bergson looked at establishing ‘la durée’, the meta-temporal duration existing despite the broken flow of time.[414] As Pearson suggests:

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[412] Ibid., p. 177.
[413] Ibid., p. 175.
[414] Bergson (1903) argued that despite the continuousness of change, there is nonetheless a manner of unity in this: ‘Shall we say, then, that duration has unity? Doubtless, a continuity of elements which prolong themselves into one another participates in unity as much as in multiplicity; but this is moving, changing. Coloured, living unity has hardly anything in common with the abstract, motionless and empty unity which the concept of pure unity circumscribes.’ Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* pp. 19-20.

> Duration is experience (it is something lived if not adequately intuited), but equally it is experience enlarged and gone beyond. To think this duration is to think "beyond the human condition", that is, beyond our dominant habits of representation in which time is conceived in terms of space.[415]

Similarly, Bulgakov's intuition that the present is continuously being 'swallowed up' by the past and future demonstrates a similarity to Berdiaev, who held that the problem of immanent, 'objectified' time consisted in the destruction of the present by the past and the future. Although Bulgakov did not voice any deep awareness of these philosophers, a similarity clearly exists: all evince a concern with the seeming unrelenting process of change inherent in the movement of time.

Bulgakov places his initial formulation of time, of past, present and future, in a religious framework. He claims that time is fundamentally related to the conditions of the created world – and therefore is similarly subjected to the great antinomy which pervades being:

> В интуиции временности ощущается антиномия тварности, – божественного начала, погруженного в ничто и его собой оплодотворившего. Ибо время есть преходящесть и ничтожество всего сущего, но вместе и возможность всего бывающего...[416]

Time, then, by bringing (or at least demonstrating) the confluence or 'synthesis' of being and nonbeing – life and death – therefore allows for the interaction of the divine basis and *nichto* (nothing) to happen simultaneously. This, however, will not take place on an even basis.

While showing concern about the nature of time and how it relates to being, Bulgakov still subjects time to eternity, which is deeper and more substantial. He

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[415] Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual*, pp. 9-10.
[416] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 175.

argues that consciousness of the basic conditions of time or temporality is only possible due to the fact that such consciousness sits in eternity and looks down at time:

> Самое сознание временности, с его жгучестью и остротой, порождено чувством сверхвременности, не-временности жизни, оно родится лишь при взгляде во время из вечности.[417]

This implies that an understanding of time can only be achieved if one is situated first in eternity: time cannot be perceived without eternity. This establishes a similar pattern in Bulgakov's thinking: immanent reality (in this case time) is certainly real, but is fundamentally dependent on the metaphysical or divine for its reality. This paves the way, as we have already seen, for the immanent reality to be determined by the metaphysical plane, as immanent reality is guided from the metaphysical. Therefore Bulgakov argues:

> Время и вечность соотносительны: время не ощущалось бы в течении своем, не суммировалось бы из отдельных разорванных моментов, если бы этого не совершал сверхвремменый *субъект* времени.[418]

This thesis is very similar to his ideas concerning history, which suggest that history is only possibly due to the existence of the transcendental subject of history, mankind: in the same way that man unifies history, man as the supra-temporal subject (*sverkhvremmenyi sub"ekt*) is similarly perceived to unify time, to allow it to flow. This testifies to the continuing idea that time is in man, not man in time, which suggests a Kantian dimension to Bulgakov's thought which will be discussed below. Berdiaev similarly wanted to suggest that time was in man;[419] however, due to the

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[417] Ibid., 175.
[418] Ibid., p. 176.
[419] "Время в человеке, а не человек во времени." Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie,* p. 322.

conditions he ascribed to the material world in which time ruled, Berdiaev runs the risk of setting time outside man and freeing it from human control.

With Bulgakov, however, there is a familiar pattern. Man, who is both temporal (immanent) and eternal (transcendent), establishes the determined relation between eternity and time: whilst being mutually related, eternity fundamentally projects into and substantiates time. Time can therefore not overcome eternity by any means:

> В любом миге бытия, в каждом его моменте просвечивает вечность, целостная и неделимая, в которой нет настоящего, прошлого и будущего, но все, что бывает, вневременно есть. Вертикальные сечения времени проникают в вечность, поэтому-то ничто из того, что только однажды мелькнуло во времени, не может уже исчезнуть, обратиться в небытие, ибо имеет какую-то проекцию в вечность...[420]

This eternal dimension, which exists throughout the temporal dimension, encompasses and holds everything that occurs within time. As with Bulgakov's ideas about theodicy, then, the supposed 'evil' of time, which brings with it death and perpetual change, is neutralised by the fact that nothing disappears in eternity – everything *is*. Eternity is therefore primary and time and the temporal conditions created by time (*vremennost'*, perhaps) are secondary to and dependent on eternity. Time, then, must be proved to be surmountable and secondary, in the same way that in Bulgakov's theodicy evil is necessarily overcome:

> Временность должна погаснуть и обессилеть, линия времени слиться в точку, когда «времени больше не будет», как клянется ангел в Апокалипсисе, только так может разрешиться антиномия времени.[421]

A theodicy of time is therefore presented through the similar argument that, just as

[420] Ibid., p. 177.
[421] Ibid., pp. 178-79.

economy is, according to the thesis in *Filosofiia khoziaistva* (1912), the anticipation of the vivifying principle, so too is time just the anticipation of the eternal, meta-temporal principle:

> И однако временность как образ тварности содержит в себе неистребимые временем побеги вечности.[422]

The question of time, therefore, exhibits some significant continuities within Bulgakov's thought, but these bring with them new problems. What is broadly evident is the similar pattern of metaphysical determinism, in this case being demonstrated in the temporal realm. That which occurs in the realm of time is substantiated and grounded within the metaphysical, divine realm of the eternal and therefore receives its primary being from it. This, as well as allowing for determinist patterns to arise, functions to create a type of theodicy for time: time as continual change, as death, is neutralised by the fact that every moment of time is held and kept within eternity. This fits closely with broader patterns of Bulgakov's thinking. It is interesting, however, to note Bulgakov's description of the 'envious Khronos' (*zavistlivyi Khronos*) and other fearful references to time. These occasional comments about the threatening, all-consuming nature of time highlight the fact that time, taken out of a historical context, presents something that is alien to Bulgakov's thinking. As a philosopher who thinks in such Solov'evan terms as 'all-unity', time in a 'formal' or 'abstract' form presents something cold in which there is no Sophiological light, there is no unity or teleology other than continual change and inevitable death. Temporality or time is, in Bulgakov's mind, therefore only rendered safe when it is returned to an 'eternal basis', when the changes and vicissitudes which emerge within time are returned to the all-encompassing embrace of eternity:

[422] Ibid., p. 179.

> Вечность лежит не *за* временем или *после* времени, но наряду с ним, *над* временем, как для него идеал, и *под* временем, как его основа, которая ощушается временем лишь чрез призму ничто, небытия.[423]

Time is thus experienced due to the interaction of nothing or nonbeing with being, but this is accompanied by the fact that time is from every angle embraced by eternity. All temporal immanence is thus only real because time is held within eternity which, whilst allowing the movement of time, ultimately substantiates it. In the same way that Bulgakov's broader historical thesis about time removes any of the real potency from time, so too does Bulgakov's thinking about eternity, which relegates time to a secondary position.

Discomfort with Kant and the reality of time

As has been mentioned earlier, Bulgakov has suggested that time is 'within' man. This idea, which recalls Kant, is also problematic for Bulgakov. The formative influence Kant asserted upon Bulgakov's mind has been important throughout his philosophical and religious development, and Kant continued to influence Bulgakov's thinking across 1911-16, when he was writing *Svet nevechernii*. However, as noted, Kant's ideas about time sit awkwardly in Bulgakov's mind, and the application of these ideas to Bulgakov's thinking about time engenders some paradoxes for exploration. Bulgakov himself highlighted his ambivalence and pre-empted this passage of enquiry:

> Что же есть время? Только ли субъективная форма сознания, как провозглашено Кантом? И да, и нет.[424]

Bulgakov's trouble with Kant fundamentally issues from a question regarding

[423] Ibid., p. 177.
[424] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 177.

the reality of time. Kant suggested that time is not something innate to objects; it is, rather, an *a priori* mode of human cognition which the mind employs to organize and order the world around it. Thus:

> Time is not an empirical concept. For neither co-existence nor succession would be perceived by us, if the representation of time did not exist as a foundation *a priori* […] Time is a necessary representation, lying at the foundation of all our intuitions […] In it [time] alone is all reality of appearances possible. These may be all annihilated in thought, but time itself, as the universal condition of their possibility, cannot be so annulled.[425]

Therefore, according to Kant, time is not something exterior to human cognition but rather exists and works within it, it is a mode of thinking which allows us to make sense of our intuitions of the world. This idea clearly holds some sway over Bulgakov, who similarly suggests that:

> Временность[426] выражает собой *состояние* тварности в разных ее модальностях и принадлежит нашему «трансцендентальному субъекту», выражающему тварное восприятие мира.[427]

Time in the above is a condition of created things through which we perceive the world. However, by reducing time to a purely cognitive level, Kant removes some of the empirical reality of time, making it seem illusory. As Reichenbach notes:

> It is true, Kant would have objected to putting his subjective time on a par with an interpretation of time as an illusion. However, the only difference is in emotive connotations.[428]

This is where we enter into problems for Bulgakov, for whom such 'emotive

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[425] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 54.
[426] Here we see the specific problem, in a particularly frustrating rendition, regarding the *vremia* and *vremennost'* distinction.
[427] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 177.
[428] Hans Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time* (Berkeley,1956), p. 13.

connotations' extended into the religious dimension and were particularly significant.

Whilst Bulgakov would agree that *time* is not a primary ontological condition, he would, however, argue that *eternity*, the metaphysical, divine time, is something real and an aspect of the ontological absolute. After all, if God resides in eternity, then eternity must possess true ontological reality. Furthermore, Bulgakov, in line with his broader philosophical project, also suggests that time is built upon eternity,[429] meaning that events of genuine metaphysical and divine value can take place within time:

> Ибо можно ли отрицать реальность времени, когда в исполнившиеся времена и сроки воплотился Бог, произошло рождество Христово, протекла земная Его жизнь, свершилось Его воскресение и вознесение?[430]

If such immanent time was only an illusory, *a priori* concept, this would mean that time would possess no ontological value. Then, if we take into account the fact that time is supposed to be rooted in eternity, this would mean that the value of eternity concurrently is not absolute and is reduced to a function of human cognition. Bulgakov would of course reject this. Also, as the above indicates, the rejection of the reality of time would mean that the significance of religiously important events taking place in time – such as, for example, the coming of Christ – would also be undermined. This would also be unacceptable to Bulgakov.

Nevertheless, Bulgakov also accepts the Kantian thesis when he presents time as secondary, as the condition of immanent experience. This idea is qualified by the fact that time is infused with genuine value, which comes from eternity. Time is thus 'within' man, as Kant would suggest, but in distinction to Kant he argues that it

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[429] '…время обосновывается вечностью…' Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 179.
[430] Ibid., p. 179.

is something that was created for man, or is rather his created condition:

> Но из глубины уныния, среди печального молчания, слышится неумолчный шепот, робкий и тихий, но вместе с тем уверенный и незаглушимый: ты – вечен и только родился для времени, – оно в тебе, а не ты в нем, это ты развертываешь и свиваешь его свиток в памяти своего духа...[431]

So whilst Bulgakov can both challenge and support Kant's ideas about time, this is subject to a certain concession: he admits that time is within man, and in this regard can somewhat question the reality of time, but this does not mean, however, that by this ontological relation to time man only possesses time in the cognitive sense that Kant is suggesting. This is because although time is real *through* man; through man's action of connecting time in history, man reaches transcendentally to the eternal, the divine, to make time real. Furthermore the *condition* of time is only made possible for man due to the created conditions of the world.

The question of the reality of time is further problematic for Bulgakov, as has already been suggested, due to his understanding of the time-history relation. If history is to be an ontological process, in the sense that it has real and not illusory significance, then the time that occurs within this process must also be by extension real or ontological. Furthermore, time, in accordance with this historical thesis, must be part of a fundamentally teleological process:

> Бог, силою Своею вызывая мир к бытию, присутствует и во времени, ибо в нем протекает процесс теофанический, который есть в то же время и теогонический.[432]

Time is thus part of a historical process. However, Kant lacks such a historicised notion of time:

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[431] Ibid., p. 176.
[432] Ibid., p. 179.

> The infinity of time signifies nothing more than that every determined quantity of time is possible only through limitations of one time lying at the foundation. Consequently, the original representation, time, must be given as unlimited.[433]

This understanding violates Bulgakov's most basic understanding of time and history, and these ideas are duly refuted:

> «Трансцендентальное» время Канта, или отвлеченная форма времени, неизбежно мыслится как потенциальная бесконечность, не знающая ни начала ни конца; поэтому его идея и приводит разум к антиномии, обнаруженной самим же Кантом. Напротив, конкретное время, которым и является история, имеет и начало, и конец...[434]

Analysis of the relationship between Kant and Bulgakov regarding the problem of time in *Svet nevechernii* has highlighted how Bulgakov perceives the relationship between time and man, and also how the supposed *reality* of time is challenged by some Kantian assumptions which clearly held some weight for Bulgakov.

Sophia and Time

The final aspect of Bulgakov's thought dealing with time in *Svet nevechernii* which merits discussion is the question of the relationship between time and Sophia. Sophia, as became apparent in *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, plays an important role in the construction of Bulgakov's thinking about the universal: as Khoruzhii argues, it is the central concept through which the immanent condition of the world is infused with metaphysical value. He writes:

> Она [софийная связь мира с Богом] должна обеспечивать ценность и смысл мира,

[433] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 55.
[434] Ibid., p. 302.

> а это возможно только одним путем – путем утверждения реальной причастности мира Богу как источнику всякого смысла и всякой ценности. Именно это утверждение осуществляет софиология Булгакова: ее можно определить как метафизическое учение о причастности мира Богу....[435]

Bulgakov accordingly identifies, in *Svet nevechernii*, 'Sophiological time' (*Sofiinoe vremia*) as a special, unitary or synthesising category of time.

As we have seen, Sophia is the central unitary point of Bulgakov's overall philosophy. In *Svet nevechernii*, Sophia similarly functions as a unifying principle for time: Sophiological time is perceived to occupy an intermediary position between the immanent temporal condition (time) and the metaphysical temporal condition (eternity). Bulgakov therefore states:

> Этим *средним* положением между временем и вечностью, «μεταξύ»,[436] и определяется ее [Софии] своеобразная метафизическая природа в отношении к временности и тварности.[437]

As the Divine Wisdom Sophia pervades the world from the moment of creation, presiding in everything both immanently and transcendentally – antinomiously being both one and the other. In this intermediary position, Sophia allows for the establishment of a metaphysically or divinely driven teleology unfolding across the expanse of time. Sophia thus completes a historicised, determinist understanding of time, which dictates that time is neither empty nor directionless. Indeed time, being a part of the grand unity of things, is instead teleological:

> Так как ей [Софии] принадлежит положительное всеединство, то ею обосновывается вся связность бытия, установляющая не механическое

[435] Khoruzhii, 'Sofiia – Kosmos – materiia: ustoi filosofskoi mysli ottsa Sergiia', p. 832.
[436] Bulgakov explains this Platonic term, meaning 'between' or 'located in the interval', in a note. Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 388.
[437] Ibid., p. 189.

> чередование, но внутреннее последование событий, иначе говоря, *объективное* время, ибо время не есть голое чередование, вытеснение прошлого настоящим, клочкообразная разорванность бытия.[438]

We thus see the emergence of the concept of *Sophiological* time: Sophia establishes the connection of all life, and therefore the internal connection of all events and time beyond mechanical cycle. Time does not remain just objective: it has deeper connections. Sophiological time is thus the temporal space which Sophia, and mankind insofar as it participates in Sophia, occupies. It is conceived of as a *synthesis* of time, which describes the unifying position Sophia occupies in the temporal domain:

> София содержит в себе живой и реальный *синтез времени*, в котором уже переходятся грани времени (хотя и не временности вообще). Если можно так выразиться, софийное время есть единый, сложный и слитный, хотя не сверхвременный, однако не надвременный акт: это есть *вечное время*...[439]

Sophia therefore transgresses time, although perhaps not the conditions of time (*vremennost'*). Sophiological time is, as a synthesis, unified time: it is also becomes 'eternal' time in which everything holds together above time. Objective time in such a way is overcome through Sophiological time.

Finally, in the same way that Sophia is omnipresent throughout creation in its immanent, becoming form, it follows that Sophiological time similarly pervades the immanent form of time:

> Не обладая вечностью по своей природе, София может находиться в плоскости временности, будучи к ней обращена.[440]

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[438] Ibid., p. 189.
[439] Ibid., p. 189.
[440] Ibid., p. 189.

Sophia, then, and Sophiological time, operates as the intellectual mechanism which Bulgakov uses to justify his antinomic description of time. Sophia allows for the simultaneous binding of eternity and time to take place: through this it allows Sophiological light, divine knowledge – however it may be characterised – to filter into time and to fill time with eternal, metaphysical significance.

What emerges then is that Sophia is the philosophical-theological apparatus Bulgakov uses to establish a determined, universal understanding of time. Time is founded upon eternity, upon the metaphysical or divine temporal basis, and this foundation is achieved through the mediation of Sophia. Sophia provides the means by which man is able to occupy both immanent and transcendental temporal spaces, as Sophia is the embodiment, as it were, of the divine antinomy in which transcendence and immanence occur simultaneously. Sophiological time is the expression of this in the temporal sphere. Furthermore, this description of Sophia and Sophiological time further establishes Bulgakov's innately *historicised* conception of time, in that it allows the teleological process of the spread of divine, metaphysical value throughout time to take place. It allows him to repeat, as above, that time 'is not a bare rotation', it is, rather, a teleological, and thus historical, process.

Conclusions

Bulgakov attempts to treat or identify time as an independent philosophical concern and he thereby ostensibly separates it from the question of history. This seeming distinction has been brought into question, however, as analysis of what Bulgakov writes about time in *Svet nevechernii* (1917) reveals a conceptualisation of

time which is fundamentally historicised, not extending beyond the basic thesis which states: ‘time, that is, history’. Indeed, patterns of determinist thinking, characteristic of Bulgakov’s thought about history, are repeated, as is a need to provide some sort of theological-philosophical justification or resolution to the condition of time – that is, a form of theodicy of time. Bulgakov’s thinking suggests more specifically that immanent time is determined, directed, and dependent upon metaphysical time (eternity), and in this way Bulgakov constructs a familiar conceptual relation. This continuity further allows for the establishment of a historical-teleological trajectory to exist within time as it does in history. In this reckoning, Sophia is described as the nexus through which the infusion of metaphysical direction and value can take place in the temporal dimension.

A broader feature of Bulgakov’s thinking has also been restated, namely that in the grander scheme of things history is primary and time is secondary. We see, from the various angles Bulgakov takes, time being apprehended and transformed into something regular and cognisable according to the broader historical categories and continuities of his thinking. This primacy of historical over temporal experience – expressed in the notion that time is not empty or directionless, but rather is potentially Sophiological and historical – establishes a pattern of thinking that places Bulgakov at fundamental odds with his contemporary, Berdiaev, who propounds an almost opposite thesis. Berdiaev suggests that time is primary and ‘historical time’ is nothing but a redundant form of restricted time. It appears that the pressures of Bulgakov’s universalist project, deeply influenced by Solov'ev but no doubt in its absolutism also influenced by a Marxist and by extension Hegelian legacy, lead him inevitably to describe time in restricted terms, as otherwise his broader thesis for the world would unravel. The potential chaos of time is regulated by historical structures.

This profound difference between Berdiaev and Bulgakov regarding the history-time relation will be further explored across Berdiaev's writings, and we will see how in the realm of time and history an existentialist project unavoidably comes into conflict with a universalist one.

4. Conclusion

This exploration of Bulgakov's thinking has revealed how deep historicising tendencies penetrate into his philosophical and religious worldview. He does not readily see human experience outside a historical framework. Bulgakov's cursory treatment of time demonstrates his inability to conceive of temporal experience in any other way than historical, and further that his attention is held by absolute, universal problems. This is very different to Berdiaev, who engaged with the individual and looked at time from an existential perspective. Indeed, a broader concern with history rather than time itself demonstrates – at least in Bulgakov's case – an intellectual inclination to look at philosophical problems in terms of structures and overarching schema rather than in terms of singular experience.

This historicising proclivity is accompanied by a determinist inclination. Whenever Bulgakov describes the historical dimensions of a problem he also subtly imposes limitations which serve to restrict and direct the historical development of the given problem. Therefore evil, theodicy, freedom, creativity and the other questions which concern Bulgakov are discussed in such a way that their solution is framed in terms of necessity and inevitability. Evil is therefore viewed as impotent and non-substantial; freedom is real only in its divine aspect; creativity is possible only in accordance with God's plan laid at the beginning of history, and causality demonstrates metaphysical rather than immanent patterns.

The reasons for this absolutist, determinist historical edifice are open to interpretation. Commentary on Bulgakov's experience of the present, his sense of *temporality as crisis* demonstrates that he perceives in the world around him a growing level of crisis and calamity, the genesis of which is multifaceted. His need to

enter into *dialogue* with this sense of crisis possibly led him to find structures in which he could neutralise his concerns, structures which provided a greater logic and also a lent a comforting sense of providence to the disasters erupting in Russia and the world. Beyond this, Bulgakov's personal intellectual history, in which contrasting or opposing worldviews ideas were adopted and then moved on from – most obviously Marxism, but also, in varying degrees, Kantianism and Hegelianism – laid certain intellectual roots which proved tenacious. Therefore, the determining, historicising tendencies of Marx and Hegel, although presented in a reformulation, nonetheless continued to influence Bulgakov's thought.

In final summary, Bulgakov as a historical thinker is a complex entity. What emerges most clearly, however, is his need for structure and order in history – or, moreover, of a completed sense of *history* itself. In this sense of history as an organised, sensible, cognisable whole, Bulgakov certainly found comfort.

Chapter 2: Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev

Time and History

1. Introduction

Berdiaev's life

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev's (1874-1948) life bears similarity to the tumult of his thought. Born in 1874 into an aristocratic family in Kiev, he refused the military service judged appropriate for someone of his birth and embarked on an intellectual career.[441] His outspoken style led him to be internally exiled by the tsarist regime at the end of the nineteenth century, and then to be expelled from Russia by the Bolsheviks in 1922 along with his likeminded compatriots. Like his lifelong acquaintance Sergei Bulgakov, he lived through the Russian Revolution and Civil War, and, after settling in Paris following a spell in Germany, he too would then also live through the horrors of the Second World War and Nazi occupation.

In a similar way to Bulgakov, Berdiaev was – at least at first – a classic thinker of the Russian Silver Age. Indeed, as one biographer has recently observed, Berdiaev's movement through various intellectual commonplaces was perhaps more a reflection of developments in motion within Russian intellectual society than being of his own initiative:

> …Бердяев, как и любой другой мыслитель, не был свободен от сильных влияний со стороны других: когда многие увлекались марксизмом – Бердяев тоже вполне искренно им увлекался; если Лев Шестов зачитывался Ницше – Бердяев тоже

[441] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 11.

> выписывал себе из Германии собрание сочинений немецкого бунтаря; русская интеллигенция открывала для себя Ибсена – и Николай Александрович публиковал статьи об Ибсене; когда Сергей Булгаков и другие стали переходить к идеализму и религии – Бердяев тоже пережил духовный переворот...[442]

In time, however, Berdiaev would distinguish himself as unique from Bulgakov and his contemporaries, on account not only of the content of his thought but also of his international acclaim.

Berdiaev's thought: Methodological considerations

Before introducing the substance of Berdiaev's thinking, there needs to be a note made about the methodology that will be used to approach his philosophy as it is quite different to the method applied to Bulgakov. Approaching Berdiaev in a systematic, analytic fashion is difficult due both to the nature and quantity of his work. Quantitatively, where with Bulgakov we were able to analyse only the first half of his work – that which was engaged specifically with philosophy – with Berdiaev we need to take into account the entire, very large, corpus, as he never strayed from a philosophical-religious medium. Qualitatively, Berdiaev wrote profusely and frequently without, by his own admission, much in the way of structure or methodology:

> Во мне нет того, что называют обдумыванием, дискурсивным, выводным мишлением, нет систематической, логической связи мысли […] Анализ – сравнительно слабая сторона моей мысли.[443]

This means that many of his texts substantially repeat the same ideas in different

[442] Volkogonova, *Berdiaev*, pp. 6-7.
[443] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 256.

ways. Furthermore, there is also the issue that there is not the clear chronology of philosophical development that we see in Bulgakov. A strict diachronic investigation of Berdiaev's thought – especially given the quantity of his work – would therefore not be fruitful in the way that it was for Bulgakov. This is particularly true when looking at a single theme including, for instance, time. Berdiaev, sometimes seemingly arbitrarily, simply elects to discuss time in some texts and not others. Sometimes there is a development from an earlier text, sometimes not. In order to piece together the whole, a synchronic approach involving citation from a variety of texts is favourable. Although chronological developments can be noted, the most important aspect of analysis is construction of the whole.

There is also the matter of Berdiaev's exposition. As Rozanov commented in 1916 regarding Berdiaev's *Smysl tvorchestva*:

> Прежде всего – глубокий упрек *философской* книге: автор *высказывает*, а не *доказывает*.[444]

This statement is true for Berdiaev at both the specific, sentence-based level and at the broader level of whole texts – his books rarely work in a way whereby they prove anything in particular to the reader. Indeed, they just present a viewpoint in its totality, without any logical exposition. We, therefore, will decide the important steps in Berdiaev's intellectual journey through an approach which, whilst remaining true to his philosophy, will involve some inference and construction. This will mean that although trying to stick to a certain selection of texts when dealing with a specific problem, texts from quite different chronological periods will be cited in order to draw

[444] V. V. Rozanov, 'Novaia religiozno-filosofskaia kontseptsiia. Nikolai Berdiaev "Smysl tvorchestva. Opyt opravdaniia cheloveka", in A. A. Ermichev [ed.], *N.A. Berdiaev: pro et contra. Antologiia,* vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 1994), pp. 261-69 (p. 262).

a complete picture of Berdiaev's philosophy.

Having said all this, there is a reasonably coherent philosophical basis evident across Berdiaev's work, and a consistent body of thinking quite coherently informs all his writing. However, he appears to be in a constant process of remoulding and restating – possibly even reinterpreting – this basic set, even system of ideas that he believes to be true and intends to demonstrate. In view of this, despite having a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of Berdiaev's works in their totality, there are further reasons why it will not be appropriate to cite from every text, as we would see a continued and confusing reiteration of the same ideas. Although an effort will be made to classify Berdiaev's various phases of thinking, these will not differ greatly from the authoritative categories delineated by Zen'kovskii[445] and later expanded upon by Poltoratskii.[446]

Broadly speaking, we will be working with the material Berdiaev published in the latter half of his life, when he was living in Paris. Texts written in the 1930s and 1940s will be of special relevance, as his philosophy by this point was perhaps slightly better formulated than previously. Central texts include, but are not limited to, *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931), *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934), *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (written 1941, published 1947) and *Samopoznanie* (1947). There are some central ideas that emerge from earlier works, however, and these works include *Filosofiia svobody* (1911), *Smysl istorii* (1922) and *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924).

[445] Zen'kovskii identifies Berdiaev's 'Sociological' or 'Psychological' stage (up to 1905), engaged with Marxism; then his 'Historiosophic' or 'Cosmic' stage (1905-1917); then his 'Ethical' or 'Personalistic' stage (from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s); and finally his 'Eschatological' stage from there onwards. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* vol. 2, pp. 64-65.

[446] Poltoratskii instructively points out that many of these periods overlap and interweave, meaning chronological distinctions should not be overplayed. To his credit, Zen'kovskii also makes his awareness of this fact clear. Poltoratskii, *Berdiaev i Rossiia*, pp. 7-8.

Berdiaev's thought: an overview

Due to the synchronic rather than diachronic approach we will be taking to Berdiaev's thought, a detailed introduction to his philosophy is necessary before we engage with the principal concern of this thesis. The basic themes of Berdiaev's thinking mark him out as distinctively Russian – he engages with the sometimes nebulous questions of creativity, freedom, eschatology, time, history, subject-object, and the Divine-human relationship. Burt has pointed out that the philosophical depth of some of these questions has – at least in the West – been subject to some doubt:

> Problems that vex the "Russian mind," such as the concepts of truth, freedom, the absolute and the ineffable, the nature of experience, the person, are relegated in Western philosophy to the subdisciplines of aesthetics and ethics or turned over to the tender mercies of "literary theory."[447]

It is not, perhaps, completely without justification to wonder whether or not Berdiaev, given his fame, has been at least in part responsible for the creation of a negative impression of Russian philosophy. In the exposition of his thought he is aphoristic, repetitive, and internally inconsistent. He also suffers from an unfortunate egocentricity and an at times hubristic self-confidence.[448] However, in spite of this, there is still much in Berdiaev's thinking that is of profound importance and he deals with questions, albeit in his own way, with great insight. It is this insight that has created interest amongst philosophers and theologians. As Lowrie comments:

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[447] Penelope V. Burt, 'Russian Philosophy without Apology', in B. P. Vysheslavtsev, *The Eternal in Russian Philosophy*, translated by Penelope V. Burt (Grand Rapids, 2002), pp. vii-xi (p. vii).

[448] This egocentrism frequently appears in Berdiaev's work, but is most unbridled in his 1947 autobiography. Here we read of a Schopenhauerian genius, misunderstood and unrecognised: 'Я с горечью замечал, что меня плохо понимают, плохо понимают самое главное у меня и, в сущности, плохо знают, что моя мысль очень централизована и целостна. Я много писал о событиях времени, постоянно производил оценку происходящего, но все это, употребляя выражение Ницше, было "несвоевременными размышлениями"...' Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 253.

> Perhaps a secret of Berdyaev's ever-widening contribution to the world's thought was his striking of new fire from human minds.[449]

The themes he writes about should not, therefore, be in any way 'relegated'. There should instead be an effort to re-engage with some of the more challenging and problematic areas of his thinking. The following will be an attempt to capture the central features of his philosophy.

Existential Focus

The centre of Berdiaev's philosophy deals with the problem of the person,[450] and he seeks to deal with philosophical questions through the lens of human existence and experience. As he writes in an early work, *Smysl tvorchestva* (1916):

> Антропология или, точнее, антропологическое сознание предшествует не только онтологии и космологии, но и гносеологии, и самой философии познания, предшествует всякой философии, всякому познанию.[451]

Given this focus, Berdiaev's philosophy has been described as both 'existentialist'[452] and 'personalist'[453] and some commentators call it both.[454] Berdiaev similarly used both terms. Although the term 'personalism' captures the fact that his philosophy sits

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[449] Donald A. Lowrie, *Rebellious Prophet: A Life of Nicolai Berdyaev* (London, 1960), p. 287.
[450] Although inconsistent with terminology, Berdiaev uses the word 'chelovek' most regularly when dealing with the person. He also uses the word 'lichnost'', but this is less frequent.
[451] Nikolai Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva. Opyt opravdaniia cheloveka* (1916), in N. A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobody. Smysl tvorchestva* (Moscow, 1989), pp. 251-580, (p. 293). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva*.)
[452] Amongst others, see: Wernham, *Two Russian Thinkers*, p. 30; Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope*, p. 121; Davy, *Nicolas Berdyaev*, p. 110.
[453] See, for example: Clarke, *Introduction to Berdyaev*, p. 79; E. V. Dvoretskaia, 'Stanovlenie "my" v zapadnoi i russkoi personalisticheskoi filosofii: Levinas i Berdiaev', in E. M. Anan'eva et al., *Russkaia i evropeiskaia filosofiia: puti skhozhdeniia. Materialy nauchnoi konferentsii* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp. 93-98.
[454] A. L. Dobrokhotov, 'Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev', in A. L. Dobrokhotov et al., *Russkie filosofy. Konets XIX – seredina XX veka* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 48-55.

in a Christian tradition,[455] and also that it should not be connected too closely with his more distinguished existentialist contemporaries such as Heidegger, Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), or even Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), his thinking demonstrates closer similarity to this more modern existentialist tradition which interprets the world through a person's immediate experience. Personalism should thus in this context be read as a rebranding of existentialism, although evidently their definitions are quite similar.

There is ample material to support this. Tillich, a distinguished contemporary of Berdiaev, remarked broadly on the existentialist tradition:

> They [existentialists] consequently take their place with all those who have regarded man's "immediate experience" as revealing more completely the nature and traits of Reality than man's cognitive experience. The philosophy of "Existence" is hence one version of that widespread appeal to immediate experience which has been so marked a feature of recent thought.[456]

Berdiaev fits such a definition of existentialism. Indeed, as an old man looking back on his life, he proclaimed himself such:

> Я всегда был экзистенциальным философом, а за это на меня нападали.[457]

Wernham also concluded that Berdiaev had most in common with the existentialist tradition, despite his unorthodox approach:

> There is nevertheless, between the thought of Berdyaev and the existentialists, in

[455] Personalism, the placing of the person in the centre of analysis and rejection of abstraction, is a broad category of thought with a long history, both secular and religious. Berkeley, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Anicius Boethius (480-524), Augustine, and Gregory of Nyssa all offered Christian interpretations of personalism. See L. E. Loemker, 'Personalism as a Philosophy of Religion', *The Personalist Forum*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1993), pp. 19-33.
[456] *Paul Tillich, 'Existential Philosophy', Journal of the History of Ideas,* vol. 5, no. 1 (1944), pp. 44-70 (p. 45).
[457] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 116.

> addition to a common anthropocentrism, a similarity of categorical framework which deserves to be noticed, even although, […] the content which he gives to the common terms derives from his own peculiar source.[458]

Berdiaev can therefore be referred to as an 'existentialist' – albeit of a highly individual type.

Interior-exterior

Taking the starting point of the person, Berdiaev investigates his nature, foundations and experience, looking variously at human relationships with God, with other people, with the world and with oneself. In this investigation he makes a key division between 'interior' (*vnutrennii*) and 'exterior' (*vneshnii*):

> Мой внутренний духовный опыт не есть объект. Дух никогда не есть объект, существование существующего не есть никогда объект.[459]

Internal qualities thus relate to the *subject*, and also to the intuitive, transcendent and metaphysical or noumenal, whilst external qualities concern the *object*, and therefore the immanent and the material. As the above suggests, the two are somewhat set against one another: the internal spirit is *never* an external object. In this connection mystical thinking – specifically reminiscent of Meister Ekhart and Jakob Boehme, but also influenced by Plotinus and early Christian thinking – guided some of Berdiaev's existentialism.

Across his work Berdiaev searches for ways to demonstrate the primacy of the metaphysical or noumenal interior over the phenomenological or material exterior.

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[458] Wernham, *Two Russian Thinkers*, p. 30.
[459] Nikolai Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*. *(Tvorchestvo i ob"ektivatsiia)* (Paris, 1947), p. 60. (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*).

As Calian comments, Kant probably informed at least part of this connection between the noumenal and mystical:

> Thus the intuitive insights of mysticism provided Berdyaev with the contents of the spiritual or real world he desired, supported as he already was by the Kantian demarcation of the noumenal world philosophically.[460]

The interior is thus broadly the domain of truth – one is tempted to use the term 'authenticity' to put Berdiaev in line with other existentialists,[461] although he does not term it this way – whereas the exterior is that of falsehood.

Freedom and Creativity

As well as separating internal from external, Berdiaev also identifies the deepest foundation of human ontology in *uncreated freedom*. This freedom exists alongside a second ontological foundation of *divine nature*, although uncreated freedom plays a more important role in Berdiaev's ontology. Indeed, it is amongst his central ontological assumptions that man is fundamentally free – free from all influence, from all pressure, from all determination:

> Нужно выбирать: или примат бытия над свободой, или примат свободы над бытием.[462]

Freedom is a key aspect of the 'internal', and the binary nature of the above statement suggests how freedom follows a similar opposition: internal-*free* is set

[460] Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope*, p. 14.
[461] Styczyński, for example, is clearly inclined to use this nomenclature. See Marek Styczyński, 'Berdjaev: authentic existence or a negative sociology', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (2010), pp. 81-91.
[462] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 98.

against the external-*determined*.[463] As it is uncreated, freedom is conceptualised as absolute, and it is therefore controversially located *outside* God – it is outside all determination, be that divine or human. The power of freedom in Berdiaev's thought has previously been interpreted as quite Nietzschean, as it invests remarkable potential in man as freedom's bearer.[464] In *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (1927-28), he explains:

> Свобода не сотворена, потому что она не есть природа, свобода предшествует миру, она вкоренена в изначальное ничто. Бог всесилен над бытием, но не над ничто, но не над свободой.[465]

Freedom is thus tied to the original *nothing*, that which came before being. God participates in this freedom, and, in the act of creation, passes it on to man.

Man's freedom allows him to create, and in this creative capacity we also see the second aspect of man's ontology, his divine nature:

> Творчество есть дело богоподобной свободы человека, раскрытие в нем образа Творца.[466]

Man's creativity therefore shows that he possesses freedom, but also that he is made by and in the image of God. God wants man through free creativity to complete the creation that He began, and man's ability to do this is testament to God's image within him. However, the word *free* still remains – man does not have to do any of this. Conflict is thus possible between man's freedom and the divine will, as he is free not to do what God wants:

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[463] Berdiaev usually takes the absence of freedom to mean determinism.
[464] See N. K. Bonetskaia, 'Apofeoz tvorchestva (N. Berdiaev i F. Nitsshe)', *Voprosy filosofii,* no. 4 (2009), pp. 85-106.
[465] N. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha. Problematika i apologia khristianstva* (1927-1928), in N.A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 13-228 (p. 112). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha*).
[466] Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva*, p. 329.

> Но и для философствующего разума ясно, что насильственное добро, насильственная прикованность к Богу не имела бы никакой ценности, что существо, лишенное свободы избрания, свободы отпадения, не было бы личностью.[467]

Man is not coerced into good and is free to fall from God. Therefore although God is present in interior freedom, so too is something outside God over which He has no control. This freedom to fall allows Berdiaev to arrive at one of his most significant concepts, the idea of objectification.

Objectification

As well as dealing with the nature of the person, Berdiaev attempts to apprehend the 'exterior', the world that surrounds the person. He addresses this chiefly through the concept of *objectification*:

> Углубление моего философского познания привело меня к идее *объективации*, которую я считаю для себя основной и которую обыкновенно плохо понимают.[468]

Although Melikh has recently suggested that this concept is an idea borrowed from Schopenhauer,[469] objectification is Berdiaev's description of the process whereby the originally metaphysical, existential world becomes object or material. The crux of his argument is that objectified, exterior reality is not real in the way that existential, interior life is real. It is secondary, not primary. He argues that objectification is the creation of the subject, that it is a particular condition achieved through human agency:

> Объективация же совершается субъектом и обозначает его направленность и его

[467] Ibid., pp. 138-39.
[468] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 331.
[469] Iu. Melikh, 'Sushchee lichnosti i lichnostnost' edinosushchego', p. 150.

> состояние. Нет ничего ошибочнее смешения объективности с реальностью.[470]

In such a way he seeks to undermine the basis of empirical epistemology, ontology and also the general conclusions of positivism which, he finds, are guilty of mistaking the objectified world for reality.

Berdiaev's conception of the objectified world is negative. He addresses it under pejorative epithets such as external, determined or material. He attaches to it qualities which he holds to be inimical to freedom. Berdiaev almost suggests an antipathy towards the external world, as is recalled in an oft quoted remark from *Samopoznanie*:

> Я не могу помнить первого моего крика, вызванного встречей с чуждым мне миром. Но я твердо знаю, что я изначально чувствовал себя попавшим в чуждый мне мир, одинаково чувствовал это и в первый день моей жизни и в нынешний ее день.[471]

A significant element of Berdiaev's notion of the objectified world relates to how he understands it to be the result of Original Sin, man's misuse of his freedom. The objectified world is directly connected to man's fall and his current fallen nature:

> Мир объективации есть мир падший, мир заколдованный, мир явлений, а не существующих существ. Объективация есть отчуждение и разобщение.[472]

Objectification therefore relates to a number of concerns in Berdiaev's thinking – it plays a role in the mystical, existential and Christian aspects of his philosophy.

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[470] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 56.
[471] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 11.
[472] N.A. Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov. Opyt filosofii odinochestva i obshcheniia* (1934), in N.A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 230-316 (p. 253). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*).

In keeping with the importance of freedom in his thought, Berdiaev's conclusions about objectification are intended to be *anti-deterministic*: he suggests that the interior, the existential 'spirit' is not in any way determined by the natural, objectified world:

> ...дух не детерминирован природным миром и есть прорыв в нем.[473]

However, with the notion of the objectified, fallen nature of the material world and the suggestion of the interior's independence from it, Berdiaev begins to posit a dualism in which the external world, although being a product of metaphysical, internal activity, is separate from and set against the original internal world. This tension is a source of significant interest for further examination. By placing emphasis on the superiority of the existential over the external world, Berdiaev also shows an affinity with the idealist philosophical systems of Fichte, Hegel and Schopenhauer. They all in their own way suggested the primacy of the metaphysical over the material or, in Berdiaev's lexicon, the existential and internal over the objectified and external.

Paradox

The emergent issue of the more exact relationship between interior and exterior, existential and objectified, highlights a key question of paradox. Berdiaev was keen to describe his thought as 'contradictory' or 'paradoxical', and sometimes used this notion to cover up methodological or philosophical shortcomings:

> В моей философии есть противоречия, которые вызываются самым ее

[473] N. Berdiaev, *Dukh i real'nost'. Osnovy bogochelovecheskoi dukhovnosti* (1937), in N.A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 363-461 (p. 379). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Dukh i real'nost'*).

> существом и которые не могут и не должны быть устранены.[474]

However, an overreliance on the notion of contradiction and paradox does not preclude the possibility that Berdiaev also succeeded in describing some genuine paradoxes. As initial exploration has suggested, in his thought man occupies two worlds which are quite opposed to one another: one is external, the other internal. A key issue concerns how far the external and internal can be occupied simultaneously and thereby be connected. Examination of this question frequently tends towards paradox: the strength with which Berdiaev describes the conditions of both the existential and the objectified domains makes any resolution – or even relationship – between them seem impossible. This will be particularly evident with the issue of time: Berdiaev posits an internal time and an external time, which, despite their conflicting properties, are still presented as connected. The consequences of this paradoxical relation, detectable in varying intensities, between interior and exterior will play out across Berdiaev's work, and will help guide our analysis.

Jakob Boehme

Boehme (1575-1624) deserves special mention when introducing Berdiaev's thought. As he comments:

> Были годы, когда для меня приобрел особое значение Я. Беме, которого я очень полюбил, много читал и о котором потом написал несколько этюдов.[475]

Boehme's name appears in the majority of Berdiaev's books, and he frequently cites him at length. Indeed, if Berdiaev is normally quite opaque about which thinkers influenced him, with Boehme he is uncharacteristically direct. Boehme's influence over Berdiaev was broad and informed many aspects of his Christian mysticism and

[474] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 331.
[475] Ibid., p. 113.

his ontology. Boehme's idea that found particular resonance with Berdiaev was that of the *Ungrund*, which, similarly to Eckhart's *Gottheit*, was conceived of as a great abyss of nothingness and freedom that existed before being and from which everything issues. Of this *Ungrund*, and its importance to his personal philosophy, Berdiaev writes:

> Противоречивый, страдальческий, огненно-трагический характер мировой жизни определяется тем, что до бытия, глубже бытия лежит Ungurnd' [sic.], бездонность, иррациональная тайна, первичная свобода, из бытия невыводимая.[476]

This *Ungrund* is the key *potential* which lies at the root of all things, and it is from this that objects are generated, as Berdiaev explains:

> Таким образом, Ungurnd [sic.] есть ничто, безосновное око вечности и, вместе с тем, воля, безосновная, бездонная, недетерминированная воля. Но это – ничто, которое есть «ein Hunger zum Etwas». Вместе с тем, Ungurnd [sic.] есть свобода. В тьме Ungurnd'a [sic.] возгорается огонь, и это есть свобода, – свобода меоническая, потенциальная. По Беме, свобода противоположна природе, но природе, но природа произошла от свободы. Свобода подобна ничто, но от нее происходит что-то. Голод свободы, безосновной воли к чему-то должен быть насыщен.[477]

Boehme's notion of the *Ungrund*, then, propagated the dualist tendency in Berdiaev's thought, as it clearly tended towards the internal and away from the external. For Berdiaev everything that is grounded in this freedom is of the upper order, and everything that it divorced from it – whether or not existing as a result of it – is of the lower order. As Korol'kova explains, Boehme's thinking promoted a negative conception of the material, created world:

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[476] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 99. [The misspelling of *Ungrund* as 'Ungurnd' is consistent in this publication; however, in all other texts it is spelt correctly as *Ungrund*]
[477] Ibid., p. 99.

> Беме объясняет существование зла с помощью идеи о падении духа в материю, самого прекрасного духа – Люцифера. Люцифер – дух природы и телесности…[478]

This sense of alienation and freedom from the material world helps to explain Berdiaev's proclivity towards dualism: from the pure potential of uncreated freedom or the *Ungrund* things have to fall into the external and material. Boehme therefore informed some of the deepest distinctions in Berdiaev's thought, particularly those surrounding internal and external, free and unfree, created and uncreated.

Time and History in Berdiaev's thinking

The theme of time is much more pronounced and explicit in Berdiaev's thought than it had been in Bulgakov's. He asserts its synchronic pervasiveness in his autobiography:

> Победа над смертоносным временем всегда была основным мотивом моей жизни.[479]

His engagement with history is also substantial, and it too plays an important role in his philosophy. The titles of many of his books reflect this, suggesting organising themes more concerned with temporal and historical problems – including *Smysl istorii* (1922); *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924); *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire* (1934); and *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (1947). A broader body of literature thus exists to draw on than was available with Bulgakov.

As is suggested by the inverted order of time and history in the title of this chapter, a key idea we will be advancing is that while Bulgakov argues that history is

[478] E. A. Korol'kova, 'Ia. Beme i russkaia sofiologicheskaia mysl'', p.10.
[479] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 6.

primary and time secondary, or rather that he conceived of time historically, Berdiaev argues the direct opposite – namely that time is primary and history secondary, that history is just a form (amongst other forms) of time:

> Но философская проблема истории есть прежде всего проблема времени.[480]

Because it is his primary concern, investigation will therefore begin with an account of Berdiaev's philosophy of time, and move on afterwards to his philosophy of history. A further point of interest is how, despite their different philosophical orientation, Bulgakov and Berdiaev brought many of the same questions into contention regarding time and history. Where Bulgakov 'historicised' certain problems, these same problems – most notably those of freedom and creativity, but, to a lesser extent, also evil – were similarly taken on by Berdiaev and 'temporalised'. The different weight they attached to these problems – Bulgakov tended towards a greater concern with evil, Berdiaev with freedom and creativity – adds an extra dimension to comparison, and further elucidates the contrasting nature of their philosophies.

The Structure of Investigation

Due to our synchronic approach to Berdiaev, the question of structure is more pertinent: there is not the same sense of natural chronology to guide investigation. As with Bulgakov, first an initial exploration of Berdiaev's sense of temporality will provide a context in which to situate his conceptual thought about time and history. Due to the greater significance of time in his philosophy, analysis of his conceptualisation of time will then follow, which constitutes the main section of this

[480] N. Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 55.

chapter. Within this, examination will begin at Berdiaev's most basic separation of time and eternity, where the relationship between external, objectified time – 'time' – and internal, existential time – 'eternity', will be explored. At this stage of investigation the relationship between the two will be characterised as more simplistically dualistic: although the question of paradox exists, it is not as pronounced. The chief chronological development in Berdiaev's thought on time-eternity, the positing of three 'types' of time in 1939, will then be discussed. Discussion here will continue to bear upon the question of dualism, but the third form of time posited, 'existential time', brings the potential for paradox into greater clarity. Following this, analysis will move onto the 'temporalised' problems, specifically creativity and freedom. These describe in greater detail the more practical interaction between internal and external time, and highlight the paradoxical nature of their relationship more fully. As with Bulgakov, then, where the 'historicised' problems demonstrated most clearly his pattern of deterministic thinking, so with Berdiaev examination of these 'temporalised' problems will demonstrate the dualistic paradox that underlies his conceptualisation of time. Following the question of time, there will be a smaller investigation of Berdiaev's conceptualisation of history, the final section of this chapter, which will reveal certain elements of this aspect of his thought which complement his work on time.

2. Temporality

> Стало банальным говорить, что мы живем в эпоху исторического кризиса, что кончается целая эпоха и начинается новая, еще не имеющая имени.
>
> *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire,* 1934.[481]

Temporality as crisis

The sense of *temporality as crisis* was a prevalent theme in Berdiaev's work as it was in Bulgakov's. This similarity is to be expected: they lived through the same period of history and lived in many of the same places at the same times. Much of what was said about Bulgakov's experience of temporality as crisis can therefore be applied to Berdiaev, who maintained:

> Мне пришлось жить в эпоху катастрофическую и для моей родины и для всего мира.[482]

A sense of crisis thus informed Berdiaev's perspective on the world. It will be noted later that, specifically in his formulations on the problem of history, crisis perhaps took a more formative conceptual role in Berdiaev's thought than in Bulgakov's. In terms of our exploration of Berdiaev's experience of time, we do not, however, want to repeat what was said about Bulgakov. It is suffice to say that the same historical, social, intellectual and religious issues figured significantly in Berdiaev's perception of temporality as crisis. The idea of a Kairos-like moment similarly persists. Two new aspects Berdiaev's perception of temporality as crisis should instead be explored, as they demonstrate a diversification on the theme. These are the innovation of an *epochal* appreciation of crisis, and work on the relationship between the machine

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[481] N. Berdiaev, *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire*. *K ponimaniiu nashei epokhi* (1934), in N.A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 317-62 (p. 318). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Sud'ba cheloveka*).

[482] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 7.

and time. A series of three texts, *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924), *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire* (1934), and *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria* (1949), constitute a trio of commentaries on the nature and condition of the present, and these will be of particular use here. A passage in *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931) also offers a notably vivid account of Berdiaev's experience of time.

Intensification of crisis: the 'epoch' of crises

A prevalent feature of Berdiaev's thinking in general is his intensity. He was predisposed towards hyperbole and this resonates throughout his work. For a man of heightened sensitivity, as Berdiaev appeared to have been,[483] living through an epoch of cataclysmic upheavals was traumatic, and consequently a sense of crisis penetrated deeply into his thinking and his experience of time. Augustyn notes:

> It is hardly surprising that in the face of the catastrophe that affected Russia and Europe as a whole […] Berdjaev is prone to use the emphatic style, which was generally characteristic of his writing. […] The philosopher uses a very simple image: the order, the Cosmos, is endangered by a destructive force, the approaching Chaos.[484]

This meant that whilst Bulgakov sought to rationalise or normalise crisis in a deterministic system, Berdiaev sought greater meaning in crisis itself, he allowed it to define his experience of the present in a more substantive way. In *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire*, discussing the aftermath of the First World War, he writes:

> Захлестнутый хаосом истории, окруженный бушующимими иррациональными силами, пораженный историческим фатумом – человек соглашается перейти в

[483] He writes: '[Мое эсхатологическое чувство] связано, вероятно, [...] с моей крайней нервностью, со склонностью к беспокойсту […] с моим нетерпением, которое есть моя слабость.' Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, pp. 336-37.
[484] Leszek Augustyn, 'Utopia and history. Some remarks about Nikolai Berdjaev's struggle with history', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (2010), pp. 71-79 (p. 72).

> сферу нечеловеческого существования, он выталкивается из человеческого существования. Война была катастрофическим моментом в обнаружении того хаоса, который шевелился под лживой капиталистической цивилизацией.[485]

The visceral character of this description is striking. Capitalism, it seems from the above, has come to create a world in which all is not well, in which chaos overflows and destroys mankind. There is a sense that history has long been pregnant with the bedlam that has now erupted, that *now* is the era of the revelation of crisis. This sense of an epoch of crisis was hit upon ten years previously, in *Novoe srednevekov'e*, where Berdiaev had claimed, in a slightly more narrative mode, that the current epoch of 'new history' is coming to an end, that the 'day' is changing into 'night'. His reflection on the present in this narrative was developed according to the idea that any such epochal shift is by its very nature catastrophic:

> День истории перед сменой ночью всегда кончается великими потрясениями и катастрофами, он не уходит мирно.[486]

Berdiaev therefore perceives his era to have been appointed to be one of crisis. It is the end of one period and the beginning of another, and, he believes, in such transitory periods crisis will always pervade:

> Молодежь всего мира ищет нового порядка, происходит мировая революция. Но не чувствуется радости рождения новой жизни. Тень легла на мир. Начался цикл исторических и космических катастроф и обвалов.[487]

Crisis therefore defines Berdiaev's experience of the present even more so than it does for Bulgakov. Bulgakov certainly posited a sense of temporality as crisis, but, through the determinism of his historical thinking was able to find perhaps greater comfort in a durable, robust Orthodox faith and a given end to history. Berdiaev,

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[485] Berdiaev, *Sud'ba cheloveka*, p. 322.
[486] N. Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e*, p. 225.
[487] Berdiaev, *Sud'ba cheloveka*, p. 323.

however, found no such happiness, and continued to be disturbed by the chaos and collapse that he saw around himself. Crisis thus becomes the defining feature of the present for Berdiaev in a more menacing way than it did for Bulgakov.

The advent of the machine and temporality

A distinctive aspect of Berdiaev's sense of temporality as crisis relates to his description of a feature of modernity, the advent of the machine. He was very aware of how industrial development was reshaping the modern world, and this puts him amongst the scores of other Russian thinkers, writers and artists who also engaged with this theme.[488] As has already been outlined, Berdiaev was sensitive to the division between internal and external and their attached epithets. Within this framework technological development was perceived as the epitome of externalisation and therefore was the source of significant concern. The machine, as well as being a great creative triumph of mankind, was seen to be mechanising life, and was thus a particularly stark reflection of mankind's ability to produce exterior, inhuman things. Although there is a degree of ambivalence here reminiscent of Berman's claim concerning man's paradoxical relationship with modernity,[489] Berdiaev, like Bulgakov, tends to place greater impetus on the negative aspects of this development:

> Техника не только свидетельствует о силе и победе человека, не только освобождает его, но также ослабляет и порабощает человека, она механизирует

[488] For an overview of the various developments in art in early twentieth century Russia and how they related to modernity and modern urban life, see: Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863-1922,* Revised edition (London, 1986), pp. 65-276. For a discussion of how industrial experience and modern life manifested itself in writing and poetry, see Mark Steinberg, *Proletarian Imagination: Self, Modernity, and the Sacred in Russia, 1910-1925* (Ithaca, 2002).

[489] 'All forms of modernist art and thought have a dual character: they are at once expressions of and protests against the process of modernisation.' Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, p. 235.

> человеческую жизнь и накладывает на человек образ и подобие машины.[490]

Berdiaev understands that the *mechanisation* of human life, its subjection to the form of the machine, implies the loss of freedom. More than this, the advent of the machine was also full of symbolism: it was the harbinger of a new reality, a new world epoch in which previously unknown powers were rising:

> Но вот техника на вершине своей ставит человека перед совсем иной космической действительностью, совсем уже не связанной с землей, она переносит его в междупланетные пространства, она окружает человека новыми, ранее неведомыми энергиями, действие которых еще не изучено.[491]

Temporality comes into play due to the fact that in the head-spinning new reality of the machine, Berdiaev felt that the movement of life, the tempo of life itself had changed:

> Головокружительные успехи техники в XIX и XX веках обозначают самую большую революцию в истории человечества, более глубокую, чем все революции политические, радикальное изменение всего ритма человеческой жизни, отрыв от природного, космического ритма и возникновение нового, определяемого машинами ритма.[492]

The use of 'rhythm' emphasises the temporal aspect of the change Berdiaev detected in the modern world. Time, he felt, was beginning to move according to some new metre. A defining feature of this changed time, this new relationship between man and time, was the fact that time was beginning to move *faster*:

> Машина изменяет отношение человека к времени. Время ускоряется.[493]

Time is thus *speeding up*. This adds to the cataclysmic feel of the current epoch: it

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[490] N. Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka.* p. 197.
[491] Ibid., p. 198.
[492] Ibid., p. 197.
[493] Ibid., p. 197.

creates the impression that as time is accelerating, control is being lost and humanity is heading faster and faster towards some unknown horizon. His perception of technology thus became eschatological:

> Техника имеет свою эсхатологию, обратную христианской, – завоевание мира и организацию жизни без Бога и без духовного перерождения человека.[494]

Machine-time, the time of technology in this way becomes a distinct threat to mankind. It threatens to lever apart man from God, to put things out of kilter and upset the human-divine balance. It also offers a 'reverse' eschatology and sets up the possibility for a 'bad' end to the world process. This idea will be discussed in greater detail later.

This experience of accelerating, crisis time persists throughout the rest of Berdiaev's life. *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria* (published posthumously in 1949) continues along the same theme:

> Происходит страшное ускорение времени, быстрота, за которой человек не может угнаться. Ни одно мгновение не самоцено, оно есть лишь средство для последующего мгновения.[495]

The idea of a 'terrible' quickening of time is marked, and adds significantly to his broader sense of temporality as crisis. It also suggests another important theme – the destruction of the present for the sake of the future – which will figure in his broader conceptualisation of time.

Conclusions

Berdiaev's perception of temporality as crisis consists in a heightened and epochal sense of crisis, paired with a pronounced sense of temporal acceleration.

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[494] Ibid., p. 199.
[495] N. Berdiaev, *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria* (1949), in N. A. Berdiaev, *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 287-356 (p. 303). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Tsarstvo dukha i tsarstvo kesaria*).

This perception of temporality as crisis will be manifested across his philosophy, as will be seen later when the dual possibilities of the end of history are discussed. For Berdiaev, then, time is experienced in a critical mode just as it was for Bulgakov: both saw historical, epochal crisis and both found fault in the direction of the modern world. Their experience of time was imbued with apocalyptic tension and expectation. It remains to be seen how, in accord with the ideas brought up earlier by Koselleck and McKeon, this sense of temporality as crisis will be differently employed in conceptual thought about time and history.

3. Berdiaev's Philosophy of Time

Проблему времени я считаю основной проблемой философии, особенно философии экзистенциальной.
Samopoznanie, 1947.[496]

Overview

Berdiaev, as an existentialist, had a more overt interest in the problem of time than Bulgakov. While Bulgakov's philosophy was influenced more by structural concepts, Berdiaev's was motivated by reflection on the direct experience of the person and this inevitably drew him towards the question of time. Indeed, time has assumed pride of place in other existential philosophies. Heidegger, for example, states in his ground-breaking *Sein und Zeit* (1927):

> Time must be brought to light – and genuinely conceived – as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it. In order for us to discern this, *time* needs to be *explicated primordially as the horizon for the understanding of Being…*[497]

Berdiaev's focus on time demonstrates both his continuities with and deviations from the existentialist tradition. As well as positing a similarity to Heidegger, through his work on time he was also able to bring his thinking into line with a diverse range of other, non-existentialist thinkers, the most significant among them belonging to Neoplatonic, Mystic and Christian traditions.

Berdiaev's thinking about time is very broad. Reference to this philosophical problem can be found amongst his first and his last works. In *Filosofiia svobody* (1911), his first full book, he notes:

> Грехопадение совершилось предвечно и предмирно, и из него родилось время –

[496] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 42.
[497] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 39.

> дитя греха и данный мир – результат греховности.[498]

Likewise, in *Ekzistentsial'naia dialektika bozhestvennogo i chelovecheskogo*, published on the eve of his death in 1947, he writes:

> Человек наследует вечность в своей человечности, он призван к жизни в Боге, он идет от вечности, через время, к вечности.[499]

Berdiaev discusses time over a period of almost half a century. Although it would be naïve to expect his philosophy of time to fit into a simple schema, it will nonetheless be characterised by its wholeness. This work on time will suffer from all the shortcomings of his philosophy more broadly. Before moving on to the main analysis, some introductory points should to be made.

The comparative element: time and history; history and time

Comparison between Berdiaev and Bulgakov relies on their contrasting engagement with similar problems: both understand that a relationship exists between time and history, but organise the relationship differently. Within this discussion, similar problems – creativity, freedom, evil – come into contention but have different weight attached to them. As was expounded above, in terms of the first of these comparisons, opposed to the history-time primacy suggested by Bulgakov, Berdiaev suggests the primacy of time over history. The philosophical groundwork that makes this possible needs to be clarified so that the reader can understand more clearly the nature of what is a sometimes confusing problem.

Primarily, Berdiaev understands history as one of the layers of objectification:

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[498] Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobody*, p. 129.

[499] N. Berdiaev, *Ekzistentsial'naia dialektika bozhestvennogo i chelovecheskogo,* (1947), in N. A. Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka. Opyt paradoksal'noi etiki* (Moscow, 1993) pp. 253-357 (p. 320). First published in French under N. Berdiaeff, *Dialectique existentielle du divin et de l'humain* (Paris, 1947). (Hereafter Berdiaev, *Ekzistentsial'naia dialektika bozhestvennogo i chelovecheskogo*).

it is a condition of the present fallen state of the world and the process whereby we move within (and eventually out of) our current condition:

> В истории объективирует человек свое творчество. Дух в истории есть объективный дух […] История в своей объективации совершенно равнодушно к человеческой личности, он еще более жестока к ней, чем природа, и она никогда не признает человеческой личности верховной ценностью, ибо такое признание означало бы срыв и конец истории.[500]

History is therefore essentially an intermediary stage in the grander dynamic of the movement from time to eternity (discussed below); it is a part of objectification and does not have greater existential meaning than this allows.

Within the assertion, then, that the question of history is first the question of time is the assumption that time is something deeper than history. However, this is not to say that history is completely disregarded: in its secondary capacity it is still of interest. History's significance is accepted, as long as this acceptance is qualified by the assertion that eternity – the existential, metaphysical aspect of time – stands higher:

> Нужно принять историю, принять культуру, принять и этот ужасный, мучительный, падший мир. Но не объективации принадлежит последнее слово, последнее слово звучит из иного порядка бытия. И мир объектиный угаснет, угаснет в вечности, в вечности, обогащенной пережитой трагедией.[501]

Analysis will therefore reflect this assumption that history is of less consequence than time by devoting much more attention to the latter.

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[500] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 315.
[501] Ibid., p. 316.

Chronological developments

Although chronological development in Berdiaev's thought is rarely pronounced, a shift is evident. Around 1931-34, with texts such as *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934), Berdiaev began to engage with the problem of time more regularly. Earlier work had been more concerned with the problem of history, and although the text *Smysl istorii* (1922) deals with the problem of time, conclusions were in part complicated by their entanglement with historical concerns. This is not to say that at any point the time-history primacy had been questioned: indeed, in this work he still writes:

> Основным вопросом, основной посылкой всякой философии истории является, несомненно, вопрос о значении времени, о природе времени, потому что история есть процесс во времени, временное совершение, движение во времени.[502]

However, in line with the sort of distinctions made by Zen'kovskii and Poltoratskii referred to above, we can still see how a 'historiosophic' phase in Berdiaev's thought wanes after *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924), and how the questions of time and eschatology assume greater importance.

Text selection

As has already been mentioned, there is a number of key passages on time that will be drawn on most heavily. These sometimes develop from a thematic focus in a given text, or sometimes Berdiaev conveniently just decided to put a section on time in a given work. He also had a habit of ending a book with an eschatological chapter, which means relevant material frequently crops up in the terminal pages of many of his works. For our purposes the following texts contain passages of

[502] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 66.

particular importance: *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931), dealing with issues surrounding time and creativity; *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934), where we see the first really potent engagement with the problem of time, and also the text which Berdiaev identifies in *Samopoznanie* as being his best work on time;[503] *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka* (1939), where Berdiaev first properly introduces his idea of the three different forms of time; *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (written 1941, published 1947), where preceding ideas about time are expanded and the question of time and newness is discussed; and also *Samopoznanie* (1947), where he presents an overview of his opinions on time. There is some significant engagement with time in *Smysl istorii* (1922), but much of this thinking is repeated in fuller form in these later texts. The relevant aspects of this earlier text will be noted as we move through Berdiaev's philosophy of time.

Influences on Berdiaev's thought about time

In the Introduction to this thesis a number of philosophies of time were outlined and those introductions need not be repeated, as comparison can be drawn where significant similarity arises. Here we need only note that Plotinus, St. Augustine, Eckhart, Bergson and Heidegger have special relevance to Berdiaev's thinking in ways that will be explored in the course of analysis.

[503] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 343.

Time and eternity

Detailed investigation into Berdiaev's philosophy of time will begin at the simplest level, concerning his basic opposition of *time* and *eternity*. This will lay a wider framework in which the more nuanced aspects of his thought can sit. As it is the most fundamental of Berdiaev's ideas about time, issues relating to time-eternity will crop up in all of Berdiaev's texts dealing with the problem of time, and all five relevant texts will thus be used for citation. After looking first at the ways in which Berdiaev conceptualises time and eternity and the nature of their relationship, discussion will then move onto *cosmogony* and *eschatology*. These concepts describe how time began (the passage from eternity to time), and how time will end, (the passage from time back to eternity). In such a way it is intended that the concepts of time and eternity will be described in their fullness.

A distinction between time and eternity is maintained throughout Berdiaev's work. However, in 1939 he develops this distinction by positing three 'types' of time. Here the sense of a divide between external, objectified time and internal, existential time becomes more dominant. Eternity is a part of this and is connected to the existential aspect of time, but becomes in itself slightly less important. A discussion of this development on the three types of time will follow analysis of the more basic concepts of time and eternity.

Concepts

Berdiaev's first intuition about the nature of time is thus the distinction between two basic temporal concepts:

> Все восходит к тайне отношения между временем и вечностью […] Задача, стоящая передо мной, в том, чтобы целостная личность вошла в вечность, а не

> разорванные ее части.[504]

This distinction goes back to ancient Greek philosophy and demonstrates participation in a philosophical tradition that is millennia old. Bulgakov also drew such a distinction, meaning that at a fundamental level both perceived a similar temporal order. As Bulgakov wrote in *Svet nevechernii* (1917):

> Время и вечность соотносительны: время не ощущалось бы в течении своем, не суммировалось бы из отдельных разорванных моментов, если бы этого не совершал сверхвременый *субъект* времени.[505]

As comparison demonstrates – and as we would expect – the unitary force of Bulgakov's philosophy brings time and eternity closer together, whereas they appear more opposed in Berdiaev's dualistic formulation. Berdiaev makes his first proper philosophical exploration of the distinction in *Smysl istorii* (1922), but we will take up his discussion from *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934). Here he repeats many of the ideas presented in *Smysl istorii*, but in a clearer form which is not complicated by simultaneous discussion of history.

Time

In Berdiaev's configuration, time belongs to the objectified world and is therefore itself objectified. Objectified time reflects all the badness, the lack of unity, and the fallen nature of the objectification process that is currently at work:

> Время падшее, время нашего мира есть результат падения, происшедшего внутри существования. Падшее время есть продукт объективации, когда все для всего стало объектом, внеположным, т.е. все стало разорванным, разобщенным и скованным, связанным. Нельзя сказать, что все вещи во времени. Время есть

[504] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 182.
[505] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 176.

> лишь состояние вещей.[506]

According to the above objectified time, like objectification, is something akin to a condition imposed upon the world. It is objective, external, and is also broken apart, disjunct and constrained. It is ‘fallen time’, time which has fallen from eternity:

> Время есть парадокс, и понять его возможно только в его двойственности. Время не реально, время есть суета, отпадение от вечности.[507]

Objectified time, like objectification itself, is not real: it does not offer the true meaning of existence, and is thus not real or existential. Significantly, time is also a ‘paradox’ due to its dualistic nature: there is a fallen side to time, and there is an original, eternal aspect to time. Although the word ‘paradox’ is somewhat incautiously attached here,[508] under closer investigation it will be seen how this duality of time does indeed resonate with a deeper paradox within Berdiaev’s philosophy as a whole.

These quotations highlight a methodological problem surrounding Berdiaev’s use of the word ‘time’: sometimes he uses the word ‘time’ to indicate an external time, sometimes (see below) an internal time. Also, as with his identification of the ‘paradox’ of time, he also sometimes uses the word ‘time’ to describe the interrelation of time and eternity as a whole. Caution should therefore be exercised when approaching Berdiaev’s use of this word, as, depending on context, it takes on different meanings.

Eternity

If ‘time’ is the time of the objectified, external world, ‘eternity’ is the time of the

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[506] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 283.
[507] Ibid., p. 284.
[508] There should be a distinction – duality, *dvoistevennost’*, is not by merit of dual character necessarily paradoxical.

highest metaphysical existence, the existential and the internal. It is aligned with the spirit, rather than the material world:

> Дух хочет вечности. Материя же знает лишь временное. Настоящее достижение есть достижение вечности.[509]

'Eternity' is not simply just a theological idea about God's eternity, [510] it also functions as an internal time, opposite to the external time of the objectified realm. Although it is not initially phrased quite in this way, it is clear through the sorts of epithet that Berdiaev attaches to eternity that it functions as the internal dimension of time. Eternity embodies all the internal values that he holds highest – those of freedom, creativity and novelty:

> Вечность же не может мыслиться нами, как законченность, завершенность в нашем здешнем смысле. Вечность есть вечная новизна, вечный творческий экстаз, растворение бытия в божественной свободе.[511]

He thereby rejects the Platonic notion that eternity is static: rather, it is in constant, creative motion. Eternity, in Berdiaev's reckoning, thus corresponds to all the best values in man, whereas objectified time corresponds to the worst, external characteristics.

Interrelation

As has already emerged, objectified time and eternity fit into a hierarchy in which eternity has primacy over objectified time. It is clearly stated in *Ia i mir*

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[509] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 43.
[510] There has been a lot of theological work about God's eternity, but Berdiaev does not touch on the issues it brings up – they are of a rather different order, being more theological-philosophical than philosophical-theological. For an authoritative discussion of these sorts of problem see Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity', *The Journal of Philosophy,* vol. 78, no. 8 (1981), pp. 429-53. For developments and discussion see Paul Helm, *Eternal God: A Study of God without Time,* Second Edition (Oxford, 2010).
[511] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 150-51.

ob"ektov (1934):

> Время есть как бы выпадение из вечности, и вместе с тем время находится внутри вечности.[512]

Berdiaev clearly intends to avoid a determinist monism in which objectified time is only a form of eternity. In view of this, he explicitly describes objectified time as a collapse of eternity, rather than a medium through which eternity operates:

> Время не есть образ вечности (Платон, Плотин), а распад вечности.[513]

The argument is not watertight, as it could be argued that a collapse of eternity still contains an *image* of eternity. There is also a suggestion of paradox here that will become manifest later. How can objectified time, as something which originated from eternity, be wholly fallen from eternity but still maintain some sort of relation to it? The conspicuous disassociation with Plato and Plotinus, who held that time was a form of eternity, is also notable. Although Berdiaev has little in common with Plato on this issue, his convergence with Plotinus is more substantial: both suggested the metaphysical responsibility of 'Spirit' or man for the creation of time, and both postulated the evanescence of time. Berdiaev's attempt to distance himself from Plotinus is at this juncture thus unconvincing.

Internal-external dualism

As analysis has demonstrated, this distinction between time and eternity takes on a more specific meaning for Berdiaev, extending beyond simple Christian formulations. It has emerged that connected to these two concepts of time and eternity, Berdiaev also intuits a corresponding division between 'external' and 'internal' time, or between objectified and non-objectified time. This helps in some

[512] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 290.
[513] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 179.

way to explain their dualistic and possibly paradoxical relationship: 'time' corresponds to an external time, 'eternity' to an internal time. The notion of an internal time is posited in a potentially confusing assertion which he repeats across a number of works:

> Время в человеке, а не человек во времени.[514]

From what we know already about 'time' as a product of objectification, objectified time should be outside man: it is 'vnepolozhnyi' and opposed to him. This objectified time is synonymous with the objectified, externalised world:

> Мир объективированный есть мир овремененный. И эта овремененность означает также болезнь времени.[515]

Such objectified time could not be 'within' man: Berdiaev in the first quotation must therefore be talking about a different time, an internal time. For the moment, eternity fills this role: as has been mentioned, all the internal, existential elements in Berdiaev's thought – creativity, freedom, novelty – exist in eternity. When Berdiaev argues that time is 'within' man, this thus means that an 'internal' time, or eternity is within man. In contrast, objectified time is external, and is thus of limited value:

> Мне хотелось, чтобы времени больше не было, не было будущего, а была лишь вечность.[516]

Time as a whole, as an interrelation, thus has a profoundly dual aspect. On the one hand it is eternity, it is within man, within it sit creativity, freedom and all the internal things he values as existential. On the other, however, it is opposed to man, it is external, objectified and it should cease. Whether or not this constitutes paradox requires further examination.

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[514] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 322.
[515] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 156.
[516] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 42.

'Bad' and 'Good' time in Smysl istorii

The opposition of a 'time' to an 'eternity' was first suggested in *Smysl istorii* (1922). Here, although Berdiaev frequently presented it in terms of a distinction between 'bad' and 'good' time, it is clearly a nascent formulation of the later internal time-external time division:

> Это ведет к признанию того, что существует как бы два времени – время дурное и время хорошее, время истинное и время не истинное.[517]

Although it should not be over-emphasised, this demonstrates that even when Berdiaev was writing during his so-called 'historiosophic' phase, to use Zen'kovskii's and Poltoratskii's categorisation of Berdiaev's thought, he still perceived a similar basic temporal separation. *Smysl istorii* emphasises the point that much of what Berdiaev intuited, as well as being a distinction between 'time' and 'eternity', was, perhaps more significantly, really a distinction between 'good', internal time, and 'bad', external time. An awareness of this deep division between internal and external modes of existence therefore cut right through his speculations on the nature of time.

The nature of objectified time

Berdiaev fills more pages discussing the time of this world, objectified time, than he does discussing eternity, the internal or existential time. Indeed, eternity is often used more as an opposing, symbolic node to objectified time than as a substantiated, fully explored concept. Berdiaev is thus – at least in general – more concerned with the problem of objectified time, and in so doing uses it to reflect upon his concerns related to the objectified world. We may recall the quotation belying his

[517] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 66.

focus on the objectified, and consequently mortal, aspect of time:

> Победа над смертоносным временам всегда была основным мотивом моей жизни.[518]

A fuller exploration of the more exact nature of this objectified time will highlight with greater precision why Berdiaev was so opposed to objectified time, and through this to objectification more broadly. In so doing it will also clarify further how his temporal dualism works.

Berdiaev is almost exclusively negative in his description of objectified time, and the strength of this consistent negativity is central to the sense of temporal dualism he creates. He picks up on a number of distinct features which he finds exemplify the injurious nature of objectified time. In *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934) he writes:

> Время есть болезнь, болезнь к смерти. И есть смертельная печаль в этой болезни, болезни времени.[519]

This idea that objectified time is a *disease* is profound: it suggests that time is somehow a malformation, something toxic, degenerative to human existence. Inherent in the idea of disease is that it is slowly brings about an end to life, that it will triumph over existence. Elsewhere he also describes objectified time in terms of torment and nightmare:

> Время есть мука и кошмар нашей посюсторонней жизни.[520]

Both descriptions relate to a sense of the hostility of objectified time to humanity, and convey the idea that such time is somehow crippling mankind.

The nature of this disease of objectified time, Berdiaev elaborates further,

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[518] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 6.
[519] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 285.
[520] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 250.

consists in the fact that it lacks fullness, specifically the fullness of the *present*:

> В чем болезнь и смертельная печаль времени? В невозможности пережить полноту и радость настоящего как достижения вечности, в невозможности в этом моменте настоящего, самом даже полноценном и радостном, освободиться от отравы прошлого и будущего, от печали о прошлом и страха будущего.[521]

In objectified time, the present cannot be experienced without a sense of the past and future in pressing upon it. The present cannot be 'liberated' from the past and future and therefore cannot be experienced in its wholeness. This impetus he places upon the importance of the *present* is a key to his wider understanding of the difference between what time should be (internal time) and what time is (objectified time): internal time relates to direct experience, the present moment, however external, objectified time breaks this up and subjects it to an external flow. This recalls significantly the Christian idea of 'Kairos': the present, the elected moment, should be sought after rather than Chronos, the flow of time. This idea of 'fullness' is also a rather Russian element in Berdiaev's thinking, as hugely influential thinkers in the Russian tradition such as Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860) and Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900) had propagated the notion that fullness or wholeness was a central theme for philosophy, specifically in the social and religious sphere.[522] Berdiaev applies this demand for wholeness to the temporal dimension, claiming that it is impossible to feel the fullness of present as a moment of eternity due to the poisonous influence of the past and future.

As is also revealed by the above quotation, Berdiaev's perception of the sick, diseased state of objectified time relates to the distinctions of past and future in

[521] Ibid., p. 286.
[522] This Russian engagement began with the Slavophiles and the concept of *sobornost'*, an almost untranslatable word whose meaning relates to togetherness, unity and wholeness: 'The idea of *sobornost*, therefore, is the idea of society as a whole, the unity of the members being secured not by coercion or by elimination of freedom but rather through brotherly fellowship…' Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 86.

themselves.[523] He argues that it is these elements that emphasise the disease of objectified time, due to the fact that past and future destroy the wholeness of the present, where access to eternity is possible. The condition of past and future thus signifies detachment from eternity:

> Прошлое и будущее, разорванные части больного времени, не имеют преимущества в отнощении к вечности. Священное находится внутри мгновения, приобщенного к вечности, а не в объективированных социальных образованиях прошлого и будущего.[524]

The disease of objectified time, therefore, consists in the way in which the past and future destroy the present. In this reckoning past and future do not exist in the way the present exists:

> Онтологически нет прошлого, как нет и будущего, а есть лишь вечно творимое настоящее.[525]

By continually dragging upon the present, then, the past and future disturb it. This argument about the nature of objectified time had already been made in the earlier *Smysl istorii* (1922), but it is presented in clearer form in the above.[526]

This thinking recalls significantly of Henri Bergson's (1859-1941) ideas about time, with which Berdiaev was well acquainted.[527] Bergson was concerned with the establishment of the *durée*, a multiplicitous, unified duration of time. This sat in contrast to the divided time that was produced by the analytical mind:

> Shall we say, then, that duration has unity? Doubtless, a continuity of elements which prolong themselves into one another participates in unity as much as in multiplicity; but

[523] It can be suggested that the distinction of 'present' is also an aspect of objectified time. Although Berdiaev argues that only in the present is access to eternity possible, it can be assumed that if the past and future did not exist, neither would the present exist in the way we currently understand it.
[524] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 287.
[525] Ibid., p. 287.
[526] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, pp. 71-3.
[527] 'И не случайно два наиболее значительных философа современной Европы – Бергсон и Гейдеггер – проблему времени поставили в центре своей философии.' (Ibid., p. 283).

> this moving, changing, coloured, living unity has hardly anything in common with the abstract, motionless and empty unity which the concept of pure unity circumscribes.[528]

Time for Bergson should be whole and in unity, it should not be abstract and divided through analysis. Although at this broad level they are similar, such a similarity with Bergson should not, however, be overplayed. Berdiaev demonstrated a number of key differences to Bergson as well, as Motroshilova contends:

> Бергсон и Хайдеггер, с одной стороны, помогают Бердяеву таким образом осмыслить время; с другой стороны, они, по мнению Бердяева, «недостаточно видят» двойственность времени.[529]

Here Motroshilova is referencing a section from *Ia i mir ob"ektov,* in which Berdiaev contends that neither Bergson nor Heidegger sufficiently grasp the dual nature or paradox of time. Instead he argues that Augustine is closer (although still wide of the mark) to comprehending this, as he places greater importance on the role of the subject in constructing the wholeness of the present.[530] Comparison with Bergson, however, is nonetheless still informative.

A similar category of concern can be identified in another contemporaneous philosopher, McTaggart (1866-1925). Perhaps the most important thinker on time in the twentieth century – but of whom Berdiaev remained unfortunately ignorant – McTaggart wrote about how notions of past, present and future problematise any understanding of time. He argued that time, understood on the basis of past, present and future, was *unreal*:

> I believe, however, that this would be a mistake, and that the distinction of past, present and future is as *essential* to time as the distinction of earlier and later, while in a certain sense, as we shall see, it may be regarded as more *fundamental* than the distinction of

[528] Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* pp. 19-20.
[529] Motroshilova, *Mysliteli Rossii i filosofiia zapada*, p. 256.
[530] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 284.

> earlier and later. And it is because the distinctions of past, present and future seem to me to be essential for time, that I regard time as unreal.[531]

Although the way Berdiaev describes time is different, he still evinces a sensitivity comparable to McTaggart's which suggests that the current distinctions of past, present and future are somehow problematic.

For Berdiaev, then, only the present possesses ontological value, but this is lost when it is broken up and dragged apart by the past and future:

> Время распадается на прошлое, настоящее и будущее. Но прошлого уже нет, будущего еще нет, а настоящее распадается на прошлое и будущее и неуловимо.[532]

Objectified time is thus broken. It makes access to eternity, the realm of internal time, through the present impossible, and will eventually bring death to man. In this respect it is symptomatic of the 'externalised' condition of the objectified world. It is hostile to man and determines his existence.

Having clarified the concepts of 'time' and 'eternity' in Berdiaev's thinking, their interrelation and character, we can now move onto the ways in which they flow into each other at their initial and terminal points.

The beginning and the end: cosmogony and eschatology

For Berdiaev, as for Bulgakov, a concern with the relationship between time and eternity led to thinking about the process whereby the transition from time to eternity is made. We do not, however, see this category of problem – or at least this problem phrased in such a way – with other modern philosophers for whom time was

[531] McTaggart, 'The Unreality of Time', p. 22.
[532] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 284.

also important, such as Heidegger, Bergson, or McTaggart. When dealing with this problem, Berdiaev in the main keeps in line with the Christian salvation myth which describes a fall from eternity to time, and then, after a worldly process, a movement back to eternity. By placing it within this Christian narrative structure, Berdiaev slightly historicised his concept of time:

> Но, вместе с тем, христиансвто дает смысл времени, истории во времени. История во времени есть путь человека к вечности, в ней накапливается обогащающий опыт человека. Но совершенно невозможно мыслить ни творения мира во времени, ни конца мира во времени. В объективированном времени нет ни начала, ни конца, а лишь бесконечная середина. Начало и конец – в экзистенциальном времени.[533]

Within this Christian structure, the notions of beginning and end are seen as particularly important.

The beginning and end, as the original boundaries of time and eternity, help establish the character of the relationship and transition between time and eternity. They are approached under the concepts of *cosmogony* and *eschatology*. Despite their relevance to historical concerns, Berdiaev's claims regarding the creation and end of specifically objectified time are also integral to his conception of the nature of time more broadly, as they set the conditions in which the birth and end of objectified time are possible. Their discussion therefore belongs to a consideration of his philosophy of time, rather than his philosophy of history. Through their exploration the character of the time-eternity relationship is further clarified.

Cosmogony

Cosmogony, dealing with the creation or beginning of the world, is a

[533] Ibid., p. 179.

significant aspect of a philosophy of Berdiaev's type, which – perhaps somewhat immodestly – aims to give a holistic account of everything. In his thinking there are two cosmogonic 'moments', two points at which the world as we know it came to be: the first depicts the creation of the cosmos and the world, the second the creation of the objectified world and time. Following the Christian creation myth, these occupy different places in the narrative so are not simultaneous. We need to look into both to understand the process which led to objectification and objectified time, as both established important conditions for time.

The first cosmogonic moment

The first stage of Berdiaev's cosmogony, the creation of the cosmos and the world by God, is actually of greater importance to the later discussion of freedom, creativity and time. It is relevant here because it establishes freedom and the possibility of fall, which, together, allow the creation of time to take place. As much of this has been dealt with in the introduction to this chapter, the most noteworthy point to highlight is Berdiaev's positing of uncreated freedom at the beginning of all things, and further his radical suggestion that this uncreated freedom, located outside God, existed *alongside* God (rather than through God) before creation:

> Вначале был Логос. Но вначале была и свобода. Логос был в свободе, и свобода была в Логосе. Но таков лишь один из аспектов свободы. Есть другой аспект, в котором свобода является совершенно вне-логстной, и происходит столкновение Логоса и Свободы.[534]

Uncreated freedom is of great importance to the existential, internal aspects of Berdiaev's philosophy, as it is through this freedom, pervading through creation from the very beginning, that man is able to engage in creativity, and escape the influence

[534] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 98.

of the objectified world. As becomes clear below, the role of this uncreated freedom in the creation of objectified time is central.

The second cosmogonic moment

The second moment in Berdiaev's cosmogony comes after the period of edenic existence which follows the creation of the world. This next part of the drama, in accordance with Christian thought, consists in the fall of man. However, for Berdiaev this fall also entails the advent of objectification, and the consequent beginning of objectified time. The fall of man, according to him, is possible due to man's freedom and free agency, as is recounted in *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (1927-1928):

> Тьма первоначально сгустилась в высшей точке духовной иерархии, там впервые свобода дала отрицательный ответ на Божий зов [...] там творение вступило на путь самоутверждения и самозамкнутости, на путь разрыва и ненависти. Человек отпал от Бога вместе со всем творением...[535]

The image of the initial darkness 'thickening' in the highest point of the spiritual hierarchy is intended to show how the initial freedom, here described in terms of 'darkness' or 'gloom', autonomously took on form and opposed God. Although the talk of a 'spiritual hierarchy' complicates matters somewhat, this initial darkness is posited as independent from God, acting against him through self-affirmation and the assertion of independence. The first cosmogonic moment has made this process possible through the original investment of freedom in man. Significantly time, in this schema, is described as a direct result of the fall:

> Не грехопадение произошло во времени, а время явилось результатом

[535] Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha*, p. 113.

грехопадения.[536]

Somewhat paradoxically the fall, then, as well as occurring in (objectified) time, also created this time; either way, however, objectified time is its direct result. The paradoxical elements of this problem will be dealt with in much greater deal when we come to discuss the relationship between creativity and time, as it describes the same problem. However, at this point Berdiaev clarifies his suggestion that in the same way that man is responsible for objectification, he is also responsible for objectified time: it is a product of his activity. It is not something created by God, it is something solely created by man. It therefore does not share those same metaphysical, existential properties that other divine-human capacities – most notably freedom and creativity – share.

Berdiaev's cosmogony thus sets the conditions which make the birth of time possible. The first condition is man's freedom, located in the darkness or uncreated freedom previous to existence. Freedom allows man to answer negatively to God's call and bring about the fall. The second condition is the advent of objectification, the externalisation of man and his subjection to the world of objects. Objectified time is thus closely tied to the fate of freedom, and, moreover, to the fate of man. It is also significant that in the fall man reaches *beyond God* – to freedom – to create objectified time. A question therefore arises – is objectified time totally disconnected from God? It could be argued that this is so as uncreated freedom, the most important element for this creation of objectified time, is independent by its very nature from God. This would then beg the broader question how far is objectification itself, as a product of the application of freedom, entirely disconnected from God.

[536] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 287.

Their disconnection propagates further a sense of impassable dualism.

Objectified time, as a result of man's fall – his free opposition to God's will – can likewise be considered as *opposed* to God (and therefore the divine within man). This is very different to eternity or internal time which is in communion with the metaphysical and divine elements of man. Dualism persists. Berdiaev recognises the contradictory nature of this scenario:

> Двойственность времени, его двойственный смысл для человеческого существования связан с тем, что время есть результат творческого нового, небывшего и вместе с тем оно есть продукт разрыва, утери целостности, забота и страх.[537]

The fall, in its original moment, was new – it was the creation of a new world order by man's use of his freedom. In this respect, objectified time should have internal, existential value. However, objectified time is bad, it is the loss of wholeness and the product of rupture. Berdiaev therefore again falls back on the notion of duality, in this scenario regarding only objectified time, rather than the time-eternity relation: objectified time on the one hand is the product of something good and internal – freedom, creativity, newness – but results in something bad and external which exerts external pressure upon man. This introduction of the theme of creativity throws the problem of paradox into sharper relief: how can objectified time be bad, external, if it is the product of creativity, which begins in the internal? How can internal and external be linked in such a way? This issue will be explored in much greater depth later. Sufficient here is to note the cosmogonic structure Berdiaev describes, and how in this framework the themes of freedom and creativity have become significant in connection to the birth of time.

[537] Ibid., p. 283.

Eschatology

Eschatology is central to Berdiaev's philosophy of time. As mentioned earlier, it is connected to the Christian notion of 'Kairos', the moment of resolution, where the end is elevated and seen to be of particular significance. Calian, referenced earlier, in his reasonably successful appraisal of Berdiaev's work identifies eschatology as an organising theme to his philosophy more broadly:

> …this study wishes to bring attention to an untreated aspect of Berdyaev's *Weltanschauung* which underlies his whole thinking. This untreated aspect is the eschatological emphasis found in Berdyaev.[538]

This reflection is, in our opinion, accurate. Subsequent scholarship has continued to identify the centrality of eschatology – Styczynski recently noted:

> In short, it seems that the Russian philosopher [Berdiaev] concentrated on abandoning the world of culture and time (his analysis of time, resembling that of Bergson, constitutes one of the best parts of his thought), on fulfilling the destiny of man, i.e., entering the eschatological dimension of existence, eternity. The predominance of mythos over logos, of Jerusalem over Athens, is evident here.[539]

Eschatology is thus recognised as a key component in Berdiaev's philosophical thinking, not just about time and history, but also concerning a variety of other themes such as creativity, freedom, ethics, and culture.

Preoccupation with the end

Berdiaev was very engaged with the question of the end and all its associated problems and paradoxes. This recalls of the 'futurist' type of eschatology discussed

[538] Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope*, p. 1.
[539] Marek Styczński, 'Berdjaev: authentic existence or a negative sociology', p. 86.

by McGrath in the introduction to this thesis.[540] Indeed, in Berdiaev's *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (1947), he writes:

> Я хочу рассматривать все вопросы в эсхатологическом свете, в свете конца.[541]

For Berdiaev, the thrust of his eschatology is a focus on the end in itself, which brings with it the end of objectified time, and consequently also history. Objectified time is not the final destination for man, it is only a midpoint that should give way to something else:

> Но совершенно невозможно мыслить ни творения мира во времени, ни конца мира во времени. В объективированном времени нет ни начала, ни конца, а лишь бесконечная середина.[542]

Indeed, he goes on:

> Трагедия и мука истории суть прежде всего трагедия и мука времени. История имеет смысл только потому, что она кончиться. Смысл истории не может быть имманентным, он лежит за пределами истории.[543]

Indeed, the fact that time (and in the above also history) ends is what gives meaning to all the pain that occurs within it.

Berdiaev's focus on the eschatological, as with the cosmogonic, also contained a paradoxical element. He maintains that whilst the beginning of the end must occur in part within objectified time, the completion of the end will take place outside it:

> Конец мира и истории не может произойти в будущем, т.е. в нашем времени. И вместе с тем, конец мира и истории не может быть лишь потусторонним, совершенно по ту сторону истории, он разом и по ту сторону и по эту сторону, он

[540] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, p. 547.
[541] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 9.
[542] Ibid., p. 179-80.
[543] Ibid., p. 181.

> есть противоречие для нашей мысли, которое снимается, но не самой мыслью.[544]

This is the sort of paradox that Berdiaev was fond of, and demonstrates another of his points of contact with the mystical tradition as many mystics – such as Eckhart, for example[545] – were very fond of this sort of paradox. It also testifies to the continuing relevance of the notion of paradox to his thought about time.

Eschatological proximity

A salient aspect of Berdiaev's thinking about the end of time concerns the apparent fact that objectified time, in his reckoning, could come to an end at any point. The end continually feels close and this creates the sense that objectified time is somehow unstable, that it could potentially collapse into an eschatological abyss without any forewarning:

> Я всегда философствовал так, как будто наступает конец мира и нет перспективы времени.[546]

This idea is repeated; it seems Berdiaev feels his understanding of the proximity of the end is amongst his more unique philosophical characteristics:

> У меня всегда была настоящая болезнь времени. Я всегда предвидел в воображении конец и не хотел приспособляться к процессу, который ведет к концу, отсюда мое нетерпение.[547]

Berdiaev's suggestion of the continuous possibility of the end is something that is consistent with the broader themes of his philosophy. It relates to his sense of *temporality as crisis*: the world appears to be over-brimming with crisis, but it is not

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[544] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 345.
[545] James M. Clark, *Meister Eckhart: An Introduction to the Study of his Works with an Anthology of his Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 13.
[546] Ibid., p. 337.
[547] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

clear when a final end may come. As the above also suggests, the omnipresent possibility of the end is also contingent upon the potential of freedom. His weak sense of process points to the fact that true freedom, in Berdiaev's mind, implies freedom from determination by any historical process:

> В мировом и историческом процессе нет необходимости прогресса закономерного развития […] Мне всегда казались мало значительными и не очень важными сами по себе события на поверхности истории, я вижу в них лишь знаки иного.[548]

This refutation of the notion of progress, and also the questioning of the idea of process more broadly, is thus tied up with Berdiaev's affirmation of man's independence and his belief in the primary importance of man's inner workings.

We are thus left to wonder how the end of time, which appears constantly possible but is not subject to historical law or determinism, comes about. An accusation could certainly be made that Berdiaev, despite identifying the proximity of the end, does not offer much in the way of explanation of how it might happen. The only real possibility appears to be through creativity, a process in which man accesses freedom and moves outside time:

> И вот задача этики творчества заключается в том, чтобы перспективу жизни сделать независимой от рокового хода времени, от будущего, которое вызывает в нас ужас и мучит нас. Творческий акт есть выход из времени, он совершается в царстве свободы, а не царстве необходимости.[549]

However the above also does not offer any suggestion as to when eschaton may be reached. As is made clear, and as will also be discussed in more depth below, creativity is a matter of freedom, not compulsion. Man chooses to create, he is not

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[548] Ibid., p. 252.
[549] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 133.

compelled to create, and he does not create according to any predetermined schema, as with Bulgakov. Therefore by suggesting the end will be brought about by creativity does not make it any clearer exactly when this will happen. We have now transgressed, however, into territory that belongs to, or is perhaps shared with, the philosophy of history. There should now be some discussion of the context to Berdiaev's thought about eschatology.

Context to Berdiaev's eschatology

Berdiaev's eschatological bent of thought chiefly demonstrates his continuity with the Russian tradition. Eschatology is a continuous theme amongst Russian thinkers – we see it clearly in (amongst many others) Sergei Bulgakov, Vladimir Solov'ev, Nikolai Fedorov (1827-1903), Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856), and also arguably in many Russian interpretations of Marxism, including not only Lenin and Trotski, but also revolutionaries of the older breed such as Nechaev (1847-1882), where an obsession with the end clearly bordered on some sort of eschatological or millenarian anticipation.[550] However, what distances Berdiaev specifically from Bulgakov, Fedorov, Solov'ev and also contemporary revolutionaries was the fact that Berdiaev's concept of eschatology was not based on an earthly eschatological end, but one that is located in pure transcendence. He is therefore further from the millenarian eschatology, a heaven on earth, which could be construed as being the logical product of Bulgakov's 'philosophy of economy', Fedorov's idea surrounding the resurrection of all human souls or Solov'ev's focus on the universal church.

This sort of earthly millenarianism, Lössl comments, has since Origen been

[550] For a recent exploration of the problem of millenarianism and eschatology in Russian revolutionary thinking, see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh, 2000). Berdiaev also forwarded a similar interpretation of Russian Marxist millenarianism. See Nikolai Berdiaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* (Paris, 1955).

wrongly associated with the Jewish faith:

> Tertullian's example also demonstrates that the belief in the millennium is not inherently "Jewish," as Origen suggests, but that it came to be defined as Jewish in the process of being increasingly interpreted in spiritual terms.[551]

Berdiaev, however, clearly followed Origen's interpretation, and similarly identified the earthly aspirations of Jewish messianism as being distorted and even perverse:

> Еврейский дух XIX и XX века перекликается с древнееврейским духом. В нем есть иная, искаженная и извращенная форма мессианизма, есть ожидание иного Мессии, после того как истинный Мессия был еврейством отвергнут, есть все та же обращенность к будущему, все то же настойчивое и упорное требование, чтобы будущее принесло с собою всеразрешающее начало, какую-то всеразрешающую правду и справедливость на земле, во имя которой еврейский народ готов объявить борьбу всем историческим традициям и святыням, всякой исторической преемственности.[552]

Berdiaev therefore went to lengths to demonstrate that his eschatology was a genuine eschatology, that for him the end lay in spirit, transcendence, and the metaphysical: it was 'other-worldly' (*potustoronnii*) and not 'of this world' (*posiustoronnii*). This means that for him, the rule of objectified time, the rule of objectification and the conditions of this world are weak, transitory:

> Эсхатологизм связан был для меня с тем, что все мне казалось хрупким, люди угрожаемыми смертью, все в истории преходящим и висящим над бездной. Я в личной жизни склонен был ждать катастроф и еще более в исторической жизни народов. Я давно предсказывал исторические катастрофы.[553]

Berdiaev thus took eschatology to mean the end of the objectified world, and, by also

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[551] Josef Lössl, '"Apocalypse? No." – The Power of Millennialism and its Transformation in Late Antique Christianity', in Andrew Cain, Noel Lenski [eds.], *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 31-44 (p. 37).
[552] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, pp. 90-91.
[553] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 337.

positing the continual proximity of the eschatological moment, further suggested that the conditions of time and the objectified world were by their very nature weak and evanescent. This further propagated his sense of a divide between a genuine, deep, internal world and an external, weak, transitory world.

Conclusions: time-eternity

The basic structure of Berdiaev's thinking about time, which surrounds the construction of a relationship between time and eternity, has been drawn up. Berdiaev, as Bulgakov did, subscribes to the basic ancient Greek-Christian distinction between time and eternity, which, as well as providing a strong sense of objectified 'time' as being purely immanent and 'eternity' being purely noumenal and existential, also provides a slightly historicised model which plots the movement from one to the other and back again. The opening stage of this schema is a cosmogonic motion of 'objectification', the final act is an eschatological movement from time to eternity.

Berdiaev's treatment of the concepts of time and eternity tries to balance a number of different philosophical interests which extend well beyond the boundaries of conventional Christian discourse. On the one hand, he proclaims that there is an internal time – eternity – a time which is 'within' man. On the other he also describes an external, objectified time, one which, whilst being produced from internal time, has fallen away from the internal and God and has subsequently lost its internal meaning. It is now opposed to and outside man. Together, this suggests a disconnection between the realms of time and eternity, and it becomes difficult to conceive of how a passage from one to the other is possible as they appear entirely separate. Indeed, the attempt to conceive how man occupies both internal and

external times becomes problematic without the use of paradox, as the two are quite opposed to one another.

Berdiaev was intransigent in the face of criticism, and frequently fell back on the belief that people 'misunderstood' his use of paradoxical concepts:

> Меня очень плохо понимают […] Склонность к парадоксальному и противоречивому мышлению вела меня к тому, что иногда враги меня хвалили. Плохо понимают характер моего дуализма, ошибочно приписывая ему онтологический характер, особенно плохо понимают центральное для меня значение *объективации* и эсхатологические мотивы моей философии. Меня все хотят отнести к категориям, в которые я никак вместиться не могу.[554]

Although he describes ontological dualism as a false charge, it is difficult to conceive of any other divide: the realms of internal and external being are quite clearly opposed in his philosophy of time. With the specific question time, however, from 1939 onwards Berdiaev will attempt to formulate better a bridge between time and eternity according to the principle of 'existential time'. This, it seems, is intended to make the sense of dualism in his thought about time more surmountable, as with it he attempts to formulate more clearly the relationship between objectified and non-objectified time.

[554] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 115.

Deepening the problem: the three forms of time

Until *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka* (1939), Berdiaev had seemingly satisfied himself with the distinction he had made between objectified time – or simply 'time' – and eternity, a broadly internal, existential form of time. However, for reasons he does not explicitly explain, he wanted to expand upon this conceptualisation of time. Perhaps he was motivated by a desire to make clearer the means by which a transition from objectified time to eternity was possible, or perhaps, more likely, he intended to make the temporal conditions behind creativity and its related concerns more understandable. Either way, such was the importance of time to his philosophical project that Berdiaev clearly needed greater clarification regarding the nature of time.

The new conclusion he reached on the problem of time relied on a development of the existentialist idea that time is within man. Berdiaev expanded this solution by suggesting that the *nature* of time depends on the *mode* of existence that man (or perhaps the world) is engaged with:

> Время есть модус существования и зависит от характера существования. Неверно сказать, что происходит движение и изменение, потому что существует время; верно сказать, что время существует потому, что происходит движение и изменение. Характер изменения порождает характер времени.[555]

At a basic level, it would be expected to follow that objectified existence would correspond to objectified time, and existential, internal existence would correspond to existential, internal time. This is borne out. However, it is also little more complex than this. Berdiaev identifies *three* types of time which correspond to three types of existence: *cosmic (kosmicheskoe), historical (istoricheskoe)* and *existential (ekzistentsial'noe)*. Although, strictly speaking, they are not all of entirely obvious

[555] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 156.

ontological distinction ('cosmic' is not an obvious ontological category), Berdiaev clearly intends them to be ontological. Each form of time corresponds to a mode of being. In this respect, as we shall see, they are temporal distinctions based on ontological conditions.

In this distinction of the three types of time, Berdiaev continues to demonstrate a superficial similarity to Heidegger, who similarly distinguished between three types of time: *originary temporality, world-time,* and *the ordinary conception of time*. Blattner summarises what he terms as Heidegger's 'temporal idealism' as follows:

> [Heidegger's] idealism relies upon drawing a further distinction between modes of time, between what he calls "world-time" (*Weltzeit*) and "the ordinary conception of time." The explanatory dependence just mentioned is in fact a chain of dependencies: ordinary time (the ticking away of purely quantitative moments) depends on world-time (the succession of qualitatively determinate Nows), whose core phenomenon is in turn the pragmatic Now (the Now that aims us into the purposive future by relying on the given past), which finally in turn depends on originary temporality.[556]

Although the level of sophistication with which Heidegger conceived of time is vastly beyond Berdiaev – almost to the point at which anything other than superficial comparison breaks down – what is clear is that there was an existing, recent (Heidegger published *Sein und Zeit* in 1927) existentialist thesis on time that distinguished between different modes of time for Dasein, or being. As Volkogonova reflected on Berdiaev:

> …Бердяев, как и любой другой мыслитель, не был свободен от сильных влияний со стороны других…[557]

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to think that Berdiaev followed an already

[556] Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, p. 28.
[557] Volkogonova, *Berdiaev*, p. 6.

established path with this development in his philosophy of time.

In our engagement with the three types of time we will draw mainly on *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka* (1939), *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (1947), and *Samopoznanie* (1947). As with all of Berdiaev's writing, in these three texts the ideas on this theme presented are approximately the same, but quotation from all three is necessary because he explores these same ideas from different angles.

Cosmic time

The first of the three ontological-temporal distinctions Berdiaev draws is that of 'cosmic' time. Across the distinction of the three types of time, two are objectified and one is non-objectified. Cosmic time is the first of these two objectified types of time. It is also the most simple of his conceptualisations. Cosmic time corresponds to the natural cycle of the cosmos – it is defined by the rotation of stars, the movement of planetary bodies, and the cycles of nature:

> Время космическое символизируется кругом. Оно связано с движением земли вокруг солнца, с исчислением дней, месяцев и годов, с календарем и часами. Это круговое движение, в котором постоянно происходит возвращение, наступает утро и вечер, весна и осень. Это есть время природы, и, как природные существа, мы живем в этом времени.[558]

Berdiaev was keen to attach spatial representation to these conceptualisations of time – with cosmic time he chooses to use the circle. This should not be taken to mean that for some reason he is trying to assert any sort of primacy to space, as he is clear on the fact that he views time to be of much greater significance. Indeed, he had already stated in *Ia i mir ob"ektov*:

> Время для моего существования первичнее пространства, и пространство в моем

[558] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 155.

существовании предполагает время.[559]

Spatial representation is thus simply an explicative measure.

The negative aspect of cosmic time is twofold – it issues from both its connection to the natural, external world and also from the fact that there is no freedom in cosmic motion. Its connection to the natural, and thus objectified world highlights how cosmic time is objectified time:

> Время космическое есть одно из порождений изменений в мире объективированно-природном. Космическое время есть время объективированное и подлежит математическому счислению, оно подчинено числу, дроблению и складыванию. Часы и дни дробятся на минуты и секунды и складываются в месяцы и годы.[560]

As it is determined by an external, cosmic measure, cosmic time is itself objectified. Furthermore, everything in cosmic time is determined by endless cycle: it does not go anywhere, meaning there is no end and no meaning to cosmic time, as it does not exit into eternity. It therefore bears no similarity whatsoever to eternity, the internal dimension of time:

> Космическое и историческое время не походит на вечность.[561]

Cosmic time, therefore, is a fundamentally limited dimension of objectification. This propagates further the sense of Berdiaev's antipathy towards the cosmic, natural world, as he perceives its time to be inherently bad.

Finally, cosmic time, as will be discussed in Section 4 on Berdiaev's philosophy of history, also presents what Berdiaev suggests as the 'ultimate objectification', the possibility of history 'gone wrong'. History, he will argue, can either empty out into cosmic time and suffer final determination and the

[559] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 288.
[560] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 156.
[561] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 179.

extermination of freedom, or into existential time and from there transcend upwards to eternity. Although this is a question related to the philosophy of history, it is nonetheless instructive to note that the final end points of history are still conceived in terms of temporal categories.

Historical time

The second of Berdiaev's conceptualisations of time, historical time, is more revealing as to the deeper aspects of his thinking about human life – cosmic time had simply demonstrated, as his readers already understood, that he felt alienated from the natural world and the cyclical monotony of natural time. Historical time describes his perception of a human life or society in time: it is a constant motion forwards, an unrelenting drive onwards towards future achievement. More than being a description of a simple temporal motion, in historical time there is also a sharp judgement being passed on historical life, and on man's destiny within the historical sphere. This in turn opens up the possibility for Berdiaev to criticise some of the ideas (already mentioned in Section 2) regarding modernity and a future-orientated perception of time.

Berdiaev's identification of historical time first reaffirms the priority of time over history, an idea oft-repeated throughout his work:

> Но философская проблема истории есть прежде всего проблема времени. Обоготворение истории есть обоготворение исторического времени.[562]

However, it also allows Berdiaev to admit – but also to delimit – the existence of linear, forwards, or 'historical' motion in human existence:

> Историческое время порождено движением и изменением иным, чем то, что происходит в космическом круговороте. Историческое время символизируется не

[562] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 155.

> кругом, а прямой линией, устремленной вперед. Особенность исторического времени именно в этой устремленности к грядущему, оно в грядущем ждет раскрытия смысла.[563]

Historical time thus corresponds to man's ontological condition within history. The spatial identifier Berdiaev chooses for historical time is the straight line, striving endlessly forward. As was evident from earlier quotation, this movement bears no similarity to eternity, meaning that his conceptualisation of historical time is, as with cosmic time, also negative. He is consequently overt in his damnation of historical time as something objectified that must be overcome:

> И самая борьба против исторического времени, против прельщения и рабства истории происходит не в космическом, а в историческом времени. Историческое время больше связано с человеческой активностью, чем время космическое. Но личность по-новому ранена и порабощена историческим временем, и она даже иногда ищет избавления от плена истории переходом в космический план существования.[564]

This having been said, the possibility of activity (*aktivnost'*) indicates that Berdiaev is willing to allow access to something else within historical time other than just cosmic cycles. The emergence of newness through such activity will allow an eschatological horizon to be opened within historical time. This presents a route out of historical time, something that was not discussed with cosmic time.

Along with this notion of the possibility of activity in historical time, Berdiaev also outlines a degree of overlap between cosmic time and historical time in common forms of measurement:

> История, конечно, подчиняется и космическому времени, она знает исчисление по

[563] Ibid., p. 156.
[564] Ibid., p. 156.

> годам и столетиям, но она знает и свое историческое время.[565]

This therefore also allows for the possibility of historical time emptying out into cosmic time and final objectification, as similarly the possibility of activity in historical time highlights the possibility to overcome historical time and raise it up out of objectification – something that will be achieved in existential time. There are thus two possible exit points from historical time, pointing in opposite directions: one towards existential time and then out into eternity, the other into cosmic time:

> Есть два выхода из исторического времени, в две противоположные стороны – к времени космическому и времени экзистенциальному.[566]

In this way, historical time corresponds to the current human condition, at least in Berdiaev's mind: man is caught somewhere between objectification and transcendence, and needs to exit one way or another.

Berdiaev's description of historical time also offers an implicit treatise on the notion of 'progress', something that Bulgakov, as well as a number of other Russian philosophers of their period, had been keen to criticise. It will be remembered that Bulgakov's essay, *Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa* (1902), represented a classic engagement with this idea:

> Первая и основная задача, которую ставит себе теория прогресса, состоит в том, чтобы показать, что история имеет смысл, и исторический процесс есть не только эволюция, но и прогресс. Она доказывает, следовательно, конечное тождество причинной закономерности и разумной целесообразности…[567]

Historical time, the line always struggling forward, offers a certain analogy to this concept, a concept Berdiaev is similarly trying to discredit: in his mind historical time, or progress, continually moves forward by its own logic, by evolution, and traps man

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[565] Ibid., p. 156.
[566] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 158.
[567] Bulgakov, 'Osnovnye problemy teorii progressa', in *Ot marksizma,* p. 519.

within this movement. Man must, as outlined above, rail against this and try to overcome it. Berdiaev thus admits the existence of progress-like movement, but also delimits it. By offering a version of progress (historical time) in which progress is restricted by the ontological-temporal conditions in which it is located – i.e. by the fact that historical time does not move into eternity – he also neuters the theory of progress and subjects it to the overarching importance of the metaphysical and existential. Historical time – progress – is thereby bounded, awaiting a turn either to a cosmic or existential end, neither of which are located within it.

Existential time

Existential time constitutes the crux of the philosophy of time Berdiaev reaches in 1939, and is amongst the most important of his philosophical innovations. Where cosmic and historical time represented the objectified, determined ontological conditions of existence, existential time represents the key existential, internal aspect of Berdiaev's philosophy: it demonstrates man's engagement in freedom and his access to the divine. Existential experience, to which existential time corresponds, is demonstrative of the deepest qualities of man's being, as he comments in *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*:

> Для субъекта, как существующего, есть разное время, определяемое его состоянием, его направленностью. Наше существование погружено не только в действительность, реализовавшуюся в формах объектности, но и в действительность потенциальную, более глубокую и широкую. И потому только возможно изменение, творчество и новизна.[568]

Existential time, therefore, corresponds to man's engagement in *potential*, where things are not objectified. In the same way as eternity was, then, existential time is

[568] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 145.

also connected to creativity, newness, and change, i.e. existential and transcendent capacities and qualities. By attributing these same internal elements to existential time that had been attributed to eternity, the earlier claim that eternity had functioned to symbolise the internal dimension of time is vindicated. Now, however, this role is being taken over – or perhaps shared somewhat – by existential time.

The representation of existential time is not quantifiable by any straightforward spatial metaphor, as it corresponds to the existential condition in which access to the metaphysical is possible. In this respect existential time is very different to the other types of time. Indeed, it does not appear to resemble time in any conventional sense:

> Время экзистенциальное лучше всего может быть символизировано не кругом и не линией, а точкой. Это как раз значит, что время экзистенциальное менее всего может быть символизировано пространственно. Это время внутреннее, неэкстериоризированное в пространстве, не объективированное. Это время мира субъективности, а не объективности. Оно не счисляется математически, не слагается и не разлагается. Бесконечность экзистенциального времени есть бесконечность качественная, а не количественная.[569]

With this description Berdiaev tries to distinguish the untarnished, non-exterior condition of existential time: like Bergson's *durée*, it is not subject to mathematical enumeration, expansion or division, so we can assume that it does not suffer from the disease of time, the division inherent in the broken past, present, and future separations. Similarly its 'infinity' is qualitative – by which we assume subjective, existential – rather than the numeric, quantitative infinity that exists in objectified time. Note, however, that he still chooses the word 'infinity' (beskonechnost') rather than 'eternity' (vechnost') – demonstrating the fact that existential time is still 'time' rather than eternity.

[569] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 157.

Despite its difference to cosmic and historical time, Berdiaev establishes that singular events still take place within existential time, meaning that there exists at least a sense of temporal sequence within existential time. Although it certainly bears significant similarity, it is thus distinct from the wholly non-successive temporal manifold posited by Heidegger in the concept of 'originary temporality'.[570] Indeed, Berdiaev argues, choosing to adopt a secondary spatial representation, although events of existential time occur in the 'vertical' plane, they are still projected along the 'horizontal' plane of historical and cosmic time. Events that occur on this vertical plane can descend or ascend into the horizontal dimension, as is indicated below:

> Все, что совершается в экзистенциальном времени, совершается по линии вертикальной, а не горизонтальной. По линии горизонтальной это лишь точка, в которой происходит прорыв из глубины на певерхность. События экзистенциального времени представляются линией по горизонтальной плоскости вследствие передвижения этих точек, связанных с прорывом из глубины. Это есть экстериоризирование того, что не подлежит экстериоризации, объективация невыразимого в объекте. Всякий творческий акт совершается во времени экзистенциальном и лишь проецируется во времени историческом.[571]

Through this description of an intersection between the vertical (existential) and horizontal (historical/cosmic – i.e. objectified) planes of time, it becomes evident how Berdiaev is trying to construct a more coherent temporal framework in which events occurring in the metaphysical plane are able to penetrate the objectified, empirical plane. Things that take place in the non-objectified vertical, in the depths, coincide with the objectified dimensions and are then represented along the plane of the horizontal, according to the rules of the horizontal. This representation or projection within the horizontal is the objectification or exteriorisation of the event occurring in

[570] Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*, pp. 117, 127.
[571] Ibid., p. 158.

the vertical.

However, this brings up two separate issues which still, at basis, make full intersection between these dimensions more difficult to conceive. The first of these consists in the fact that existential time is not eternity, so it remains difficult to conceive of how the coming of eternity, the true end of time, could take place. Existential time is rather a temporal channel to eternity, not eternity itself. It is thus not truly identical with the upper echelons of the metaphysical. The second problem consists in the fact that even if existential time *were* truly unadulterated transcendence, the conditions of objectification, of the 'horizontal', as will be revealed further, appear so strong that they have the power to warp anything that passes over from the vertical, rendering it limited. This means that the existential can only remain existential if it stays in the existential: any passage into the object leads to fall. The first of these issues will be discussed in the following section, whereas the second is of much wider significance, concerning practical interrelation between objectified and non-objectified time through creativity. As this brings creativity to the forefront, it will be discussed in the later section dealing with the temporalised problem of creativity.

Existential time and eternity

The most obvious issue surrounding existential time is that, whatever the epithets Berdiaev attaches to it, it is nevertheless not fully commensurate with eternity. He is explicit on this point:

> Неверно было бы сказать, что экзистенциальное время тождественно вечности,

> но можно сказать, что оно причастно в некоторых мгновениях вечности.[572]

Instead, then, existential time *participates* in eternity at *certain moments*. It is therefore by the logic of the above not a direct channel for eternity straight into the temporal. This distinction between existential time and eternity has been missed previously in some scholarship. Seaver, for example, one of the first wave of European scholars to deal with Berdiaev after his death, overlooks the difference when he argues:

> There are two ways out of [historical time]: one is when history turns to nature, and is submerged again in cosmic time. This is the term of naturalism. The other way is when history passes into the realm of the freedom of the spirit, and is submerged again into existential time.[573]

The aim of eschatology, as has been made clear, is the submergence in *eternity*, not in existential time: the difference is significant, as existential time is a mode of human existence, a temporal formation of a human ontological condition – it is not an endpoint in the way eternity constitutes an endpoint. It is a channel through which 'moments of eternity' be reached, rather than a destination.

Although it would be inappropriate to labour this point too far, it is thus of note that Berdiaev wants to separate the concept of existential time from eternity, as, in this respect, he is actually – if only in this specific scenario – limiting man's temporal reach with regard to God's. Although with his ideas about freedom and creativity Berdiaev is at risk of putting man almost on a level to God, or at least beyond His reach, here Berdiaev relegates man's temporal reach to just *moments* of eternity *through* existential time – God, we assume, just operates in eternity. If man is called to creatively reform the world, and bring about the eschatological end of time and

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[572] Ibid., p. 157.
[573] George Seaver, *Nicolas Berdyaev: An introduction to his Thought* (London, 1950), p. 113.

objectification through this, we are left to wonder how far this is possible. Man's access to eternity is restricted by the nature of existential time, which only allows momentary participation: the challenge is thus to maximise contact with eternity through existential time.

Conclusions: the three forms of time

Berdiaev's extension of his engagement with time and eternity as external and internal forms of time is thus achieved through the supposition of cosmic, historical, and existential times. Representing different ontological modes of existence, these modes reveal how for Berdiaev existence itself, in all its various facets, is deeply connected to time. This temporal 'system' (although this word should, of course, be used with trepidation in Berdiaev's case) creates a structure in which a movement from time to eternity appears more feasible, albeit momentarily. In this framework we see how cosmic time is conceived as the lowest of the forms and existential time as the highest. Between these historical time corresponds to a sort of middle ground: both cosmic and existential time intersect with the historical line of historical time, which itself can move towards either the cosmic or existential. Importantly, both historical and cosmic times are objectified, 'horizontal' forms of time, whilst existential time is non-objectified, 'vertical' and internal time. Dualism is thus still very clearly expressed, indeed, perhaps more clearly expressed, as now due there is a clearer opposition posited between 'existential' and 'objectified' forms of time. Eternity here is still an important concept and it is tied in an (albeit slightly ambiguous) relation with existential time.

This thesis on the threefold nature of time has in the past been misunderstood. Seaver, for example, suggests:

> Historical time is an interlude in cosmic time. It has a beginning and will come to an end. The occasion for its beginning was the Fall of Man; the Fall of Man was in fact the cause of historical time, and this is why it is still man's curse and enemy.[574]

Although he is correct that historical time is the product of the fall, it is overlooked that cosmic time, too, is 'objectified time', and thus is similarly a product of falling. Historical time is no 'interlude' in cosmic time, *both were created together* at the cosmogonic moment of objectification. Rather, they correspond to two different modes of objectified existence. A degree of parity between historical and cosmic time needs to be reasserted, as in this way one is able to understand with greater clarity how this interpretation of the three types of time is a part of a broader time-eternity distinction.

The notion of existential time is central to Berdiaev's philosophy of time more broadly, as it is a better articulated description of what an 'internal' time should be. Eternity, although being described according to various internal and existential epithets (creative, free etc.) did not elaborate this in such clear terms. The positing of existential time also brought issues surrounding the practical intersection of internal and external forms of time to light, as it was described in some detail how moments of existential time are manifested along the horizontal plane of historical time. This, however, brings the question of creativity into specific relief, as it emerges that creativity is the practical means through which this intersection can take place. It will also be revealed how creativity is, quite paradoxically, also responsible for the movement of objectified time. This now demands further exploration.

[574] Seaver, *Nicolas Berdyaev*, p. 113.

The 'temporalised' problems: creativity, newness, freedom and evil

After looking in detail at the structure and concepts Berdiaev uses in his philosophy of time, and then at their development, we can now address the problems which become 'temporalised' in his thought. These are the problems which, whilst not solely related to time, function to put Berdiaev's deeper assumptions about the nature of time into better focus. The most significant of these is creativity: it has been touched upon a number of times, and its importance to Berdiaev's philosophical project is manifold. Related to creativity are the problems of newness and freedom, which similarly take on temporal significance. The question of the relationship between evil and time also appears, but is of lesser importance. These questions together show most clearly the paradox of time that has so far been indicated in Berdiaev's philosophy, but not explored further. They reveal a contradictory scenario in which on the one hand mankind's activity, through creative activity and the use of freedom, continually *creates* the flow of objectified time, whilst on the other hand they paradoxically describe how objectification and objectified time also *determine* the result of this activity, making it *correspond* to the flow of objectified time.

As already mentioned, it is of interest to the wider scope of this thesis that the above 'temporalised' problems are almost identical to the problems which Bulgakov 'historicised'. However, whilst creativity for Berdiaev is central, for Bulgakov the theme of evil is more central to the determinist aspects if his thought, as his dominant notion, namely that:

> Мир не может вовсе не удаться...[575]

implies that evil, which runs counter to the meaning of the world, cannot win. To the contrary, Berdiaev, as an anti-determinist, will entertain conditions in which the world

[575] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 180.

can fail, in which evil can triumph. A bias towards different problems, and different organisations of the same problems, is thus evident.

Creativity and time

Overview

Creativity sits right at the centre of Berdiaev's thought and is one of the most distinctive themes of his philosophy. Contemporaries and scholars have often highlighted the importance of this theme in Berdiaev. For example, Rozanov wrote of the 'heroic character' of all Berdiaev's works, which 'call to creativity',[576] and, much more recently, Bonetskaia has also stressed the importance of creativity to his thought:

> [Для Бердяева] Идея *творчества* в кругу идей одна из важнейших.[577]

Creativity is a particularly rich element of Berdiaev's thinking, and it influences his philosophy of time in a number of respects.

The temporal dimensions of creativity stem first from the wider significance he attaches to creativity at a philosophical and theological level. Berdiaev holds that when God made man, He created man from nothing. However, in order to make man in His image, God invested in man the same capacity to create from nothing:

> Творчество же есть прорыв из ничего, из небытия, из свободы в бытие и мир. Тайна творчества раскрывается в библейско-христианском мифе о творении мира Богом. Бог сотворил мир из ничего, т.е. свободно и из свободы. […] И человек, сотворенный Творцом и по его образу и подобию, есть также творец и

[576] Rozanov, 'Novaia religiozno-filosofskaia kontseptsiia', p. 268.
[577] N. K. Bonetskaia, 'Apofeoz tvorchestva (N. Berdiaev i F. Nitsshe)', p. 98.

призван к творчеству.[578]

God now awaits creativity from man. Free creativity is perceived to be man's fulfilment of God's desire, even His 'will':

> Свободное творчество есть ответ твари на великий призыв Творца. И творческий подвиг человека есть исполнение сокровенной воли Творца, который и требует свободного творческого акта.[579]

This is not, however, to say that man *must* create in the way that God desired, as the basis of creativity is uncreated freedom, independent from God. Nevertheless, creativity takes on a very broad significance in the construction of Berdiaev's philosophical project as a whole.

Differences with Bulgakov on time-creativity

Given the role of creativity in Bulgakov's thought on history, there is also a significant point of crossover between Berdiaev and Bulgakov on the question of creativity and time/history. Indeed Berdiaev, perhaps not without bitterness, notes:

> С. Булгаков в своей книге "Свет невечерний" признал демонический, человекобожеский характер моей мысли о творчестве.[580]

Berdiaev's emphasis on the great importance and also independence of human creativity led Bulgakov, along with other Christian commentators, to feel that Berdiaev had promoted blasphemous thinking. Although both thinkers accept the real significance of creativity, and similarly the decisive role of creativity to the movement of history and time, in their separate conceptions of creativity the opposition between an existentialist 'temporaliser' and a more determinist

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[578] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 117.
[579] Ibid., pp. 44-45.
[580] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 246.

'historiciser' is distinct. In this opposition Bulgakov, the more determinist thinker, focuses on reining in creativity and Berdiaev, the existentialist, concentrates on exalting it.

Bulgakov, it will be remembered, suggests that creativity is like a plan placed within man by God, a goal which man pursues in time:

> То, что́ тварь сознает в себе как задачу творчества, вложено в нее Богом, другими словами, задача эта предвечно разрешена, но она должна быть разрешена во времени.[581]

This grows into the idea that God gives an historical plan to man which he fulfils through creativity, that is to say, creativity functions as a means for establishing a determined passage of events in history which man follows through his creative activity. Creativity is thus invested with no real independence: it is only a means for a preformed plan to be accomplished. Berdiaev, however, holds to the contrary that creativity is much more important. In his understanding, it is connected with freedom. Although the creative capacity is given by God, creative activity is, as well as being free from determination by the material world, also free from God:

> Я признавал, что творческие дары даны человеку Богом, но в творческие акты человека приходит элемент свободы, не детерминированный ни миром, ни Богом.[582]

Creativity is therefore a fundamentally anti-deterministic element in Berdiaev's philosophy. This question of creativity thus expresses in clear form some of the differences between these two philosophers.

In Berdiaev's thought key ideas are developed regarding time and creativity in

[581] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 180.
[582] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, pp. 247-48.

O naznachenii cheloveka (1931), and significant ideas are also introduced in *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (1947) regarding the question of newness in time. A chronological shift is evident as the latter work also takes into account Berdiaev's new ideas regarding the three types of time posited in 1939. *Samopoznanie* (1947), as it has been thus far, will also be a continued point of reference. A degree of relative chronological development is thus evident, but, as ever with Berdiaev, it is a little opaque.

Objectified time and its relation to creativity

Moving on to the specific problem, the key question that needs to be explored concerns the relationship between objectified time – external time – and creativity. It is significant that in Berdiaev's estimation creativity is a key internal capacity: it is not connected to objectified time, or to the condition of the impending, determined future:

> Для свободного творческого акта не существует детерминированого будущего и нет рока. В мгновение, когда совершается свободный творческий акт, нет мысли о будущем, нет мысли о неотвратимой смерти, о грядущей муке, есть выход из времени и из всякой детерминации.[583]

Creativity is therefore closely aligned to the internal, existential world and to non-objectified, internal time:

> Творчество движется не по плоскости в бесконечном времени, а по восходящей вверх линии, к вечности.[584]

Although creativity belongs to the internal world, it will at some point have to engage with the external, objectified world. Analysis will proceed by first discussing how creativity is, through this engagement, described as responsible for creating the flow

[583] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 133.
[584] Ibid., p. 134.

of objectified time. This requires a detailed examination of the process of the creative act in itself. Differences to Bulgakov will be noted as they arise, as they are meaningful.

The creative process: nothing to something

Creativity begins, Berdiaev informs us, with man's reaching into the original, 'meonic' freedom, into nothingness, and bringing forth something:

> *Творчество есть переход небытия в бытие через акт свободы.*[585]

All creativity, Berdiaev therefore argues, is by its very nature creativity *from nothing*:

> Творчество по самому существу есть творчество из ничего. Ничто стало тем-то, небытие стало бытием.[586]

Importantly, in any creative plan or conception man's undetermined, original freedom comes into play:

> Во всяком творческом замысле есть элемент первичной свободы человека, ничем не детерминированной, бездонной, свободы не от Бога идущей, а к Богу идущей.[587]

Therefore, although it is implied that this freedom is 'moving towards God', the assertion that the creative idea or design does not come just from God is more important: it means mankind's creativity is not directed by God.

This establishes a clear difference to Bulgakov: Bulgakov suggested that *divine* creativity was from nothing, but *human* creativity was from the divine basis, from the divine something:

> Тварное творчество, которое является актуальным выражением тварной свободы,

[585] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 45.
[586] Ibid., p. 117.
[587] Ibid., p. 118.

> есть не *творчество из ничего*, *но творчество в ничто из божественного что*.[588]

Berdiaev is clear: a root element of creative activity is man's access to nothingness, that which is free from everything, even God. Bulgakov is equally clear: man, although creating 'into nothingness' does this *from* divine substance: man does not create *from* nothing in the way Berdiaev suggests.

The created product: newness

The root of creativity lies in nothing. The product, however, is something. Indeed, creativity is an activity that is inherently goal-orientated: it brings forth a creative product. In Berdiaev's conception, the defining characteristic of things that have been created is the fact that they did not exist beforehand. This means that in the creative process something wholly new, something that never existed within the world, is brought forth:

> Творчество есть всегда прирост, прибавление, создание нового, небывшего в мире.[589]

Newness, therefore, is the fundamental characteristic of things that are the product of creativity.

Conversely, Bulgakov argued that such newness from human creativity was not possible:

> Человеческое творчество не содержит поэтому в себе ничего *метафизически нового,* оно лишь воспроизводит и воссоздает из имеющихся, созданных уже элементов...[590]

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[588] Bulgakov, *Svet nevechernii*, p. 180.
[589] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 117.
[590] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, p. 114.

A difference between the two therefore persists: Berdiaev recognised man's ability to create newness, Bulgakov did not.

The creative motion: newness-change-time

The emergence of newness creates change: there is now a new situation in which something has come to exist through the creative process. This suggestion that creativity creates change is crucial, as it is from here that change becomes responsible for 'movement', and, by means of this, for objectified time, as Berdiaev comments in *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934):

> В действительности не изменение есть продукт времени, а время есть продукт изменения. Время есть потому, что активность, творчество, переход от небытия к бытию, но эта активность и творчество разорванные, не целостные, не в вечности.[591]

The assertion, then, that *creativity* creates objectified time because it creates movement and change is central. In the above formulation the result – time – is broken, because the creative activity which is responsible for it is itself somehow broken. Therefore creativity creates objectified time, not existential or internal time.

The idea that creativity gives birth to objectified time is repeated once it has been made. In *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, the formula is reasserted in an alternative wording. Here it is argued that newness and coterminous 'movement' are responsible for the existence of objectified time:

> Но время не есть форма, в которую вкладывается мировой процесс и которая и сообщает миру движение. Время есть потому, что есть движение и новизна.[592]

This recalls the Absolutism-Relativism debate discussed in the introduction to this

[591] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 283.
[592] Ibid., p. 144.

thesis: according to the above, then, Berdiaev would fall in the relativistic camp – time is not absolute, but is instead dependent on events and change. The solution, then, that objectified time is the result of creativity is advanced quite explicitly: it is posited as contingent upon newness, change, and motion, the results of creativity. Without creativity, without change or movement there would be no objectified time.

Strikingly, Bulgakov comes to the same broader conclusion about the time-creativity relation, albeit by the almost opposite philosophical chain of argument. He argues:

> Возможность истории, исторических процессов, а в том числе хозяйства (и знания), основана на этой способности к новому творчеству, идущему дальше простого воспроизведения или повторения старого...[593]

According to both philosophers, then, objectified time, or time-as-history for Bulgakov, are only possible due to creative activity and its resultant newness. Difference only arises, as has already been suggested, due to their differing perceptions of how this creative activity takes place.

Activity or being

It is relevant to note here that creative 'activity' is now being used to connect time and man in the same way as 'being' was used to connect them earlier. With the different 'types' of time, Berdiaev had argued that time was dependent on the mode of being the person was engaged with. Creativity, though, is activity: it requires man's activity. In this way it is something different to being. However, having said this, time appears no less dependent on activity here than it did on being earlier. Berdiaev is therefore further complicating his description of the relationship between

[593] Bulgakov, *Filosofiia khoziaistva*, p. 93.

man and time. As well as bearing some innate ontological connection to man's mode of being, it also has a more active connection in which man's activity, the way he directs his creative energy, determines time. This, perhaps, reflects more broadly on Berdiaev's understanding of man's various modes of being – they are the result, one way or another, of some effort or activity on the part of man. This would suggest that man lives in the historical, cosmic, or existential domain as a result of the orientation and use of his creative freedom.

Despite beginning outside objectified time, then, creativity is, according to the above, responsible for establishing the movement of objectified time. Although Berdiaev does not explicitly word it this way himself, in our analysis it is clear that this is so. Creativity is thus simultaneously connected very closely to both external and internal forms of time.

The other side of the paradox: the independent role of objectified time

As well as suggesting that the source of objectified time is in creativity, an alternative idea also emerges. This suggests that the force of objectification and objectified time demands that creativity corresponds to its laws. In this way creativity would not be responsible for the movement of time, but, rather, creativity would have to obey the laws of objectified time, meaning that time would appear to be flowing and working *independently* of creative activity.

As Berdiaev notes, despite its eschatological horizon (dealt with later), the creative act cannot just remain as an idea, it must *incarnate* something and thereby take on form:

> Всякий творческий акт, моральный, социальный, художественный, познавательный есть акт наступления конца мира, взлет в иной, новый план существования. Но творящий должен воплощать для мира и для людей свои образы иного, свой экстаз, свой огонь, свой трансцензус, свое приобщение к иной жизни. И он принужден это делать по законам этого мира.[594]

When incarnating his ideas, then, the creator must *correspond*, work *according to* the laws of the external world, which include the laws of objectified time. Rather than creative activity establishing the flow of objectified time, then, it now appears that objectification, existing independently from the internal, creative domain, opposes and determines the results of creative activity. It therefore appears that as soon as the internal 'ecstasy', 'flame', or 'transcendence' touches the external domain they are immediately forced into line with the rules of the external. The laws of the external world appear insurmountable, and the sense of a particularly impassable dualism ensues.

The fallen nature of the creative act

A central tenet of Berdiaev's thought about creativity thus consists in his belief that all the products of creativity are fallen. By this he means that the end result of creativity never delivers the creative 'flight' or transcendence present in the original creative intention. This takes on specific temporal consequences: although the creative act takes place (or perhaps begins) *outside* time, creative products appear *within* time. Creative activity in the final analysis thus fails to transcend time:

> Творческий акт происходит вне времени. Во времени лишь продукты творчества, лишь объективизация. Продукты творчества не могут удовлетворять творца.[595]

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[594] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, pp. 163-64.
[595] Ibid., p. 258.

Fall occurs due to the necessity for the creator to deal with the objectified world. The products of creative acts consequently appear *in* time: rather than creating the movement of time, they instead are described as falling into it and, it is implied, as obeying its rules. Even more significantly, this interaction is described in terms of the 'resistance' creativity meets from objectification:

> Первичный творческий акт есть взлет вверх, к иному миру. Но он встречает затруднение, сопротивление в материи этого мира, в ее бесформленности, массивности, тяжести, в дурной бесконечности, окружающей со всех сторон творца.[596]

It should be noted that the notion of 'bad infinity' (originally a Hegelian idea) is in fact here also a description of objectified time. The notion that 'resistance' and 'difficulty' is met upon contact with the objectified world is particularly pertinent: it suggests that objectification, and objectified time as a part of objectification, are *working against* the internal flight of the creative impulse. Therefore creative products must 'settle in (objectified) time', despite the original inspiration of the creative impulse:

> Продукты творческого акта оседают во времени. Но сам творческий акт, творческий взлет приобщается к вечности.[597]

The results of creative acts, this suggests, will therefore correspond to the objectified time in which they settle.

It is a further point of note that in Berdiaev's thinking contact with the objectified dimension cannot be avoided: as creativity is orientated towards the world, as it is triggered by a desire to change the world, it cannot just remain in the internal and satisfy itself there. It needs to issue outwards, the creator demands *departure* from himself:

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[596] Ibid., p. 160.
[597] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 134.

> Но во всяком случае творящий не может остаться в себе, он должен выйти из себя. Этот выход обычно называют воплощением, которому придают объективный характер по преимуществу.[598]

This issuing out of itself, this embodiment of the creative impulse is, however, the moment of failure. From a Hegelian perspective, Berdiaev accepts both sides of an opposition – objectified and internal – but is not willing to allow their sublimation and resolution. The objectified world is thus always encountered when a creative act takes place:

> Творческий акт человека нуждается в материи, он не может обойтись без мировой реальности, он совершается не в пустоте, не в безвоздушном пространстве.[599]

Creative activity cannot entirely work on the 'from nothing' principle, as it cannot exist without the reality of the material world. Curiously, then, it is creativity's need to incarnate itself in an object, to create something, that proves to be the cause of its downfall. Here, perhaps, Bulgakov would be able to suggest a *Christological* solution to the problem which Berdiaev does not reach: Bulgakov would suggest that Christ had demonstrated the perfectibility of matter, the assuaging of its previous sinful condition, making possible its transfiguration into something holding divine value. This would offer a way out, making the possibility of a perfect creative product real, but Berdiaev does not describe it as an option.

From this second perspective, then, objectified time conditions the results of the creative act, rather than simply existing as a consequence of them. This presents a similarity to the Absolutist position in the Absolute-Relative debate: objectified time appears dominant, untouched by events but instead forcing events to correspond to

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[598] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, pp. 160-61.
[599] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 247.

its inexorable flow. There is thus a clear, well formulated paradox: how can objectified time be the product of creative activity whilst at the same time being responsible for determining the product of this activity? Expressed in terms of the broader paradox we have been exploring prior to this section, the question of creativity demonstrates how external time is on the one hand secondary to internal time, it is at once a product of this internal time and flows from it, but, on the other hand, is paradoxically completely opposed to this internal time, and is described in strong enough terms to be able to condition this internal time and subject it to its laws.

The eschatological character of creativity

The question of the eschatological character of creative activity can now be discussed, as it throws further light on the complex relationship between time and creativity. Creativity, itself initially linked to internal time, has a paradoxical connection to objectified time: this has been established. However, according to its eschatological character, creativity is also portrayed as aiming *beyond* objectified time – it is presented as potentially transcendent to it, a channel into non-objectified time. It is therefore connected to the end and the final passage to the higher dimension. Berdiaev is quite explicit on this point:

> И творчество несет в себе эсхатологический элемент. Оно есть конец этого мира, начало нового мира.[600]

Through creativity Berdiaev invests great responsibility in man: he is to create – and thereby end – the world alongside God. Calian thus notes accurately the significance of eschatology to Berdiaev's thought on creativity:

[600] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 154.

> The creative act points to an eschatological context, to an End dimension not yet realised, where it will be successfully completed and realised. Hence the significance of eschatology to Berdyaev's notion of creativity.[601]

The possibility, however, of this 'successfully completed' creative act is, as discussion has brought to light, quite problematic – perhaps impossible.

Creative acts are eschatological because they are directed towards the end, which entails escape from objectification. They aim beyond specifically objectified time where the constant pressure of the future causes fear and harm:

> И вот задача этики творчества заключается в том, чтобы перспективу жизни сделать независимой от рокового хода времени, от будущего, которое вызывает в нас ужас и мучит нас. Творческий акт есть выход из времени, он совершается в царстве свободы, а не в царстве необходимости.[602]

Creativity is thus geared towards escaping the rule of this time, and will be completed in freedom where time does not rule. This, therefore, is the key eschatological horizon of creativity: it is aimed outside objectified time.

Looking at the first aspect of the paradox discussed above, the question arises as to how creativity on the one hand seems to create objectified time and on the other is directed outside it. If time – in whatever form – is the product of creativity, then in trying to escape time, is creativity not attempting to escape its own products? It could be suggested that the creative eschatological impetus is driven towards escaping the conditions in which creativity is fallen, escaping the conditions in which creative activity continues to create time. However, this does not remove the situation in which creative activity is in conflict with its own product: although it tries to escape objectified time, it continues to create this same time. If we consider the

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[601] Calian, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of Hope*, p. 64.
[602] Ibid., p. 133.

second half of the paradox, the solution would also be similarly problematic: if objectified time were totally independent from internal time and internal creativity, then what hope would there be for a creative eschatological overcoming of objectified time, if such objectified time always changes the products of creativity, and makes them objectified? Moreover, what need would there even be to overcome such time if it were independent?

Berdiaev perhaps understands this, and often discusses the 'dual nature' of time:

> И вот перед нами раскрывается двойственная природа времени. Время есть и источник надежды, и источник ужаса и муки. Обаяние будущего связано с тем, что будущее может быть изменено и в какой-то степени зависит от нас.[603]

Although we continue to hope that we can change the future (presumably through creativity), the existence of the future *in itself* is what needs to be changed. The only exit from this strange condition appears to be the complete avoidance of the objectified realm of time. If time were removed, if creativity did not have to engage in objectified time then perhaps it is conceivable that some existence outside time in the metaphysical dimension would be possible:

> И если бы вся жизнь человеческая могла превратиться в сплошной творческий акт, то времени больше не будет, не будет и будущего, как части времени.[604]

However, Berdiaev does not suggest that he wants to disregard the objectified world entirely: he does not overlook the fact that man has an empirical life or the fact that creativity has a product, not just a direction. Solution does not therefore lie in the veneration of pure potential, however attractive Berdiaev may sometimes find this idea.

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[603] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 132.
[604] Ibid., p. 133.

The impetus for eschatological creativity

There is also the question of the specific impetus for eschatologically-orientated creativity, as this complicates the relationship between internal creativity and the external world further. Here a distinction needs to be drawn between *impetus* and *source*: impetus describes the trigger for a given creative action whereas source relates to the basis which makes creativity possible, and where the creative capacity issues from. Although we know that the source of creativity is internal, it has not yet been made sufficiently clear what it is that specifically triggers a creative action. One would assume that since creativity's source is internal, and since creativity is at first a free, internal desire, its impetus would also be somehow internal. However, Berdiaev actually grounds the eschatological impetus of creative activity back in the external dimension. He holds that the fulfilment of the eschatological aim does not consist in immediate transcendence of the world, but rather the world's *transfiguration*:

> Я же исповедую активно-творческий эсхатологизм, который призывает к преображению мира.[605]

Man is dissatisfied with the world and therefore desires to change it. The impetus for creative eschatology thus lies in a negative reflection on the objectified world. Man sees the condition of the world and desires its end:

> Творчество в своем первоисточнике связано с недовольством этим миром, оно есть конец этого мира, хочет конца этого мира в своем первоначальном порыве и есть начало иного мира. Поэтому творчество эсхатологично.[606]

A key element of the eschatological character of creativity therefore is a special human engagement with the world. This desire to change the external world,

[605] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 338.
[606] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 162.

however, always seems to lead to the downfall of the creative impulse: as soon as it is subjected to the conditions of objectification, fall inexorably ensues. This demonstrates, in a circular way, how creative eschatology is intertwined with the external world in both its product and impetus: the impetus of the creative act derives from a response to the creative product, which then leads to the creation of another, similar product, which leads to the same reaction, and so the process seems to go on *ad infinitum.*

Eschatological creativity as unstable

One of the even more opaque, but nonetheless interesting, comments that Berdiaev makes concerns his understanding of the connection between the instability of being and creativity:

> Для философии творчества основным является сознание, что человек не находится в законченной и стабилизированной системе бытия, и только потому возможен и понятен творческий акт человека.[607]

The world condition, as Berdiaev understands it, is not stabilised, and it is this lack of stability that makes the creative act both cognisable and possible. This immediately suggests the importance of the notion of *temporality as crisis*: for Berdiaev, the unstable, or, perhaps, 'crisis' state of the world and time is what makes the 'philosophy of creativity' – i.e. a defining aspect of his broader philosophy – understandable. What is particularly noticeable is how he does not offer any discussion of what a transfigured, or completed, resolved or 'stabilised' world might look like: crisis and instability, therefore, penetrate deep into his worldview, and, despite his focus on eschatology, he does not prophesy an end of this condition.

[607] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 152.

Does objectified time overcome creativity?

A broader question emerges: is Berdiaev's philosophy of creativity, by merit of the power attributed to objectified time and the objectified world, fundamentally pessimistic? Should we, rather than talking of Calian's 'Philosophy of Hope', instead be discussing the opposite? There is much that could be put forward to support this idea, although it is misleading when taken too far: to do so would detract from the point that his philosophy is dualistic and paradoxical – neither side appears to overcome the other. However, there is still an element of pessimism related to creativity: Berdiaev describes a situation in which the conditions of the objectified world, amongst them time, bring down creativity and doom it to failure. He therefore identifies the continual failures of creative activity, due to the fact that it never succeeds in realising its intention:

> Творческий акт в своей первоначальной чистоте направлен на новую жизнь, новое бытие, новое небо и новую землю, на преображение мира. Но в условиях падшего мира он отяжелевает, притягивается вниз, подчиняется необходимому заказу, он создает не новую жизнь, а культурные продукты большего или меньшего совершенства.[608]

Looking at the relationship between time and creativity, what does this say about the possibility of escape from objectified time? As we know, the creative product is temporal, not eternal: the result is not transcendence. Although it is not a *total* failure, as products are produced, something does issue from the creative flight – one could speculate that the total, abject failure of creative activity would be the failure to produce anything whatsoever – however, these are only pale reflections of the original creative flame. This situation makes the conceptualisation of a successful eschatological end distinctly problematic.

[608] Ibid., p. 248.

Berdiaev is not unaware of the problem, although in the main only disregards such criticism:

> Но хотелось бы предотвратить ложное понимание моей мысли. Я совсем не отрицаю смысла продуктов творчества в этом мире. Это есть путь человека, человек должен пройти через творчество культуры и цивилизации. Но это есть творчество символическое, дающее лишь знаки реального преображения. Реалистическое творчество было бы преображением мира, концом этого мира, возникновением нового неба и новой земли.[609]

Instead, however, he falls back on a symbolist aesthetic, claiming that we see only 'signs' of real transfiguration, thereby demonstrating that he remains a Silver Age thinker, in this sense, to the end. Indeed, he also remains caught up in the consequences of the paradox that seems to encroach into all areas of his work. He is at a halfway house, as it were, admitting the partial intersection of the domains of time and eternity – there are 'signs' of the latter existing in the former – but is unable to describe how the full transfer from one to the other can successfully take place.

Tragedy

The time-creativity-objectification relation is thus valuable in that it describes the possibility of eternity and internal time interacting with objectified time. Berdiaev understands the difficulties that arise from his philosophy, and, therefore, when discussing the relationship between objectified time, eternity and creativity he is inclined to use the term 'tragedy' to describe their interrelation. He argues:

> Все продукты творчества могут быть временны и тленны, но сам творческий огонь есть огонь вечности, в котором должно было бы сгореть все временное. В этом трагедия творчества. Он хочет вечности и вечного, а создает временное,

[609] Ibid., pp. 248-49.

> создает культуру во времени, в истории.[610]

However, he still admits that the attempt to reach the eternal fails: despite desiring the eternal, creativity creates only the temporal. This represents the fall of the original creative movement into the objective world. It is hard to see exactly how Berdiaev expects to move beyond this problem that, in terms of its aim of transcending objectified time, creativity is set a seemingly Sisyphean task: despite continuing labour, it does not really achieve anything.

The reference to 'signs' of the eternal is not the only such instance of this type of thinking, and elsewhere, for example, he writes about the glimmering of the noumenon in the phenomenon:

> Творчество нуменально по своему первоисточнику, но оно обнаруживает себя в мире феноменальном. Продукт творчества принадлежит к феноменам, но в них просвечивает и нуменальное, в них есть вечное.[611]

However, this should be contrasted with the more frequent reflections he makes on the tragic failures of creative activity, on the conspicuous lack of full realisation. Consider, for example:

> Творческое горение, творческий взлет всегда направлены на создание новой жизни, нового бытия, но в результате получаются охлажденные продукты культуры, культурные ценности, книги, картины, учреждения, добрые дела.[612]

> Творческий акт устремлен к бесконечному, форма же творческого продукта всегда кончена.[613]

> Но я изначально сознал глубокую трагедию человеческого творчества и его роковую неудачу в условиях мира.[614]

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[610] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, pp. 124-35.
[611] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 164.
[612] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 119.
[613] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 161.
[614] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 248.

These quotations, taken from across the three texts we have been looking at, are sufficiently expressive to demonstrate that Berdiaev primarily sees the *tragedy* of creativity in the object world. Given what has been highlighted by the discussion of the relationship between internal and external time in their connection through creativity, this is to be expected: the paradox Berdiaev describes thus appears unsolvable.

Preliminary conclusions: creativity and time

Exploration of the issue of creativity therefore clarifies further some of the general issues that surround the question of time in Berdiaev's work. In particular it highlights with greater accuracy the paradox that exists in the interrelation between non-objectified, internal time and objectified, external time: it demonstrates that a connection between the two exists, but, in view of their strong opposition can only be conceived paradoxically. Both are described in terms of their potential to surmount the other: the flow of internal time, through creativity, in one instance seems to create the somehow corresponding flow of external time, and in another this external flow of time appears to condition the product of this creative process. The elucidating role of creativity here is similar to the role it played in Bulgakov's thought, as, by looking at the problem of creativity and history in the latter's philosophy, the multifaceted nature of the determinist assumptions he held became more evident. Clearly, for both thinkers, creativity plays an important role in the structuring of thought about time.

In terms of the broader goals of Berdiaev's thinking, this paradox brings with it certain difficulties. By describing the failure of the creative act, he points towards the apparent impossibility of both the full movement of non-objectified time into

objectified time (the opening stage of the creative process) and also the apparent impossibility of the full contrary movement (the eschatological horizon of creativity). All he describes is the potential for 'signs' or indications – that is, imperfect reflections. The fleeting moment of connection between internal and external does not provide a satisfactory result either way. Although Berdiaev might, in line with his broader ideas surrounding the importance of the 'moment', argue that in this context man should seek to 'exit into the moment' and depart this way, this does not seem to be a tangible alternative due to the impossibility of full crossover. As creativity is so central to his philosophy, it begins to appear that man is trapped within Berdiaev's paradox: if creativity does not open a way out of objectified time, how is man to escape?

Freedom and time

The next of the problems related to time that will be considered is that of freedom. Berdiaev has been considered by many the 'philosopher of freedom', and he accepted willingly this grand title:

> Меня называют философом свободы [...] И я, действительно, превыше всего возлюбил свободу. Я изошел от свободы, она моя родительница. Свобода для меня первичное бытие.[615]

It was perhaps Berdiaev's insistence on the pervasive importance of freedom that won him the admiration of such a variety of readers – many found the radical assertion of freedom both tempting and engaging. As Lowrie, in unapologetically eulogistic terms, puts it:

> If Berdyaev was a knight, he was a rebel knight, and his insistence on his own freedom

[615] Ibid., p. 60.

> was more than a passive refusal to accept authority or discipline; it usually meant an attack upon "whatever powers there be."[616]

Beyond the more hagiographic engagements with Berdiaev, there is more serious work on Berdiaev's philosophy of freedom. Recently Gęścińska and Lepez captured the scope of Berdiaev's thought on freedom, on how it tied in with his (then very popular) critique of communism, and thereby made him an increasingly well-known figure:

> Freedom is indeed *the* recurrent theme of Berdjaev's thought. Berdjaev is a great advocate of freedom, *true freedom*, which is especially reflected in (a) his rejection of the concept of negative liberty, (b) his emphasis on the importance of autonomy for, or the internal foundation of, morality, (c) his critique of communism and totalitarianism that deprive man of his freedom, and (d) his critique of the ''dictate of the masses'' in democracy.[617]

As Gęścińska and Lepez elaborate, Berdiaev's espousal of freedom is thus more complex than just a rebellious rejection of political, social and religious orthodoxy, it also had a significant intellectual dimension and was built into the foundations of his philosophy.

The relationship between freedom and time brings up some significant issues. However, it is does not feature as dominantly as the time-creativity relation, and so will be dealt with more briefly. Indeed, rather, the idea of freedom was *integrated* into work on creativity – many of the issues which arise with freedom have thus already been addressed. There are also, however, some independent issues: freedom plays an important non-determinist role in Berdiaev's philosophy of time, as it works against linear, progress-like movement. It also brings up the question of the

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[616] Lowrie, *Rebellious Prophet,* p. 283.
[617] Alicja A. Gęścińska, Steven Lepez, 'Freedom as praxis: a comparative analysis of August Cieszkowski and Nikolaj Berdjaev', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (2010), pp. 109-23 (p. 111).

relationship between nonbeing and time, and of God's potential for control over objectified time. It should, however, be noted that Berdiaev rarely directly connects freedom and time. In view of this, then, we are exploring the *consequences* his philosophy of freedom brings for his philosophy of time.

Freedom and creativity

As was established previously, creativity is central to the possibility of time: it, from a certain perspective, allows time to move by creating newness. Although we do not want to repeat these conclusions with the word 'freedom' in the place of 'creativity', there can still be an analogous assertion that if creativity makes time possible, then likewise freedom makes time possible, because creativity is not possible without freedom. Indeed, in a rephrasing of the theological idea that God awaits creativity from man, in *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (1927-8) Berdiaev arrives at the formulation:

> Бог ждет от меня акта свободы, свободного творчества.[618]

He is able to do this due to the fact that genuine creativity presupposes man's participation in genuine, other-worldly freedom, as he writes in his seminal *Smysl tvorchestva* (1916):

> Творчество неотрывно от свободы. Лишь свободный творит. Из необходимости рождается лишь эволюция; творчество рождается из свободы. Когда мы говорим на нашем несовершенном человеческом языке о творчестве из ничего, то мы говорим о творчестве из свободы.[619]

Considering earlier conclusions, we can suggest then that if objectified time is created by newness then this creation is likewise dependent on the existence of

[618] Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha*, p. 20.
[619] Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva*, p. 368.

freedom. Similarly, if creativity is conversely subjected to objectified time, then freedom is in the same way subjected to objectified time. As before, the relationship between time and freedom will posit the same paradox: is freedom *responsible* for the existence of objectified, external time, or is it subjected *to* external time? Again, the paradoxical solution can be suggested that both statements are true.

Time and nonbeing

If time moves due to freedom, time also exists due to the existence of nothingness or nonbeing (as with Bulgakov the distinction is a little indistinct). When discussing the initial, uncreated freedom man draws on to create, Berdiaev establishes a close similarity between freedom and nonbeing:

> В недрах потенции, которая не есть бытие, и которую мы апофатически принуждены называть небытием, заложена та первичная, до-бытийственная свобода, без которой не может быть творчества нового, небывшего.[620]

Although in the above it seems that pre-ontological freedom 'lies' in nonbeing, suggesting a difference between the two, there is in fact an emergent blurring of the division between freedom and nonbeing. Indeed Berdiaev continues in a way that suggests an identity between them:

> Можно апофатически сказать, что нумен есть небытие, потому что нумен есть свобода. Бытие же есть детерминация, бытие не есть свобода.[621]

Freedom and nonbeing, if they are not coterminous, become very closely related. Understanding the significance of nonbeing to creativity and consequently its role in the development of the world, Berdiaev is led the somewhat Hegelian proclamation that the 'dialectic of world development' is possible only due the existence of

[620] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 143.
[621] Ibid., p. 144.

nonbeing:

> Становление, диалектика мирового развития возможны лишь потому, что есть небытие. Если допустить лишь бытие, то накакого развития не будет. Новизна в становлении возникает из недр небытия.[622]

In such a way, then, when Berdiaev claims that objectified time depends on creativity, he is also suggesting that it depends on freedom and nonbeing. These things, although all engaging in the same process, are not identical: creativity relates more to activity; freedom and nonbeing to being. They are all requisite, however, for the movement of time. This therefore corresponds to the point made earlier that objectified time relates both to human activity and human modes of being.

Berdiaev's perspective on nonbeing also suggests the positive potential of nonbeing, as it is not constrained or determined and is drawn upon in creative activity. This is very different to Bulgakov, who perceived negative value in nonbeing, and who also argued that man did not have access to nonbeing. Again, then, the potentially chaotic nonbeing is restricted in Bulgakov's thinking where it is given freer rein in Berdiaev's. Given the significance of nonbeing to the temporal processes of both philosophers, it becomes ever clearer how Berdiaev's conception of time was fundamentally broader, freer and less determined than Bulgakov's.

Preliminary conclusions: freedom and time

Berdiaev's thinking about freedom, although not always conspicuous in its connection with thinking about time, therefore set conditions that influenced his temporal philosophy. The first of these was that the existence of freedom essentially allowed objectified time to occur due to the importance of freedom in the creative

[622] Ibid., p. 143.

process. Similarly freedom, in its close connection with nonbeing, establishes a tie between objectified time and nonbeing, as the existence of nonbeing also makes creativity possible. More deeply, perhaps, Berdiaev's work on freedom demonstrates a broader tendency in his philosophy. It reveals a type of thinking inclined towards deep, binary divisions between created-uncreated, free-unfree, and internal-external. These divisions also manifested themselves the strong distinction being drawn between non-objectified time and objectified time. Freedom should thus be viewed from this perspective, and be understood to relate to the 'internal' rather than the 'external': as a part of the former, it will sit in paradoxical connection with the latter. In terms of a comparison with Bulgakov, much that was said about creativity can apply here. Bulgakov puts less impetus on freedom as he does not advocate primordial freedom: his view of the historical process is determined and therefore freedom fits in as a part of that determinism. Berdiaev, however, through his interpretation of freedom aims to make time less determined. Although there has been less to say about freedom than about creativity in Berdiaev's philosophy of time it can still be suggested that freedom, as a crucial element in creativity, is of more profound importance to Berdiaev's philosophy that it was for Bulgakov's. Instead, Bulgakov's *restriction* of freedom became more important.

Evil and time

The final problem that takes on temporal significance for Berdiaev is that of evil. Much of the discussion above has indirectly touched upon the problem of evil, chiefly due to the possibility that for Berdiaev objectified time could be, or represent, evil: Original Sin created objectification, thus objectified time could be, or could be evidence of, evil. In Berdiaev's reckoning the possibility of evil lies in the potential of genuine freedom: freedom, which is also nothing, is external to God's influence and

is compelled neither towards good nor evil. Such potential, connected to nonbeing, thus contains the possibility for evil:

> Ибо всякое восстание против Бога есть возврат к небытию, принявшему форму ложного фантасмагорического бытия, победа ничто над божественным светом. И тогда только ничто, которое не есть зло, превращается в зло.[623]

Nothing, whilst not being evil, has the potential to become evil, just in the way it has the potential to be good: it is independent from coercion. Indeed, the absence of the freedom to evil, and to protest against God, the absence of the possibility to turn the *nichto* into evil would be deterministic, which would go against the principle of freedom that is present throughout Berdiaev's philosophy:

> Человек, лишенный свободы зла, был бы автоматом добра.[624]

The possibility of evil, as will be discussed in greater depth in section 4, allows for a final eschatological turn towards cosmic rather than existential time, a 'bad end' to the historical process. This is a question related to the problem of history. However, generally speaking, Berdiaev's sense of theodicy is more straightforward and also less dominant than Bulgakov's, meaning that the significance of objectified time's potential 'evil' character is not so significant. It still, however, merits discussion.

Is objectified time evil?

The principal question regarding evil and objectified time is thus the character of this form of time in Berdiaev's reckoning. Establishing the more evil character of objectified time helps identify the dualistic character of Berdiaev's temporal philosophy more broadly: 'evil' objectified time could potentially be set against 'good', non-objectified time. To a certain extent this potential good-evil dualism is picked up

[623] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 39.
[624] Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha*, p. 95.

upon by Berdiaev himself, who notes in *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki:*

> Не только для опознания и объяснения факта существования зла, но для возможности самого существования мира и человека, необходимо допустить дуалистический момент.[625]

However, as ever with Berdiaev, this clear opposition, whilst at some points detectable, is also made more complex by the paradox which underpins his thought more generally. He therefore continues to write:

> Но этот дуалистический момент нужно мыслить диалектически, его нельзя превратить в дуалистическую онтологию, которая столь же ошибочно, как и онтология монистическая.[626]

Although objectified time may well to a certain extent be 'evil', it would also be caught up in a complex *dialectical* relationship in which evil (objectified time) would pass into good (non-objectified time) and good back into evil. Paradoxically, then, non-objectified time should have some sort of connection to 'good', internal time.

Before this is explored further, however, there needs to be some mention of Berdiaev's conception of the nature of evil. He makes a direct association between the object and evil, as is explained in *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka* (1939):

> Объект всегда злой, добрым может быть лишь субъект.[627]

Indeed, this sort of deeply negative reflection on the objectified world has prevailed throughout Berdiaev's work. He notes in *Smysl tvorchestva* (1916):

> Дух человеческий – в плену. Плен этот я называю «миром», мировой данностью, необходимостью.[628]

A salient characteristic of evil is therefore is object quality, and this is accompanied

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[625] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 128.
[626] Ibid., p. 128.
[627] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 15.
[628] Berdiaev, *Smysl tvorchestva*, p. 254.

by various deterministic and necessitating attributes. One would assume, therefore, that anything of an ‘objectified’ character would correspond to such an evil character.

Looking at Berdiaev’s description of objectified time, he frequently ascribes to it a deterministic, coercive and therefore potentially evil character, but also conversely he also regularly tries to break this principle of the necessity of objectified time, tries to break it down and root it back within the internal. Hence the old quandary: it is unlikely that it will ever be described as purely ‘evil’, due to the paradox that describes its connection with the interior world. On the one hand objectified time is a disease, it is fallen from eternity, it is the temporal framework externally imposed upon man in which death is unavoidable and in which the human organism breaks apart, whilst on the other hand time is the almost the tool of man, it adopts his modes of experience, he controls it, and it is therefore connected to his interior:

> Время есть падшесть в судьбе мира. Но неверно было бы сказать, что только падшесть. Время есть также продукт движения, активности, творчества, но ущербленных и притянутых вниз.[629]

However, as with creativity, despite the fact that objectified time is rooted within man he still wants to escape it, his creative desire orientates him beyond such time, towards an escape from decaying and disintegrating into the merciless current of the future. A definitive judgement cannot be passed: it is thus quite ambiguous whether or not objectified time is evil. Although there is perhaps more material to suggest that it is more evil than it is good, the fact that Berdiaev wants to connect objectified time to the subject, to give it at least the potential to be good, cannot just be disregarded.

This is again quite different to Bulgakov for whom, as with the questions of

[629] Berdiaev, *Ia i mir ob"ektov*, p. 287.

creativity and freedom, evil was a much more controlled problem: it was constricted by a well formulated, deterministic theodicy. Berdiaev, however, by linking freedom to the *nichto* beyond God's reach gave a greater freedom to evil, meaning that the evil aspects of time allow it to run free of any divine coercion. For Bulgakov evil was limited in the same way as the rest of existence was, meaning that it was understood in a more Hegelian sense, where it was perceived as an unfortunate consequence of an inexorable process moving towards the realisation of the Kingdom of God. Consequently, evil appears to be of lesser importance in Berdiaev's work as it is tied to the broader theme of the internal-external dualism: it is not such an immediate problem, so Berdiaev does not concern himself with it in the same way.

Conclusions: the temporalised problems

The problems of creativity and freedom are therefore of much greater consequence to Berdiaev's philosophy of time than the problem of evil, which just reflects the dualistic tendency which flows through this thinking. However, together they highlight with much greater precision the deep paradox that runs through Berdiaev's thought about time, concerning the relationship between internal and external forms of time. Significantly, these same problems also revealed the more deterministic characteristics of Bulgakov's thought about history: for him, however, evil was the most important, as was suggested in his notion that evil cannot win in the world. Although creativity and freedom also figured in this thinking, they, like evil in Berdiaev's thought, were of lesser consequence. Despite dealing with these issues in different ways, then, they were all of continued concern for both philosophers, and their description had considerable impact on the way in which they would describe time and time-as-history. Indeed, the ways in which they differently

engaged with these problems perhaps helps explain some of the reasons why they tended to opposite solutions of the time-history/history-time relation in the first place.

More broadly, Berdiaev revealed a temporal dimension to these issues as they helped explain how time, in its dual forms, was experienced directly by the person. Given his general mystical focus, as ‘internal’ capacities he sought to give creativity, freedom and also the potential for evil free reign. He also sought, however, to highlight how these capacities were restricted by the external dimension. Conversely Bulgakov, as an inherently more structural thinker, chose to limit the scope of these capacities: man was free *to an extent*, man created *under guidance*, and man was unable to do evil that might overturn God. Seeing as he did an inevitable end to history, brought about through Sophiological activity directed towards the establishment of the kingdom of God, he looked at these problems through the lens of achieving this goal across the course of history, rather than engaging with them as immediate problems of the present. Berdiaev was concerned with man’s abilities as they came from *within*, and thus looked at time as a field for this activity. Bulgakov was more modest in his appraisal of mankind, and sought to impose limits upon these capacities and wanted to put them within a structure where they received greater meaning from above.

Conclusions: Berdiaev's philosophy of time

Berdiaev's engagement with the problem of time presents a many-sided reflection on an issue that cut right to the heart of his thinking. His work on pure time – i.e. time *as time*, rather than as history – is evidently much broader than Bulgakov's, who when speaking only about time was nowhere near as expansive. Central to the comparison between the two was the different ways in which the organisation of their respective philosophies naturally presented the problem of time, and also the different points at which time manifested itself in their work. For Berdiaev, more so than for Bulgakov, time was an obvious, troubling question:

> Проблема времени есть основная проблема человеческого существования.[630]

While still understanding the relevance of time, Bulgakov was able to instead approach it through the prism of history. Indeed, as Bulgakov demanded a greater sense of structure than Berdiaev, he was perhaps naturally inclined to give primacy to history over time, as history for him offered a clearer framework in which the troubles of the present would eventually solve themselves. Time perhaps did not provide such a sense of security.

Conversely, Berdiaev ascribed primacy to time over history. This can be seen as a result of the existentialist character of much of his thinking: when looking at the immediate conditions of man's existence, his life in the world, he found time, and the conditions that time imposes upon man a prevalent feature of his existence and experience. He was thus more interested in time because it is an immediate problem: he did not look at it in a structural fashion, but was driven to discover what he perceived to be the 'truth' of human life through its exploration. For Berdiaev,

[630] Ibid., p. 281.

structures and systems did not offer the deeper meaning to life.

However, as has been established, much of Berdiaev's reflection upon the nature of time was caught up in a paradox which underpins his philosophy more broadly. His conceptualisation of time is profoundly dualistic: on the one hand he intuits an internal, existential time, an 'eternity' which belongs to the mystical domain of interior, untrammelled experience whereas on the other he finds an external, 'objectified' time, one which is hostile to the internal and existential. The first, reminiscent of Bergson's notion of the *durée* or Heidegger's *originary temporality* is undivided, full and sits at the core of man's internal being, whereas the second is broken apart and split into the merciless, endless procession of past and future. Despite this opposition a paradoxical connection between these two types of time is also posited. This is achieved through a variety a philosophical means – it is identified in work specifically dealing with time – but is clarified in particular by his work on creativity and time. Creativity describes how human activity, beginning in internal, existential time but manifesting itself in external, objectified time connects together the two different temporal domains, which are revealed to be in a paradoxical state of mutual connection and repulsion. Berdiaev therefore successfully maintains a dual perspective on time in which paradox features prominently: he understands that time is connected to hope, potential, and the internal, but also that it is externalised, cruel, and that it brings about the continual, impending pressure of human mortality.

This dualistic and paradoxical perspective on time is the result of the unique mixture of Christian mystic and philosophical ideas that Berdiaev takes on. Whilst there is a large amount of interexchange between these various types of thinking in his thought, it can be seen how mystical thinking, combined with a deep existentialist

proclivity, propagated the notion of opposition between such categories as internal-external and uncreated-created. Likewise, an antipathy towards positivism and an interest in Kant focused his mind on the object-subject divide, and, ensuing from this and also from a concern with the determinism of German idealists such as Hegel, Berdiaev also drew a divide between free and determined. Drawing these various strands of thought together, Berdiaev's philosophy of time thus identifies a time in which all the 'good' sides of these divisions (internal, subjective, uncreated, free and so on) sit and another in which all the 'bad' sides (external, object, created, determined etc.) sit. They resist one another but also connect to one another, as they are, after all, both still temporal.

This paradox within Berdiaev's philosophy of time allows for reflection on a broader issue that could be raised regarding one of his dominant philosophical concepts, that of objectification. Considering the relationship between internal and external forms of time highlights questions surrounding the more exact nature of the relationship between objectification, the external, object would, and man's internal, existential and divine life. How is it possible, one is led to wonder, that man, in the beginning, was able to take his internal life and externalise it? How does this external world then relate to the internal world? After all, at one level the external world is set against man, it determines him and resists his ambitions, but it is nonetheless still originally the product of his originally internal, free activity. Furthermore, in view of the primacy of freedom in Berdiaev's thinking, how free, then, is the objectified world from God's divine influence? Can it comprehensively fall away from the internal in some great, all-encompassing catastrophe? Due to the importance Berdiaev places on the paradox of the relationship between internal and external, it is very difficult to provide any answer or solution to these problems other than by reaching towards

further paradox.

4. Berdiaev's Philosophy of History

> Я проникнут темой истории, я читал много книг по истории, но я всегда испытывал нравственное страдание при чтении исторических книг, до того история представлялась мне преступной.
>
> *Samopoznanie,* 1947.[631]

Introduction and definition

The emphasis Berdiaev placed upon time by no means meant that he relegated the problem of history to the background of his philosophy. Indeed, he wrote significantly about history: it plays a vibrant, distinct role in his thinking and he has much to say on the subject. Noticeably Berdiaev's philosophy of history has garnered more attention than his philosophy of time. A larger number of scholars have written about history in Berdiaev's work and it has generally been accepted as a central theme in his philosophy:

> Из сказанного ясно, сколь важна для Бердяева философия истории. По сути дела – это основная арена мировой драмы.[632]

Research into Berdiaev's philosophy of history has been conducted both in recent scholarship and by the generation of Berdiaev scholars who were active in the years after his death.[633] Perhaps they were more drawn to examine Berdiaev's work on

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[631] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 343.
[632] Dobrokhotov, 'Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev', p. 52.
[633] Notable recent works include: Augustyn, 'Utopia and history. Some remarks about Nikolai Berdjaev's struggle with history'; Christian Gottlieb, *Dilemmas of Reaction in Leninist Russia: The Christian Response to the Revolution in the Works of N.A. Berdyaev 1917-1924* (Odense, 2003).

history because history is considered a particularly 'Russian' theme – Courten, for example, is of the view that:

> …it became the task of the philosopher and the intellectual in Russia to gain insight into the course of history, and to determine which place Russia had in it.[634]

As this indicates, an inclination to think about history also allows discussion to lead towards debate of *Russian* history: philosophers – and then also critics – of a Russo-centric perspective wanting to enter into discussion of Russian destiny find fertile soil in the question of history, and are thus often drawn to write about it. Berdiaev's work on history, and many of the reflections of Russian commentators upon it, follow this tendency. Berdiaev was keenly aware of Russian experience, of the Russian people and of a Russian 'mission' in the context of history:

> Русский народ из всех народов мира наиболее всечеловеческий, вселенский по своему духу, это принадлежит строению его национального духа. И призванием русского народа должно быть дело мирового объединения, образование единого христианского духовного космоса.[635]

However, this sort of messianic nationalism is not the focal point of this study and is hence of lesser interest.[636] It will have little effect upon his broader conceptualisation of history or on his work about history as it is related to time.

In analysis of Berdiaev's philosophy of history we will be looking at a number of texts, as history appears in a number of contexts. These include the earlier texts *Smysl istorii* (1922) and *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924), along with the milestones of

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Older works include, but are not limited to: Kuvakin, *Kritika ekzistentsializma Berdiaeva*; N. P. Poltoratzky, 'Nikolay Berdyayev's Interpretation of Russia's Historical Mission', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 45, no. 104 (1967), pp. 193-206; N. Poltoratskii, *Berdiaev i Rossiia*; David Bonner Richardson, *Berdyaev's Philosophy of History: An Existential Theory of Social Creativity and Eschatology* (The Hague, 1968).

[634] Courten, *History, Sophia and the Russian Nation*, p. 41.

[635] Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e*, p. 242.

[636] For a modern overview of Russian messianism, see Peter Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After* (London, 2000).

his later intellectual development, *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931), *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki* (1941) and *Samopoznanie* (1947). Also *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire* (1934), although mainly relating to temporality (as was discussed in section 2), has some relevant material. Although there is some difference between these texts, there is a similarity in terms of the consistency of underlying themes that inform Berdiaev's historical contemplation. The main difference that arises relates to his increasingly negative stance towards history as he gets older.

Defining 'philosophy of history' in Berdiaev's thinking

Particular attention needs to be paid to clarifying how exactly a philosophy of history is approached in Berdiaev's thought. Primarily it needs to be asserted that, as with Bulgakov, it is being used in terms of *conceptualisation* of history: this refers to the 'speculative' tradition, outlined in the introduction to this thesis, of considering the *nature* of history, and the movement and structure (or lack of structure) of history as a whole. Philosophy of history is not used in the 'analytic' sense, in which there is a systematic historical investigation of specific events which are then subjected to the terms of a broader, detailed philosophy of history. Philosophies of the latter sort pertain to thinking of a more critical, rigorous type which is harder to find in the Russian tradition of the early twentieth century. Although at times Berdiaev tries to evaluate events in the light of a perceived broader historical movement, it becomes evident that other than a quite sparse narrative (which all but disappears around 1924 after *Novoe srednevekov'e*) and a vague Christian notion of a historical schema he does not view history in this systematic sense. He is therefore more *historiosophic* than he is *historiographic* in his approach to history.

In terms of a more specific definition of Berdiaev's philosophy of history, this will be prefaced by an understanding of the position of history as a substrate of time. In view of this, our analysis of Berdiaev's philosophy of history will ultimately enrich our understanding of his philosophy of time, and clarify further his supposition of the primacy of time over history. Firstly, then, it is necessary to remain aware of the fact time still has primacy over history, and that history is comprised of time, and in such a way is a temporal space in which historical events unfold. History follows the basic narrative of the 'temporal process':

> А это ведет к признанию того, что самый временной процесс, который есть мировой исторический процесс, совершающийся в нашем времени, зачинается в вечности, что в вечности зачинается то движение, которое совершается в нашей мировой действительности.[637]

This narrative will constitute the basis of his philosophy of history. Much of the work already done on Berdiaev's later understanding of 'historical time' need not be repeated: it is already known that history is understood as horizontal progress in a forwards direction, how it is ultimately limited and how it is not an end within itself, but how it is also subject to overlapping with cosmic and interjection from existential time. We will instead be looking at the aspects of Berdiaev's writing about history that have not yet been covered, at the other ways in which he characterises the movement and structure of history. The focus of this investigation will be the discovery that the modes of historical movement Berdiaev describes ultimately contribute to a sense of *uncertainty* and *anti-linearity* which, in the context of other philosophies of history is highly unusual, and, in comparison with Bulgakov, is very different.

Definition of 'philosophy of history' is also important because taken in itself the

[637] Ibid., p. 67.

term is potentially extremely broad. As Poltoratskii accurately points out:

> Проблематичность философии истории связана с выяснением ее метода, задач, материала и границ. С ней не только соприкасаются, но нередко и перекрещиваются история в многообразных ее течениях, социология, социальная философия, философия культуры, психология народов, политическая философия и публицистика.[638]

This is especially true with Berdiaev, as so much of what he writes about history is not strictly speaking part of a 'philosophy' of history – it frequently moves into being straightforward history itself, and from there on into social commentary, intellectual criticism and political discussion. Indeed, Gottlieb remarks:

> …[Berdiaev's] philosophy of history makes it clear that, in his response to the revolution, he aspires not merely to a polemic against the revolution but to an overall integrated religious/philosophical vision of human existence on both the universal and individual levels.[639]

Taking into account the grand ambitions of Berdiaev's philosophy of history, we need to be sure that we remove the elements which for this study would be superfluous, as otherwise there will be a risk of moving into territory that, whilst no doubt revealing to Berdiaev's thought, would in this case be irrelevant.

Our investigation will centre upon the claim that Berdiaev describes a philosophy of history which is quite unconventional: while for many thinkers history is a linear process, for Berdiaev it is non-linear and uncertain. This is ultimately a reflection of the fact that an understanding of time underpins his philosophy of history. Also, the prevalence of the idea of uncreated, un-coerced freedom, and of a focus on eschatology further informs this unusual conceptualisation of history and historical development.

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[638] Poltoratskii, *Berdiaev i Rossiia*, p. 4.
[639] Gottlieb, *Dilemmas of Reaction*, p. 233.

The difference between historical narrative and philosophy of history

Relevant to concerns surrounding the definition of Berdiaev's philosophy of history is the issue that Berdiaev also had a particular inclination to write histories, or narratives on a variety of phenomena. The linearity he describes in these narratives could be seen to undermine the non-linearity which will be argued belongs to his philosophy of history. Berdiaev narrates accounts of a whole host of issues, which are variously political, intellectual, religious, social and economic. In these accounts he rarely cites other sources, but rather just presents an assumed historical knowledge.[640] At first glance it appears he may be talking about something which ostensibly falls under the rubric of the *philosophy* of history. However, what is rather being offered is his interpretation of prosaic *history* – i.e. a description of the development of a particular social grouping or intellectual movement. The terms of these narratives rarely correlate with his philosophical ideas about the nature of history. The two can thus be considered separately.

What will therefore be argued is that Berdiaev's *philosophy* of history is actually quite different to his *writing* of history: where his writing of history is quite linear, his philosophy of history is much less linear and more confused, more paradoxical. Philosophy of history thus reflects on how he understands history in a deeper, more holistic sense, whereas writing history is an attempt to construct a narrative of a particular event or part of history. There rarely seems to be much overlapping between the two: his philosophy of history does not inform his writing of

[640] There is some debate over his use of sources, both historical and philosophical. Davy, representative of a more unquestioning approach to Berdiaev, describes the situation quite forgivingly by suggesting: 'Berdyaev gave his allegiance to truth alone, adopting an identical attitude to the authors he read or to political movements or religions. He picked out what he thought true and rejected what he judged false.' M.-M. Davy, *Nicolas Berdyaev*, pp. 110-11. Gottlieb, on the other hand, takes a far more astute, critical approach and is thus less positive: 'On the whole his presentation seems to convey the impression that his insight into some 3000 years of history is simply a matter of course.' Gottlieb, *Dilemmas of Reaction*, p. 237.

history. At the only point at where they significantly overlap, in *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924), linearity breaks down. Interestingly, the qualitative difference between Berdiaev's philosophy of history and his writing of history could be compared to the difference between his essays dedicated to the discussion of other writers (which are frequently quite cogent) and his exposition of his personal philosophy.[641] Perhaps when he has an external reference point – i.e. ideas that are not of his personal genesis – he is able to write more clearly.

[641] Upon reading, for example, Berdiaev's *Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo* (Prague, 1923) or his *Konstantin Leont'ev. Ocherk iz istorii russkoi religioznoi mysli* (Paris, 1926), one is struck by a cogency and structure of analysis that is quite difficult to find in his general philosophical exposition.

History as uncertain

Two defining features have been hypothesised for Berdiaev's philosophy of history: uncertainty and non-linearity. Historical 'uncertainty' relates to the fact that, due to the nature of his own philosophy, Berdiaev is unable to provide the sense of certainty that Bulgakov, for example, could provide when talking about the process and end of history. Walicki has recently contended that:

> Berdjaev and Bulgakov […] awaited a health-restoring spiritual revolution and allotted Russia a special role in Christianity's transformation of the world...[642]

Although it is true that both awaited it, there is sufficient evidence to say that Berdiaev was racked by the concern that this spiritual revolution may never come. Indeed, through the logic of his own philosophy, which placed great emphasis upon freedom and also upon the freedom to evil, Berdiaev was compelled to accept the possibility of a bad end to history. Although a belief in the end of history itself is not challenged, we do not see the same confidence in the outcome of the historical process that many other Russian philosophers – in this case particularly Bulgakov – possessed. There is therefore a fundamental uncertainty in Berdiaev's philosophy of history that, when combined with its non-linear quality, makes for a sense of history that is quite different to many of the other historical modes of thinking that we have come across – for example, Hegel, Marx, and also much Christian thought, including the Church fathers. However, unlike other philosophers such as Bergson and Heidegger, with whom Berdiaev had significant similarity, he still wanted to discuss history at length.

This uncertainty regarding history reflects a different engagement with the sense of *temporality-as-crisis* than was seen with Bulgakov. Where Bulgakov saw

[642] Andrzej Walicki, Milestones and Russian intellectual history', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (2010) pp. 101-07 (p. 104).

crisis, he attempted to rationalise this crisis and understand it through a broader, providential historical narrative in which everything made sense according to a pre-determined meaning. Berdiaev, however, was perhaps more ambivalent in the face of this crisis: it shook his confidence in the world around him and he was led to wonder if the darkness of his time may overcome all. Uncertainty therefore became a prevalent theme in his conceptualisation of history.

Existentialism and Nietzsche

A key dimension of this uncertainty is rooted in Berdiaev's existentialism. Just as with time, man is deeply significant to his understanding of how history moves – man's activity shapes history, man reveals his destiny in history and man will one day end history. Man and history are inseparable:

> Нельзя выделить человека из истории, нельзя взять его абстрактно, и нельзя выделить историю из человека, нельзя историю рассматривать вне человека и нечеловечески.[643]

History will thus be 'within' man, just as time (from one perspective) was:

> Человек есть в высочайшей степени историческое существо. Человек находится в историческом, и историческое находится в человеке. Между человеком и «историческим» существует такое глубокое, такое таинственное в своей первооснове сращение, такая конкретная взаимность, что разрыв их невозможен.[644]

All that we know about Berdiaev's ontology and his understanding of man is thus relevant to his understanding of history, and in order to understand how he conceptualises history, the idea that history is a reflection of man's development

[643] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 21.
[644] Ibid., p. 21.

must be appreciated. As before, Berdiaev's existentialism is tied to the Christian creation myth, so much of his conceptualisation of history is also meant to follow the Christian narrative. One would assume that this provides a degree of certainty, but it does not.

Uncertainty is rooted in Berdiaev's assertion of man's freedom: man is free to do as he wants, and, as history is indivisible from man, history becomes what man chooses to make it. Here we return back to the question of creativity, which, as it did with time, assumes an important role in the historical process:

> Наступит эпоха, новый исторический эон, когда эсхатологический смысл творчества будет окончательно выявлен. Проблема творчества упирается в проблему смысла истории.[645]

Through creativity, then, man is free to direct himself towards whatever he chooses in history. As he is free, as he bears the likeness to God, he is able to create in such a way as he sees fit, and by this he can lead history in whichever direction he chooses.

There is thus a significant typological comparison to draw between Nietzsche's conceptualisation of history presented in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1885) and Berdiaev's. Zarathustra claims:

> Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman – a rope over an abyss. A dangerous going-across, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and staying-still.[646]

Although the end of history is different – Nietzsche sees it in the advent of the Superman, Berdiaev in the Kingdom of God – the confluence of their thinking is marked. Both place man at the centre, both see history as specifically man's great

[645] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 170.
[646] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathrustra*, p. 43.

endeavour:

> Весь мировой процесс стоит под знаком Человека...[647]

Similarly, both describe the process as uncertain. History, Zarathustra proclaims, is fraught with 'danger': it is a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous wayfaring and a dangerous staying-still. Berdiaev's focus on freedom similarly propagates this uncertainty. Man's participation in uncreated freedom means that history is fundamentally uncertain:

> Свобода заключает в себе такое темное иррациональное начало, которое не дает никакой внутренней гарантии, что свет победит тьму, что божественно заданная тема будет разрешена, что дан будет ответ на заданную Богом тему о свободной любви.[648]

Creativity is also tied to history, and this makes history all the more uncertain and unstable as it is free to be used towards bad ends. The significance attached to free creativity as man's god-like ability is also quite profoundly Nietzschean, as Bonetskaia has recently noted.[649] History could end well or end badly, at any point. Berdiaev's insistence on man's freedom in history to choose between good and evil earned him some disrepute in his own day – Karsarvin, commenting in 1923 in *Sovremennye zapiski* on Berdiaev's *Smysl istorii*, notes:

> Тема истории – автор прав – есть тема свободы. Но свобода вовсе не есть свобода выбора между дорбым и злом, и без выяснения понятия свободы метафизика истории невозможна.[650]

Karsavin therefore felt that Berdiaev's concept of freedom was not sufficiently

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[647] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 64.
[648] Ibid., p. 63.
[649] Bonetskaia, 'Apofeoz tvorchestva (N. Berdiaev i F. Nitsshe)', p. 89.
[650] L. P. Karsavin, 'N. A. Berdiaev. "Smysl istorii. Opyt filosofii chelovecheskoi sud'by." "Konets Renessansa. (K sovremennomu krizisu kul'tury)"', (1923), in A. A. Ermichev (ed.), *N.A. Berdiaev: pro et contra. Antologiia,* vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 1994), pp. 327-30 (p. 329).

clarified: most likely, he would have wanted to have seen freedom guided towards good, rather than, as with Berdiaev, it sitting in a void between good and evil. More broadly, then, we see then that this first moment of Berdiaev's uncertainty when faced with history is an expansion of his broader uncertainty as to which way man will choose to direct his freedom. This brings up the issue of eschatology and uncertainty.

The bifurcation of the eschatological horizon

Conventionally, eschatology relates to the end of history and/or time, the point at which history ends and where whatever lies beyond history is realised. The eschatological horizon thus refers to the orientation towards that point, the 'eschaton', at which eschatology occurs. If we look at many Russian eschatologies we see this eschatological horizon normally conceived in a single way. Fedorov, for example, sees the end of history in the resurrection of all dead generations. Solov'ev saw it in the unification of the Church and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Bulgakov saw the eschatological horizon being reached by the sophiological process of economy and the endowing of sophiological wisdom to world. Berdiaev, however, did not subscribe to a single eschatological end. His eschatological vision was bifurcated, removing the certainty of what the eschatological completion of history would consist in.

This bifurcation of the eschatological horizon in Berdiaev's philosophy is expressed in a number of ways, but these different descriptions all relate to one division: either history can end in final objectification, or history can end in transcendence and movement into the metaphysical. In his later work, a key aspect of his conceptualisation of this event relates to the final temporal mode that human

life adopts:

> История происходит в своем историческом времени, но она не может ни в нем остаться, ни в нем кончиться. История выходит или во время космическое, это утверждает натурализм и он соглашается на окончательную объективацию человеческого существования, человек оказывается лишь подчиненной частью мирового природного целого, или во время экзистенциальное, и это означает выход из царства объективации в духовный план.[651]

It is interesting to note in passing that, whilst for many the end of history is considered also in terms of an end of time, Berdiaev still sees the continuation of temporal existence after history has come to an end. History can thus end in one of two ways, one good, one bad. He posits this dual possibility on a number of separate occasions. In *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931) he discusses the issue in more Hegelian terms, looking at the way in which 'consciousness' can deal with its present lack of unity in the objectified world:

> Первоначальная подсознательная, стихийная цельность невозможна уже после возгорания сознания и прохождения через раздвоение сознания. После этого возможно или движение вверх, в рай сверхсознания, или разложение и падение в адские состояния, сохраняющие клочья сознания.[652]

So here, albeit in discussion of a quite different manner of philosophical problem, Berdiaev is still reiterates the possibility of 'disintegration and fall into hellish conditions'. This dual eschatological possibility stalks his thinking about the end, and it brings with it a feeling of the insecurity of history, of the fact that there is no indication as to which of the two outcomes will come about.

This bifurcation of the eschatological horizon is possible again due to Berdiaev's insistence on freedom. Man must be free to sin just as he must be free to

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[651] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 179.
[652] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 232.

do good. This is established from the early stages of his philosophy, in *Filosofiia svobody* (1912):

> Свобода греха, поистине, есть величайшая тайна, рационально непостижимая, но близкая каждому существу, каждым глубоко испытанная и пережитая. Но и для философствующего разума ясно, что насильственное добро, насильственная прикованность к Богу не имела бы никакой ценности, что существо, лишенное свободы избрания, свободы отпадения, не было бы личностью.[653]

In the same passage he goes on to explain how despite the fact that God may well have a plan for us, may well have put an idea for us to complete within ourselves, we are nonetheless free to pervert that idea:

> В плане творения нет насилия ни над одним существом, каждому дано осуществить свою личность, идею, заложенную в Боге, или загубить, осуществить карикатуру, подделку.[654]

The bifurcation of the eschatological horizon thus is a product of man's freedom to direct his will towards evil or towards good: final objectification is thus as equally possible as is final transcendence. These two eschatological horizons, quite opposed to one another, constitute the defining quality of Berdiaev's uncertainty about history: it can go either way, as there is nothing that can coerce man in a given direction. Objectification, slavery and necessity, whilst being opposed to freedom and God's plan, can thus be the ultimate product of freedom, as he comments in one of his last works:

> Зло бессмысленно, и оно имеет высший смысл. Также свобода противоположна необходимости и рабству, и она может перерождаться в необходимость и рабство, переходить в свою противоположность.[655]

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[653] Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobody*, pp. 138-39.
[654] Ibid., p. 138.
[655] N. Berdiaev, *Ekzistentsial'naia dialektika bozhestvennogo i chelovecheskogo*, p. 301.

History and the internal-external paradox

The paradox of the internal-external relationship we had been discussing earlier also manifests itself in Berdiaev's thought about history, and this develops an uncertainty about history of a different species. Berdiaev appears to offer contrary suggestions as to whether or not history is internal or external, and consequently how it should be understood. In its connection with objectified time, history is understood as a product of objectification. Man is enslaved by history, it is imposed upon him:

> Человек не только принимает тяготу истории, не только ведет с ней борьбу и осуществляет свою судьбу, но он имеет тенденцию обоготворять историю, сакрализировать происходящие в ней процессы […] Человек готов поклониться исторической необходимости, историческому року и в нем увидеть действие Божества.[656]

However, in *Smysl istorii* – and at many other moments – Berdiaev is also willing to attach positive, internal value to history. Here he addresses what he calls incorrect, frequently deterministic understandings of history:

> Прежде всего, я хотел бы указать на то, что существует ложное и очень распростаненное в современном сознании отношение к историческому процессу, которое делает его мертвым и внутренне невоспринимаемым.[657]

Although broadly negative about history, we see then at moments Berdiaev wants to suggest that history can be interpreted from the internal. He does not just see history as something imposed upon man but also as something that comes from within man, shows his communion with the metaphysical and eternal and thereby reveals his eventual passage beyond objectification:

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[656] Berdiaev, *O rabstve i svobode cheloveka*, p. 154.
[657] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 41.

> Если история не есть лишь внешний феномен, если она имеет какой-то абсолютный смысл и связь с абсолютной жизнью, если в ней есть подлинно онтологическое, то это значит, что она должна зачинаться и совершаться в недрах Абсолютного, т.е. в тех недрах бытия, с которыми соприкасается, в своей последней глубине, духовная жизнь и духовный опыт.[658]

We therefore see the re-emergence of the similar paradox: history has both an internal and an external aspect. From the first perspective, history is something full of value and internal potential, from the second history is objectified and hostile to man and his internal life. Paradoxically, both of these sides of history exist simultaneously – history is both interior and exterior, phenomenological and noumenal. This paradoxical, dual character of history serves to further propagate the sense of uncertainty – evident here more in terms of confusion – regarding Berdiaev's apprehension of history, as it cannot be solved either way.

History as tragedy

A prevailing notion throughout Berdiaev's work is a sense of the 'tragedy' of history, of its inevitable failure, of the fact that all that comes to pass in history is fallen. It is difficult to equate this sort of pessimism with the optimistic belief in the coming Kingdom of God. Again, then, we are presented with a deep uncertainty, which links back to this bifurcation of eschatology: if everything in history fails, it seems unlikely that a final transcendental movement out of history will take place. This idea of 'tragedy' appears throughout Berdiaev's work, but it is clearly articulated in *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire* (1934). Here we read of the fact that history is a tragic conflict within the human condition, something that it has never been able to overcome:

[658] Ibid., p. 48.

> История же есть трагическое столкновение между личным и сверх-личным и до-личным. История никогда не разрешает конфликта между личностью и обществом, личностью и культурой, личностью и массой, между качеством и количеством.[659]

The tragic quality of history is linked to the conditions of the objectified world – in this quotation Berdiaev outlines how history cannot resolve the difference between individual and society, the problem that in the current world everyone is divided, objectified and unable to escape this condition. This notion of the tragedy of history is also closely connected to the tragedy of creativity: everything that is intended to bring an end to the world through creativity fails, and so too, therefore, does history:

> История имеет смысл, признание смысла истории принадлежит христианству. Но история вместе с тем есть неудача человека, неудача культуры, крушение всех человеческих замыслов.[660]

Berdiaev intends to demonstrate that through the assertion of the failure of history, it follows that there must be something after history which will resolve the problems that history itself is unable to solve:

> Несоизмеримость между историей и личной человеческой судьбой и есть трагедия истории, трагедия бесысходная в пределах истории, требующая ее конца.[661]

This conclusion is, however, problematic, and it leads away from the existentialist claim that history is man's destiny, man's work: if what is going on within history cannot be resolved within the boundaries of history, surely history becomes somewhat meaningless and divorced from man? Again, then, we return to the paradox which underpins Berdiaev's philosophy more broadly. How are we to

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[659] N. Berdiaev, *Sud'ba cheloveka v sovremennom mire*. *K ponimaniiu nashei epokhi* (1934), in N. A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* (Moscow, 1994), pp. 317-62 (p. 318).
[660] Ibid., p. 318.
[661] Ibid., p. 319.

connect what is going on within history (i.e. in the ‘external’ realm) to what goes on beyond history’s boundaries (i.e. the purely ‘internal’, existential realm)? How will the resolution of history take place? The notion of the tragic fate of history places emphasis on the external coercion that takes place within history, and this opposes the notion that history is within man, that man resolves it in the internal domain, beyond the reach of the external pressure of history.

Uncertainty therefore assumes two prevailing characteristics in Berdiaev’s philosophy of history: one relates to the dual possibility of history’s end, the other to the confusion which ensues from the paradox that history is both internal and external. This has been demonstrated across a number of texts: on the one hand, history appears opposed to man, it works against him, it is a failure and a reflection of all that is fallen in the world, but on the other hand it is man’s path to the transcendental, to the eschatological end of this world and the coming of the Kingdom of God. These differing perspectives are difficult to align with one another, and describe well the broader paradox of his thought.

History as non-linear

As well as being uncertain, history in Berdiaev's conceptualisation was also non-linear. This non-linearity establishes again Berdiaev's great difference to Bulgakov in his conceptualisation of history: Bulgakov's description of the historical process was deeply linear, it had a clear rhythm and was moving in a certain direction. However, for Berdiaev history was 'volcanic', it erupted in crises whereby things suddenly changed:

> Почва истории – вулканична, и из нее возможны вулканические извержения.[662]

In this volcanic quality, it is further evident how Berdiaev's original experience of time, the sense of *temporality as crisis*, manifests itself in a conceptualisation of history in which crisis-type movement – sudden movements and changes – becomes an important mode of historical development. Berdiaev sees in the crises of his time something analogous to the nature of history itself. Bulgakov had conversely tried to rationalise crisis, had tried to diminish its importance and subject it to a providential, linear development.

Non-linearity takes on a variety of forms. Primarily it relates to the way in which Berdiaev describes the process of history – he argues against the necessity of cause and effect, against the idea that a linear principle could guide human development. In this respect anti-linearity in history was a facet of his general opposition to the objectified world in which external forces were perceived to reign. However, non-linearity also relates to his description of the relationship between memory and history and his attempt to root the entirety of history within the subject. In *Novoe srednevekov'e*, Berdiaev also writes in a more 'analytic' mode about history, but still continues to posit a strong sense of non-linearity

[662] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 148.

Anti-process and anti-evolution theory

The most pronounced non-linear aspect of Berdiaev's conceptualisation of history consists in his overt rejection of the notion of a linear historical process. He is insistent on this rejection throughout his philosophical career. In 1922 he claims:

> В истории нет по прямой линии совершающегося прогресса добра, прогресса совершенства, в силу которого грядущее поколение стоит выше поколения предшествующего…[663]

Likewise, in 1947:

> Для понимание моей мысли важно подчеркнуть, что мне чужда идея прямого, сплошного, непрерывного развития.[664]

His need to insist on the absence of consistent development is the result of some of the most fundamental aspects of his thinking. The most significant of this is creativity. Creativity, the basic motivating force of both time and history, is grounded in absolute freedom, in freedom from cause and effect and therefore freedom from coercion. Creativity does not follow consistent developmental patterns as it is freely chosen:

> Я вообще антиэволюционист в том смысле, что признаю прерывность, связанную с вторжением в мировой процесс свободы, и отрицаю непрерывность как выражение детерминизма.[665]

Beyond creativity, quite simply the nature of Berdiaev's philosophy itself militated against such linear thinking. By his own admission, he was not a systematic thinker:

> Тут обнаруживается также моя сравнительно слабая способность к систематичекому развитию мысли. Я мыслю и пишу афористически и стараюсь

[663] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 188.
[664] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 252.
[665] Ibid., p. 252.

> находить формулировки для своих интуиций.[666]

This non-systematic, non-linear conceptualisation of history is thus a product of the basic qualities of his philosophy.

A desire to transcend process was also looked at in terms of being anti-evolutionary, and in such a way it could be used to combat atheistic conceptualisations of the historical process. Through this not only Darwin, but also the general positivist notion of progress, could also be challenged. Again, this anti-evolutionism is repeated throughout Berdiaev's life, so quotation can be drawn from any number of texts:

> Эволюция не только не есть творчество, она противоположна творчеству. В эволюции ничто новое не создается, а лишь старое перемещается. Эволюция есть необходимость, творчество же есть свобода.[667]

By equating evolution with necessity, and thereby objectification, Berdiaev limits evolution to the immanent realm. In evolution Berdiaev sees no possibility for creativity or creative movement – evolutionism, or thinking that relates the world process only to the immanent world, is thus discarded:

> В эволюции, как ее понимает натуралистичекий эволюционизм, по-настоящему новизна возникнуть не может, так как нет творческого акта, всего восходящего к свободе и прерывающего каузальную связь.[668]

The idea of creativity is thus one of the central concepts Berdiaev deploys to identify developmental patterns which transcend the logic of linear, evolutionary development. He therefore returns to the point that was reached with the philosophy of time, that time, and in this case history or 'world development', moves only as a consequence of creativity, which is itself possible only due to the existence of

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[666] Ibid., p. 244.
[667] Berdiaev, *O naznachenii cheloveka*, p. 117.
[668] Ibid., p. 142.

newness and nonbeing:

> Становление, диалектика мирового развития возможны лишь потому, что есть небытие. Если допустить лишь бытие, то накакого развития не будет. Новизна в становлении возникает из недр небытия.[669]

Berdiaev's conceptualisation of history is thus thoroughly non-linear as a consequence of the nature of the historical process. This does not follow the pattern of determinism, it does not move forward in a direct line towards perfection, but follows the free will of creativity, it bounds forward in volcanic upheavals and in moments of creative passion:

> Закона необходимого исторического прогресса нет, это противоречит свободе человека и предполагает ложную объективную телеологию.[670]

Memory as non-linear

One of Berdiaev's more curious ideas relates to his understanding of memory – or sometimes anamnesis[671] (*pripominanie*) – and history. This is mainly dealt with in *Smysl istorii* (1922), but also appears briefly in *O naznachenii cheloveka* (1931), *Ia i mir ob"ektov* (1934) and *Samopoznanie* (1947). Memory, Berdiaev argues, is a means by which man discovers that the entirety of history – everything that has happened within history – is contained within himself. In this respect it is amongst his most overt attempts to subject history to the existentialist frame of his philosophy:

> Каждый человек по своей внутренней природе есть некий великий мир – микрокосм, в котором отражается и пребывает весь реальный мир и все великие

[669] Berdiaev, *Opyt eskhatologicheskoi metafiziki*, p. 143.
[670] Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie*, p. 345.
[671] A Platonic idea that knowledge exists in the soul eternally.

> исторические эпохи...[672]

This suggestion that every historical epoch is exists within man means that when we want to write or think about a particular historical period or event, we need to find those historical periods or events within ourselves:

> …человек должен в самом себе познать историю, постигнуть ее, раскрыть, напр., глубочайшие пласты эллинского мира, чтобы поистине постигнуть историю Греции, историк должен раскрыть в себе глубинные пласты мира древнееврейского, чтобы постигнуть эту историю.[673]

This seemingly absurd suggestion must be understood in the context of Berdiaev's shifting antipathy towards the external world, towards the objectified world. All experience, all history, if it is to contain genuine value *must* exist at some extent within the individual. Like many thinkers of a mystical bent, Berdiaev valued that which is within. This thesis on memory should also thus be understood in the context of Berdiaev's mystical striving to find intuitive yet metaphysical meaning in history as a whole. It also bears some significant resemblance to St. Augustine's idea that through memory man is able keep the historical 'alive' in the present, and prevent time from falling apart.

It can be contested that the idea of memory and history is non-linear for the quite obvious reason that the suggestion that all history exists within man, that man can commune somehow with others' past experience, completely breaks down the conventional impression of history as a process whereby the present is lived and then the past becomes *past* – i.e. non-accessible as direct experience. Through positing the ability of man to engage in any aspect of the past Berdiaev not only breaks down the pattern of the cycle of generations but also contests the basic idea

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[672] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 27.
[673] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

of the past as past, the movement of future, present, past. As Seaver summarises:

> Remembrance, therefore, is the link that connects the existential present with the existential past. By means of it the past lives in the present.[674]

History loses its sense of being something that has gone but instead becomes a compilation of universal experience or knowledge that man can engage with as and when he chooses, with disregard for temporal or historical processes:

> Итак, можно сказать, что в этом микрокосме заключены все исторические эпохи прошлого и этого человек не может в себе задавить пластами времени и ближайшей исторической жизни; это может быть прикрыто, но никогда не может быть окончательно задавлено.[675]

This thesis on memory or anamnesis is thus non-linear and strikingly unusual. It contributes significantly to the generally non-linear character of history that Berdiaev describes across his philosophy. We can now finally look at the point at which this non-linear conceptualisation of history intruded into his writing about the modern world.

The concept of the 'new middle-ages'

Berdiaev's essay *Novoe srednevekov'e* (1924) earned him a great deal of fame in Europe. This was no doubt because in this text he presented a Russian interpretation of the revolution that followed neither conventional left-wing nor commonplace pro-imperial émigré readings of the event.[676] The idea of the 'new middle ages' had, however, been hit upon before the text itself – it appears in nascent form in *Smysl istorii* (1922). The concept of the 'new middle ages' is actually

[674] Seaver, *Nicolas Berdyaev*, p. 119.
[675] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 28.
[676] See Lampert, *Nicolas Berdyaev and the new Middle Ages* for a contemporaneous reading of Berdiaev's text.

as much related to Berdiaev's experience of time – his sense of *temporality as crisis* – as it is to a philosophy of history. It was born from his reflection on the character of his own times, which sees the end of the current epoch – which he terms 'new history' – and the beginning of a new one, the 'new middle ages':

> Нам суждено жить в историческое время смены эпох. Старый мир новой истории […] кончается и разлагается, и нарождается неведомый еще новый мир.[677]

The idea of the 'new middle ages' is thus in part a speculation on current affairs, as well as a type of history, and will also contain elements of philosophical reflection on the nature of history. There is a greater sense of consecutive development and linearity than we have been describing elsewhere – however, a fundamental sense of historical non-linearity still underpins the narrative. Non-linearity consists in the fact that despite looking to describe historical movement forwards, Berdiaev actually envisions historical development in terms of a turning backwards, or something similar to Zarathrustra's notion of a 'looking back'. This is made possible by the assumption that elements of the past can be repeated.

Novoe srednevekov'e depends on the construction of a historical narrative, spanning the movement from the original, or old middle ages, through the 'new history', and then on to the 'new middle ages'. During the old middle ages, Berdiaev argues, there was a particular inclination towards the spiritual, to searching for God and to interpreting divine mysteries:

> Но знаем также, что Средние века были эпохой религиозной по преимуществу, были охвачены тоской по небу, которая делала народы одержимыми священным безумием, что вся культура средневековья направлена на трансцендентное и потустороннее, что в эти века было великое напряжение мысли в схоластике и

[677] Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e*, p. 222.

> мистике для решения последних вопросов бытия...[678]

The character or condition of this epoch was central to Berdiaev's interpretation of it. After the old middle ages came 'new history', in which people became more and more externalised, consumed variously by industrial progress, individualism, imperialism and the wars between classes. Discussion of the 'new history' thus also provided a vehicle for criticism of the current epoch, and again focused on its human character:

> Нам предстоит несомненный факт: в новой истории, гордой своим прогрессом, центр тяжести жизни перемещается из духовной сферы в материальную, из внутренней во внешнюю жизнь, общество становится все менее религиозным.[679]

Following the horrors of 'new history', Berdiaev interprets a new epoch, the 'new middle ages', where he perceives a return to the old spirit of the middle ages, in which people again want to find religious meaning and inner, intuitive value in the world:

> Мы опять вступаем в атмосферу чудесного, столь чуждую новой истории, опять возможны станут белая и черная магии. Опять возможны станут страстные споры о таинах божественной жизни. Мы переходим от душевного периода к духовному периоду.[680]

The 'new middle ages' thus becomes a device through which the ontological centre of mankind is corrected, realigned back to the internal away from the external.

This narrative is non-linear due to the way in which it describes a return to certain points in the past. This is qualified, however, by the suggestion that there is not some sort of *complete* return to or restoration of by-gone epochs:

> ...нужно окончательно установить, что никаких возвратов и реставраций старых

[678] Ibid., p. 243.
[679] Ibid., p. 238.
[680] Ibid., p. 254.

> эпох никогда не было и быть не может. Когда мы говорим о переходе от новой истории к средневековью, то это есть образный спосов выражения. Переход возможен лишь к новому, а не старому средневековью.[681]

However, he argues that there is a certain element of the 'eternal' in a given historical epoch, and that *this* can be restored in a new epoch. This is where linearity breaks down as past events can be returned to or relived, so long as they have an 'eternal' character:

> К слишком временному и тленному в прошлом нельзя вернуться, но можно вернуться к вечному в прошлом.[682]

So whilst the objectified elements of the past cannot be restored, the metaphysical or eternal parts of it can be: and in such a way we see how non-linearity can come to define elements of the historical process. It issues from a philosophical assumption about the nature of history that certain past things can be restored due to their 'eternal' (or metaphysical, internal etc.) character.

In the concept of the 'new middle ages' strict historical consecutiveness is thus absent. This sort of non-consecutive development was also described in *Smysl istorii*. Here he similarly describes different 'epochs' of human development, but also describes how they are not to be taken consecutively, that one can move between them:

> В исторической судьбе человечества можно установить четыре эпохи, четыре состояния: варварство, культура, цивилизация и религиозное преображение. Эти четыре состояние нельзя брать исключительно во временной последовательности; они могут сосуществовать, это – разные направленности человеческого духа.[683]

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[681] Ibid., pp. 242-43.
[682] Ibid., p. 227.
[683] Berdiaev, *Smysl istorii*, p. 217.

This then is quite revealing: by describing these epochs as different ‘orientations’ of the human spirit, we perhaps come closer to what it is Berdiaev is trying to capture through the concept of the ‘new middle ages’, and how this is anything but a simple description of a linear historical development. Furthermore, he also contends that this human development is contingent only upon the direction of human freedom:

> Многое зависит от нашей свободы, от творческих человеческих усилий. Потому-то возможны два пути. Я предчувствую нарастание сил зла в будущем, но хотел определить возможные положительные черты будущего общества.[684]

History thus again becomes non-linear, it becomes dependent upon the will of the subject, defined by his freedom. The concept of the ‘new middle ages’, although perhaps in quite an opaque form, is another reflection of this. It recalls Berdiaev’s thesis on memory or anamnesis, in which there are elements of the past which can be drawn out and re-experienced in the present.

[684] Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e*, p. 255.

Conclusion: Berdiaev's philosophy of history

Berdiaev's philosophy of history has been discussed from a specific angle. What has been attempted is to capture how he *conceptualised* history, how he reflected on the *nature* of history – how it moved, where it was heading. This has been done by distancing Berdiaev's actual *writing* of history from his philosophical reflection on history, as the two are, other than in the case of *Novoe srednevekov'e*, quite distinct. Two prevailing features of this philosophy of history have been identified: uncertainty and non-linearity, and together they make for a highly individual and unusual conceptualisation of history.

It was mentioned at the outset of this section that Berdiaev's philosophy of history is prefaced by his understanding of time's primacy over history. This has remained true, and discussion of history alone – without reference to time – has been relatively sparse. The uncertainty that is detected in Berdiaev's thinking about history – evident in two different forms – is deeply reminiscent of the uncertainty that cuts through his philosophy of time: it is consistently argued that both time and history are paradoxically both inside and outside man. The non-linearity of Berdiaev's description of history demonstrates the paradox and uncertainty that lie behind it: he does not want history to be subject to external rules or laws of development, but also admits that these external rules do come into play. Non-linearity similarly maintains a sense of the freedom of history from determinism.

In terms of comparison with Bulgakov what is most interesting is how clearly the two thinkers oppose each other on such a panoply of issues. First of all there is the way in which their experience of temporality as crisis translates into a philosophy of history: Bulgakov seeks regularity whereas Berdiaev embraces non-linearity and, even, crisis itself. Bulgakov is driven to imbue history with reason, logic, and

certainty, whilst Berdiaev finds the meaning of history in the absence of such coercive concepts. Both believe ardently in the end of history, and hope for the coming of the Kingdom of God, but where Bulgakov finds the meaning of history demands the necessity of the Kingdom of God, Berdiaev finds the meaning of history demands the possibility of failure – freedom must be absolute if it is to mean anything. Berdiaev thus prophesises the possibility of a bad end to history whereas Bulgakov claims that the divine plan cannot fail. Between them, they offer a quite remarkably binary opposition on the same problem, engaging in the same questions, the same themes, wanting the same thing, but coming to almost opposite conclusions.

5. Conclusion

It is difficult to come down on either side of the fence when attempting to assess the broad success or failure of Berdiaev's philosophy as a whole, let alone on a specific issue such as his philosophies of time and history. Perhaps an attempt to do so in itself is not particularly constructive. One conclusion to draw is how classically *Russian* Berdiaev's philosophy is: it is caught between so many competing bodies of thought, trying to synthesise and adapt to everything whilst at the same time offering something new, something profound, and gets caught up in the enormity of the task. Dobieszewski, describing the Russian tradition – but he could well be describing Berdiaev – notes that:

> Consequently, one may say quite justifiably that Russian philosophy is a relatively autonomous philosophical universe which simultaneously reflects its own entirety, similarly (in form, of course, not in content) to such past schools of thought as Greek and Jewish philosophy, Patristics, French Enlightenment philosophy or classical German philosophy.[685]

This investigation has certainly testified to the importance of all of the above – save perhaps French Enlightenment philosophy – in the construction of Berdiaev's thought about time.

[685] Janusz Dobieszewski, 'Neoplatonic tendencies in Russian philosophy', *Studies in East European Thought,* vol. 62, no. 1 (2010), pp. 3-10 (p. 9).

Conclusion

Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev

The pattern of similarities and differences between Bulgakov and Berdiaev is, in certain respects, to be expected. In terms of experience and intellectual background they are from very similar stock. Although originally Berdiaev was from an aristocratic background and Bulgakov from more humble beginnings, in their formative years between 1900-1922 they moved in many of the same circles and shared many friends and acquaintances. In terms of their thought about time and history, both had the same ultimate goal in mind: an eschatological end and a movement beyond the current world condition. What was different was how they envisioned getting to this point. Berdiaev viewed the end more in terms of time, Bulgakov more in terms of history: both, however, were keenly aware of the relevance of temporal experience in itself, as, after all, history is still a passage through time. Time, or time conceptualised as history, therefore played a significant part in both of their philosophies, as it described the way in which the coming of God would be achieved.

Neither Bulgakov or Berdiaev could accept that idea that time just *was*, that it merely *existed* as a fact of life to be dealt with. Something like Einstein's Theory of Relativity, for example, would satisfy neither: it would only touch on the 'surface' of the problem, and, to borrow Bulgakov's terminology, would not reach into the 'depths'. Therefore, it becomes clear how for both a sense of history and time reflected a desire to find meaning in the world around them. This can also be tied to the notion of *temporality as crisis*: in a world of uncertainty and calamity, notions of eventual resolution give hope that crisis can be overcome. Both philosophers bear

this idea out, although the way in which they understood the means of achieving this end as very different: crisis perhaps pervades more deeply into the construction of Berdiaev's philosophy, whereas Bulgakov responds more strongly *against* crisis, placing greater emphasis on the orderly nature of historical and temporal processes.

A further dimension of the comparison between Bulgakov and Berdiaev is how it has brought into focus the significance of a similar set of problems in both philosophers' work. These problems – those of creativity, freedom, necessity and evil – have highlighted some of the broader assumptions which informed and developed their contrasting philosophies of time and history. With Bulgakov, his continual focus on providing a theodicy and a resolution of evil, along with his restriction of human creativity and freedom, allowed for his construction of a determinist pattern of thinking about history and a corresponding philosophy of time, in which the 'good', divine and metaphysical dimension applied pressure on the material dimension. Likewise, for Berdiaev, his discussion of the problems of creativity and freedom, and to a lesser extent evil, demonstrated with greater clarity the *paradoxical* nature of his understanding of time: they reveal how, when discussing the 'objectified' and 'existential' domains of time, his descriptions of the relationship between the metaphysical and material inexorably tend towards paradox.

Both philosophers testify to the significance of the problem of time, and history as a problem related to time – rather than just being a problem in itself – in Russian philosophy. At the same time, their thinking on these questions demonstrates engagement with a philosophical tradition which extends back to Plato, and which continues to be relevant today. They can justifiably take their place in this tradition. Yet it is noticeable is how classically Russian this engagement is, drawing on such a broad range of philosophies and ideas. This reflects not only Bulgakov's and

Berdiaev's great erudition but also their connection to the intellectual mainstream; they were not estranged or disconnected from the European tradition but demonstrate an active engagement with and innovative interpretation of many bodies of thought.

This thesis has sought to adopt a comparative and thematic approach and to explore lines of research which could be developed further, in the Russian Silver Age and beyond. The theme of time, both an ancient and modern problem, has provided a new avenue through which to investigate two thinkers' philosophies. There is no reason why there cannot be further discussion of time in Russian philosophy, or, indeed, further discussion of the question of history, whether through such major and very different figures as, for example, Fedorov, Frank or Bakhtin, or through lesser known Silver Age philosophers, such as Ern, whose messianic philosophy has much to say about time, history and temporality as crisis. Indeed, an attempt to write a broader account of the theme of time and history across Silver Age thought could elucidate the larger relevance of this theme to Russian thought as a whole, and also demonstrate further how Russian thought plays its part in the European intellectual and cultural tradition.

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