

BREZTALNOSTI:

LEV ŠESTOV MED LITERATURO, RELIGIJO
IN FILOZOFIJO

*Groundlessnesses:
Lev Shestov between Literature, Religion
and Philosophy*

Na naslovnici:
Slika, ki jo je Šestov podaril Antonu Ocvirku
za portret v knjigi Razgovori (1923)

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Zbornik simpozija
z dne 12. maja 2005 v Ljubljani

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Udeleženci simpozija Pavel Kuznecov, Vid Snoj, Pavle Rak in Nikolaj Ivanov

O ZBIRKI

»Acta comparativistica Slovenica« je novoustanovljena knjižna zbirka Oddelka za primerjalno književnost in literarno teorijo na ljubljanski Filozofski fakulteti, edinega fakultetnega oddelka za primerjalno književnost na Slovenskem. Namenjena je dokumentiranju naših samostojnih in skupnih raziskovalskih interesov ter naših medsebojnih raziskovalskih srečanj in srečanj z domačimi in tujimi sodelavci.

Vsebinska zasnova zbirke je odprta. V njej lahko izide samostojna razprava ali pa zbirka razprav enega ali več avtorjev, lahko je objavljen prevod tujega dela, ki je s strokovnega ali pedagoškega gledišča pomembno za slovensko primerjalno književnost, ali pa, narobe, prevod kakega pomembnega slovenskega dela v tuji jezik. Urejajo jo učitelji z oddelka.

Zbirka je eden izmed načinov, s katerimi si oddelek odpira okno v svet. Omogočala in shranjevala naj bi konkretno sodelovanje s tujimi komparativisti oziroma filologi. V ta namen bo gojila tujejezičnost in, s prevodi slovenskih prispevkov v tuje jezike, našo lastno večjezičnost.

Zbirka je odprta za različne pristope na področju literarne vede, hkrati pa tudi za obravnavo področij, ki se dotikajo literarnega.

Za slovensko primerjalno književnost je od začetka značilno, da ko se ukvarja z obdobji, smermi, tokovi in gibanji v evropski ali celo svetovni literaturi, to navadno počne z ozirom na slovensko literaturo; zanima jo, kaj, recimo, pomeni Prešernovo pesništvo na ozadju evropske romantike ali Cankarjevo pripovedništvo na ozadju literarnih smeri *fin de siècle*.

Ta »klasična« usmeritev slovenske primerjalne književnosti ostaja, vendar z dopolnilom. Zbirka ne bo predstavljala le primerjalnih študij, ki zadevajo slovensko literaturo, ali sploh študij, ki se držijo izključno znotraj meja literarnega področja, ampak tudi študije s kar najširšim filološkim interesom, interesom za besedo, ki se lahko umešča na več področij hkrati. Dober zgled za to je pisanje Leva Šestova, ki se giblje po obeh straneh meje med različnimi področji, področji literature, religije in filozofije.

To, da se zbirka začneja z razpravami več avtorjev o Šestovu, ni čisto naključje. Kajti Anton Ocvirk se je v zgodnjih tridesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja – formativnih letih, ki jih je kot diplomant ljubljanske slavistike preživel v Parizu, kjer je prišel v stik z avtoritetami francoske primerjalne književnosti – večkrat srečal tudi z njim. Ko se je vrnil v Slovenijo, je teoretično in praktično, s knjigo *Teorija primerjalne literarne zgodovine* (Ljubljana: Znanstveno društvo, 1936) in s stolico, ki se je na ljubljanski slavistiki odprla zanj, utemeljil slovensko primerjalno književnost. Še prej pa je svoje pogovore s Šestovom povzel v knjigi *Razgovori* (Ljubljana: Tiskovna zadruga, 1933).

Zato bi knjižica razprav o Šestovu lahko pomenila vrnitev k izvirom slovenske primerjalne književnosti in eno izmed spodbud za nov začetek.

Skratka, zbirka »Acta comparativistica Slovenica« se začneja s Šestovom, pri katerem je svojčas začel utemeljitelj slovenske primerjalne književnosti, in je zamišljena kot prostor raziskovanja in srečevanja, ki ju usmerja kar najširši filološki interes – *inter-esse* ljubezni do besede, ki se ne ustavlja le pri literarni besedi, ampak sledi pomenom in kontekstom besede tudi na druga področja, na področje filozofije, religije, drugih umetnosti in umetnostnih ved ter vede o jeziku oziroma na področje kulture in omike sploh.

Prvi zvezek zbirke prinaša razprave, predstavljene na mednarodnem simpoziju z naslovom *Breztalnosti: Lev Šestov med literaturo, religijo in filozofijo*, ki ga je oddelek v sodelovanju s KUD Logos in Slovansko knjižnico ter v okviru Forumu Orient–Occident organiziral 12. maja 2005 v Ljubljani.

Vid Snoj

V Ljubljani, 1. novembra 2005

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

“Acta comparativistica Slovenica” is a newly established book collection of the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, the only faculty department of comparative literature existing in Slovenia. Its purpose is to document our independent and common research interests and our mutual research gatherings and meetings with domestic and foreign colleagues.

In terms of content, the collection has been conceived as an open collection. It may contain an independent discussion or a collection of discussions by one or more authors, a translation of a foreign work that is relevant for Slovene comparative literature from the professional or pedagogical viewpoints, or vice-versa, a translation of an important Slovene work into a foreign language. Editing is performed by the teachers of the Department.

The collection is one of the ways that our Department is opening its window to the world. It is aimed at enhancing and storing specific forms of cooperation with foreign experts in comparative literature and philologists. For this purpose it will nurture foreign languages and, by featuring translations of Slovene contributions into foreign languages, our own multilingualism.

The collection is open to various approaches in the field of literary criticism, as well as for the treatment of fields touching on literary science.

From the very beginning, Slovene comparative literature has characteristically dealt with the periods, movements and currents of European or even world literature in view of Slovene literature. For example, it is interested in, let's say, what Prešeren's poetry represents on a background of European Romanticism,

or Cankar's prose on a background of literary movements of the *fin de siècle*.

This "classical" direction of Slovene comparative literature has remained, but with an addition. The collection will not only present comparative studies relating to Slovene literature, or even studies keeping exclusively within the boundaries of the literary field, but also those with the broadest philological interest, an interest in the word that can be placed in several fields at the same time. A good example of this is the writings of Lev Shestov, who moves on both sides of the boundary between various fields, namely, literature, religion and philosophy.

The fact that the collection begins with the contributions of several authors on Shestov is not entirely coincidental. For it was in the early thirties of the previous century that Anton Ocvirk, a graduate of Slavic studies in Ljubljana who spent his formative years in Paris, where he encountered the authorities of French comparative literature, also met with Shestov on several occasions. When he returned to Slovenia, he theoretically and practically – with his book entitled *Teorija primerjalne literarne zgodovine (Theory of Comparative Literary History)* (Ljubljana: Znanstveno društvo, 1936) and a chair that was opened for him at the Department of Slavic Languages – founded Slovene comparative literature. Before that, however, he had already summarized his discussions with Shestov in a book entitled *Razgovori (Discussions)* (Ljubljana: Tiskovna zadruga, 1933).

It is for the above reason that a book of discussions on Shestov could represent our return to the origin of Slovene comparative literature and one of the incentives for a new beginning.

In short, the collection "Acta comparativistica Slovenica" begins with Shestov, with whom the founder of Slovene comparative literature himself had begun so many years ago, and is envisaged as a place of researching and meeting, both of which directed by the broadest philological interest – *inter-esse* of love

for the word that does not only stop at the literary word, but follows the meanings and contexts of the word into other fields as well, namely, philosophy, religion, other arts and art criticisms, science of language, and the fields of culture and civilization in general.

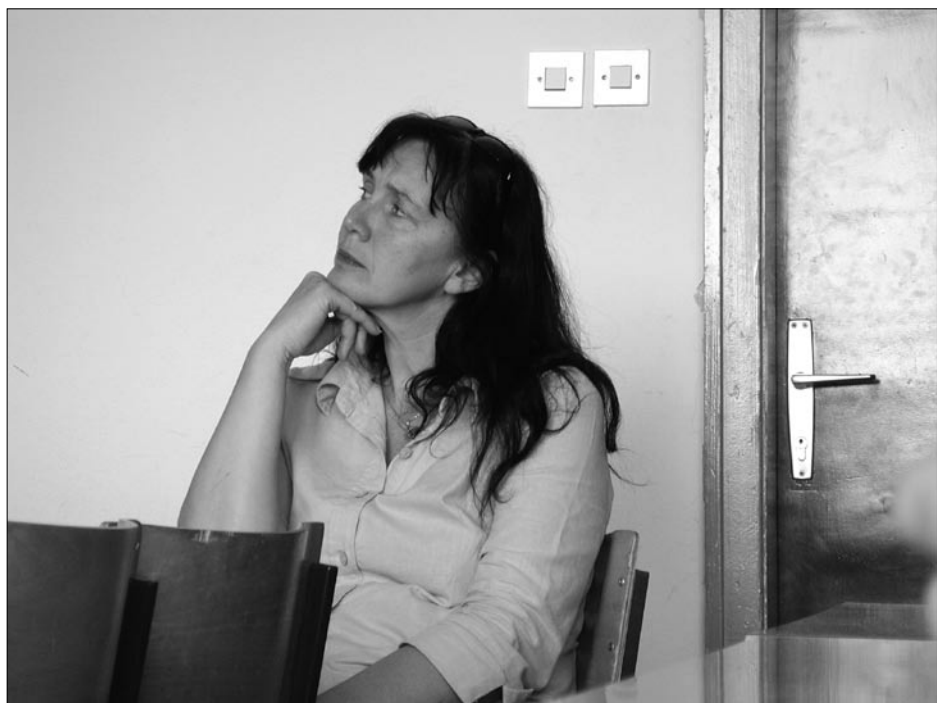
The first volume of the collection contains discussions presented at the international symposium entitled *Groundlessnesses: Lev Shestov between Literature, Religion and Philosophy*, which was organized by the Department in cooperation with KUD Logos and the Slavic Library, and in the framework of the Forum Orient–Occident, on 12th May 2005 in Ljubljana.

Vid Snoj

Ljubljana, 1st November 2005



*Udeleženca simpozija Pavel Kuznecov in Pavle Rak
Seta Knop*





Tone Smolej

Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani

»RESNICE NE MOREMO VKLENITI
V ZNANSTVENA NAČELA«:
ZGODNJA SLOVENSKA RECEPCIJA LEVA ŠESTOVA

Ime Leva Šestova se v slovenski publicistiki pojavi prvič leta 1925. V drugi polovici dvajsetih let se občasno zgolj omenjajo njegova dela o Tolstoju in Dostojevskem, večinoma z zadržki. Kritik v *Domu in svetu* tako zapiše misel, da Šestovova »površna filozofija in publicistično mišljenje nista baš najboljša pot do globine« (Čibej 1927: 275).

Slovenci smo se zares srečali s Šestovom šele v tridesetih letih, glavni posrednik pa je bil Anton Ocvirk, ko je kot diplomant ljubljanske slavistike leta 1931 prispel v Pariz, kjer je dve leti študiral primerjalno književnost. V tem času se je seznanil z nekaterimi vodilnimi pisatelji in filozofi ter z njimi opravil intervjuje. Z Levom Šestovom se je srečal celo večkrat, vsaj štirikrat leta 1932.¹ Kasneje ga je takole opisal:

Obraz Leona Šestova je obraz asketa, obraz samotneža, obraz mistika, ki mu pomeni življenje nesprestanu bedenje na vrtu Getsemani, neprestano pričakovanje poslednjega razodetja. Njegovi spisi pripovedujejo o neutešenem prisluškovanju podtalnim snovanjem duha, o dolgih nočnih meditacijah, o hrepenenjih in vizijah, o pogovorih s samim seboj in z nevidnimi skrivnostmi, o grozah in zapuščenosti sredi vidnega, otipljivo dokazanega sveta. V ostro razritem čelu, v gubah nad očmi, v zarezah okoli ust, v suhih, upadlih licih, v močno izbočenih ličnih kosteh, v motno žarečih, z vekami napol zastrtih očeh, ki gledajo kakor od onstran telesa, je vtisnjen mrak teh nočnih bedenj, trpka grenkoba vednega domotožja po resnici, po Bogu, neka otožna, nedoumljiva tegoba (Ocvirk 1933: 48).

Šestinšestdesetletni ruski filozof je – kot je razvidno iz korespondence – z veseljem sprejemal petindvajsetletnega slovenskega izobraženca na svoj dom v Boulogne sur Seine, saj je cenil njegovo razgledanost. Pogovore pa je razumel kot delo. Ali kot je zapisal v pismu: »V veselje mi je, ko vas vidim pri delu. Vsakokrat sem vse bolj prepričan, da nimate le interesa, ampak tudi potrebno nadarjenost za študij filozofije. Na kaj takega pa se redko naleti.«²

Šestov je v pogovorih predstavil svoje komentarje k dobršnemu delu evropske filozofije, kar je Ocvirk natančno zabeležil. Filozof je bil zelo kritičen do francoskih sodobnikov, češ da se pretirano ukvarjajo z zgodovino filozofije, ki jo pojmujejo kot znanost, premalo pa s sistematično filozofijo ali metafiziko. Skupaj z Ocvirkom sta v podobni luči obravnavala tudi starejše mislece.

Če je Arthur Schopenhauer sklepal, da človek v erotični ekstazi ne vidi prave realnosti, je Šestov mnenja, da le v ekstazi doživimo pravo realnost in spoznamo pravo resnico, ki nam je sicer nedostopna. V nasprotju s Sørenom Kierkegaardom, ki je bil prepričan, da je razum pri prvem človeku še spal, Ocvirku

zatrjuje, da je bil človeški duh pred spoznanjem zdrav in buden, po spoznanju dobrega in zla pa je omahnil, zaspal in spi nepretrgoma do zdaj. Vprašanje izvirnega greha se pojavi, tudi ko razlaga svoj odpor do razuma in znanstvene filozofije: »Prave, edine in najgloblje kritike čistega razuma ni napisal Kant niti ne znanost, ampak ona je zapisana v Svetem pismu v božjih besedah: ‚Od vsega drevja v vrtu jej; od drevesa spoznanja dobrega in zlega pa nikar ne jej, kajti tisti dan, ko boš od njega jedel, boš moral umreti‘« (Ocvirk 1933: 55). Dotakne se tudi svoje odmevne kritike Edmunda Husserla, ki ga je sicer cenil kot najvidnejšega filozofa dvajsetega stoletja. V nasprotju s Husserlom, ki je filozofijo razumel le kot znanost, je, kot pravi, njegov namen dokazati, da razum nima takšne moči, kot mislimo, saj nas pravzaprav omejuje in ovira pri pravem doživljanju resnice in Boga.

Komparativistu Ocvirku je Šestov govoril tudi o svojih analizah literarnih klasikov. V pogovorih se največ mudi pri Shakespearu, ki ga je obravnaval že v svoji prvi knjigi *Shakespeare in njegov kritik Brandes*: »Shakespeare je čutil, da se ne smemo ustaviti le pri splošno objektivnem svetu, le pri vidni realnosti, ampak da moramo prodirati vedno globlje in globlje, v temo notranjih razkolov. Iz takih tragičnih spoznanj, o katerih nam govore Shakespearejeve tragedije, izvirajo vendar vsa religiozna spoznanja« (Ocvirk 1933: 50). Zavrača literarne zgodovinarje in estete, ki govorijo o tragični veličini in lepoti, saj se s tem le izogibajo temeljnemu vprašanju, skritim v tragediji. Sam meni, da bi bilo bolje govoriti o tragični grdoti, neznatnosti in grozi kot o tragičnem junaštvu in veličini. Tragedija je po njegovem nekaj notranjega in nima nič skupnega s tragedijami na sceni, z odrskimi junaki. Presenetljivo malo pa govori o Tolstoju ali Dostojevskem.

Razen o literaturi Šestov razglablja tudi o razmerah v tedanji Sovjetski zvezi. Obsoja versko in etično nesvobodo, pisatelja Gorkega pa označi za »pohlevnega in ponižnega klečeplazca

diktatorja Stalina«. O sebi pravi, da je pesimist, saj se mu ruska prihodnost zdi temna in nerazveseljiva:

Mislím, da bo v Rusiji še mnogo huje, kakor je bilo doslej. [...] Politični položaj je danes tam prav tako nevzdržén, ako ne mnogo bolj, kakor v minulem stoletju. Povsod je polno ova-duhov, detektivov, hujskačev in podrepnikov. Prej ste bili vsaj toliko svobodni, da ste lahko molčali, danes niti molčati ne smete več, kajti molk vas izdaja; danes se morate izraziti. Iz-pod enega despotizma je prišla Rusija pod drugega (Ocvirk 1933: 64).

Ocvirk in Šestov sta se verjetno zadnjič srečala maja 1933. Tega leta je Ocvirk v Ljubljani objavil knjigo *Razgovori*, v kateri je na drugem mestu – takoj za pogovorom z Andréjem Gideom – najti tudi pogovor z njim, ki ga uvaja kratek uvod. V njem Ocvirk poudarja, da je Šestov neizprosen rušilec vseh znanstvenih dogem in filozofskih resnic, njegova filozofija pa da pelje iz znanosti v mit in razodetje, iz racionalnega v nedoumno. Ruski mislec se je prijazno odzval na poslani izvod knjige: v pismu Ocvirku le obžaluje, da ne zna jezika, da bi jo lahko prebral in cenil.³

Ocvirkov pogovor s Šestovom so kritiki v recenzijah zelo različno sprejeli. Miran Jarc (1934: 49), ki mu misticizem ni bil tuj, z naklonjenostjo prebira filozofove misli o razodetju resnice, Josip Vidmar (1934: 181) pa se sprašuje, ali res »vro te misli, ki so često duhovite in presenetljive, iz globoke potrebe in strasti tega človeka [torej Šestova, op. T. S.] do resnice, ali so samo živahne kombinacije nemirnega razuma o nečem, kar mu je zanimivo, dà, morda celo najzanimivejša stvar na svetu«? Na pripombo, da v Šestovovem pripovedovanju ne vidi poglobitve stvari, namreč modrosti in razboljene notranjosti, temveč sluti le »svetskega človeka velike splošne in strokovne spretnosti« (Vidmar 1934: 181), pa se je odzval sam Ocvirk, češ da ta slovenski kritik raz-soja, čeprav ni videl, kaj šele bral niti ene filozofove knjige:

O tem morda najoriginalnejšem metafiziku naših dni, ki ga pozna ves svet in so o njem pisane disertacije in razprave pri raznih narodih, sodi naš globoki kritik kakor o kakšnem ljubljanskem »hochstaplerju« svoje vrste. Vsa čast Vidmarjevemu smešnemu, a obenem tragično bahavemu diletantizmu in neznanju, ki ga stavlja v prvo vrsto razsodnikov pod Rožnikom (Ocvirk 1934: 360).

S to polemiko je Šestov za več kot štiri desetletja izginil iz slovenske publicistike.⁴ Nova poveljna oblast, pri kateri je imel Vidmar osrednjo vlogo, takšni filozofiji ni mogla biti naklonjena. Neki pisec je leta 1947 Šestovovo delo označil za pisarije emigranta – belogardista in se čudil, da se francoski eksistencialisti navdušujejo nad takšnim mračnjakom.

Recepcija Leva Šestova je torej na Slovenskem tesno povezana z Antonom Ocvirkom, ki je bil njegov posrednik in glasnik.⁵ Čeprav liberalec in prav gotovo ne mistik, je bil Ocvirk toliko odprtega duha, da je spoštoval, cenil in celo promoviral misleca, s katerim se svetovnonazorsko najbrž ni povsem istil.

- 1 V Ocvirkovi knjižnici je najti naslednje Šestovove knjige: *L'Idée du Bien chez Tolstoï et Nietzsche, Pages choisies, Sur les confins de la vie* in *La nuit de Gethsémani*.
- 2 Léon Chestov, pismo Antonu Ocvirku, 17. 5. 1932.
- 3 Léon Chestov, pismo Antonu Ocvirku, 18. 11. 1933.
- 4 Šele leta 1976 je revija *Znamenje* na pobudo Andreja Capudra in v njegovem prevodu objavila Šestovovo predavanje *Kierkegaard in Dostojevski*. Prevajalec se trideset let kasneje spominja, da je imel tedanji urednik Vekoslav Grmič veliko pomislekov, ali bi tekst objavil, zaradi Šestovovega emigrantstva.
- 5 Poudariti je treba, da je prav pogovor s Šestovom med vsemi Ocvirkovimi »razgovori« doživel največ ponatisov. Ponatisnjen je bil tudi v njegovi knjigi *Miscellanea*, vendar so tedanje politične razmere narekovale nekatere spremembe besedila. Ocvirk je izpustil uvod, motto o iskanju Boga, Šestovov opis razmer v Sovjetski zvezi in njegovo kritiko Gorkega. Ponatis pogovora v reviji *Tretji dan* leta 2000 upošteva izvirno verzijo.

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« NOUS NE POUVONS PAS ENFERMER LA VÉRITÉ
DANS DES PRINCIPES SCIENTIFIQUES »:
La réception précoce de Léon Chestov en Slovénie

Le nom de Léon Chestov apparaît pour la première fois dans la presse slovène en 1925. Les critiques de l'époque se montrent réservés en particulier envers ses œuvres ayant trait à Tolstoï. Le critique de la revue littéraire catholique *Dom in svet* déclare ainsi que « la philosophie superficielle et la pensée journalistique de Chestov ne sont pas la voie la plus sûre vers la profondeur » (*Čibej* 1927 : 275).¹

Le premier véritable médiateur de Chestov auprès des Slovènes est Anton Ocvirk qui, dans les années 1931-1933, effectuait à Paris ses études de troisième cycle en littérature comparée. À cette époque, il a interviewé certains écrivains et philosophes connus, dont Léon Chestov qu'il a rencontré au moins quatre fois en 1932.² La description qu'Anton Ocvirk fait du philosophe russe est la suivante:

Le visage de Léon Chestov est celui d'un ascète, d'un solitaire, d'un mystique pour qui la vie se résume à une veille au jardin de Getsémani, une attente continuelle de la dernière révélation. Ses écrits reflètent une écoute inlassable des créations souterraines de l'esprit, les longues méditations nocturnes, les aspirations ardentes et les visions, les soliloques et les mystères invisibles, l'effroi et le sentiment de désarroi face au monde visible et tangible. Sur son front ridé, dans le plis surmontant ses yeux, dans les sillons autour de ses lèvres, sur ses joues creuses et flétries, sur son visage osseux, dans ses yeux à l'éclat trouble, à demi cachés par les paupières et dont les regards

semblent venir d'ailleurs, est imprimée l'obscurité de ces nuits sans sommeil, l'amertume d'une soif continuelle de vérité, de Dieu, une tristesse incompréhensible (Ocvirk 1933 : 48).

Comme en témoigne sa correspondance (voir annexe), le philosophe russe alors sexagénaire recevait volontiers chez lui, à Boulogne sur Seine, le jeune intellectuel slovène dont il appréciait la grande culture. Comme nous le lisons dans une lettre, il considérait leurs conversations comme un travail : « Es ist für mich eine wirkliche Freude Sie bei der Arbeit zu sehen. Mit jedem Mal überzeuge ich mich immer mehr, dass Sie nicht nur ein Interesse, sondern auch die nöthige Begabung haben, um die Philosophie zu studieren – und so etwas begegnet man nicht oft. »³

Chestov lui a exposé ses vues sur les principaux courants philosophiques européens. Il se montrait très critique à l'égard de ses contemporains français qui, selon lui, assimilaient abusivement l'histoire de la philosophie à une science, négligeant ainsi la philosophie systématique et la métaphysique. Durant ses conversations avec Ocvirk, Chestov a abordé de même les penseurs des époques antérieures. Contrairement à Arthur Schopenhauer, qui considérait que l'homme dans l'état d'extase érotique était incapable de distinguer la vraie réalité, Chestov, lui, pensait que seule l'extase permettait à l'homme de connaître la vraie réalité et d'appréhender la vérité qui lui serait autrement inaccessible. Alors que pour Søren Kierkegaard l'esprit du premier homme sommeillait, pour Chestov l'esprit de l'homme était sain et éveillé avant la connaissance du Bien et du Mal et ne s'était endormi qu'après cette révélation. La question du péché originel apparaît également lorsque Chestov explique sa réticence à l'égard de la raison et de la philosophie scientifique : « Ce n'est ni Kant ni la science qui a écrit la vraie, l'unique et la plus profonde critique de la raison pure ; celle-ci est inscrite dans la Bible, dans la parole de Dieu » (Ocvirk 1933 : 55) ; ici le philosophe russe se réfère à l'arbre de la connaissance évoqué dans la genèse. Ches-

tov a également confié à Ocvirk sa célèbre critique d'Edmund Husserl qu'il considérait par ailleurs comme la figure centrale de la philosophie du xx^e siècle. À la différence de ce dernier, qui comprenait la philosophie comme une science, le penseur russe tend à prouver que la raison non seulement n'a pas un tel pouvoir, mais même entrave notre appréhension de la réalité et de Dieu.

Au cours de ses entretiens avec Ocvirk, dont l'objet d'étude était la littérature mondiale, Chestov mentionne ses analyses des grands classiques littéraires. Il s'attarde longuement sur Shakespeare, auteur qu'il a déjà abordé dans son premier livre intitulé *Shakespeare et son critique Brandes* : « Shakespeare a pressenti qu'il ne fallait pas nous en tenir au monde objectif, à la seule réalité visible, mais qu'il fallait, au contraire, nous enfoncer toujours plus profond dans les ténèbres des schismes intérieures. Les prises de conscience tragiques semblables à celles que nous trouvons dans les tragédies de Shakespeare sont à l'origine de toutes les révélations religieuses » (Ocvirk 1933 : 50). Chestov récuse aussi les historiens de la littérature et les esthètes qui, en mettent l'accent sur la grandeur et la beauté du tragique, évitent les questions fondamentales cachées dans la tragédie. Selon lui, il vaudrait mieux parler de la laideur, de l'insignifiance et de l'horreur du tragique que de son héroïsme et sa grandeur. Chestov comprend la tragédie comme quelque chose d'intérieur n'ayant rien à voir avec les tragédies représentées sur scène. On peut s'étonner que le philosophe russe ait si peu parlé à Ocvirk de Tolstoï et de Dostoïevski.

Chestov a également entretenu Ocvirk de la situation politique en Union soviétique. Après avoir condamné le manque de liberté religieuse et morale, il a qualifié Gorki d'« humble et servile valet du dictateur Staline » et affirmé son pessimisme face à l'avenir, jugé obscur et peu réjouissant :

Je pense que la conjoncture en Russie va encore considérablement empirer [...]. La situation politique actuelle est largement aussi insoutenable qu'au siècle dernier. Le pays grouille de délateurs, détectives, agitateurs et flagorneurs. Avant, on avait au moins la liberté de ne rien dire, mais maintenant il est également interdit de se taire, car le silence nous trahit ; aujourd'hui, on est contraint de s'exprimer. La Russie est passée d'un despotisme à un autre (Ocvirk 1933 : 64).

Ocvirk et Chestov se sont rencontrés pour la dernière fois probablement en mai 1933. La même année, Ocvirk a publié à Ljubljana son livre *Razgovori (Entretiens)* où figure à la deuxième place – juste après André Gide – les conversations avec Chestov précédées d'une courte introduction. Là, Ocvirk rappelle au lecteur que Chestov est l'adversaire acharné de tous les dogmes scientifiques et vérités philosophiques. Il ajoute que sa philosophie mène de la science au mythe et à la révélation, du rationnel à l'incompréhensible. Le penseur russe a aimablement accusé réception du livre, déplorant seulement de ne pas savoir suffisamment le slovène pour pouvoir le lire et l'apprécier.⁴

L'entretien d'Ocvirk avec Chestov a été perçu de manière très inégale par les critiques slovènes. Tandis que Miran Jarc (1934: 49), à qui le mysticisme n'est pas étranger, réserve un accueil favorable aux pensées du philosophe ayant trait à la révélation de la vérité, Josip Vidmar (1934 : 181), publiciste pro-soviétique, reste très sceptique : « Ces pensées souvent spirituelles et surprenantes proviennent-elles bien d'une passion profonde pour la vérité ou ne sont que les conjectures animées d'un esprit agité concernant une question qui l'intéresse, certes, et qui est même pour lui la chose la plus intéressante du monde ? » À la remarque où Vidmar affirme ne pas voir dans le discours de Chestov l'essentiel (la sagesse et l'expression d'une intériorité meurtrie), mais uniquement un cosmopolite habile, Ocvirk répond en objectant que le critique slovène juge sans avoir lu ou même vu un seul des ouvrages de Chestov :

Notre profond critique juge cet homme qui est peut-être le métaphysicien le plus original de notre temps, qui est connu du monde entier et qui fait l'objet de nombreuses thèses et études dans divers pays comme s'il s'agissait de quelque « hochstapler » de Ljubljana dans son genre. Vidmar peut être félicité pour son dilettantisme et son ignorance ridicules et fanfarons qui le placent au premier rang des censeurs de clochers (Ocvirk 1934 : 360).

C'est sur cette polémique que s'achève la réception de Chestov dans la presse slovène.⁵ Le nouveau système politique d'après-guerre, où Vidmar était une personnalité très influente, ne pouvait pas être favorable à la philosophie du dissident russe. En 1947, Frid qualifie les œuvres de Chestov de « griffonnages d'un émigré contre-révolutionnaire », s'étonnant que les existentialistes français puissent s'enthousiasmer pour une personnalité aussi sombre.

C'est donc essentiellement à Anton Ocvirk que les Slovènes doivent d'avoir eu connaissance de Léon Chestov. Libéral et personnellement peu enclin au mysticisme, Ocvirk a fait ici sans aucun doute preuve d'ouverture d'esprit en respectant, appréciant et même promouvant le penseur russe sans toutefois s'identifier complètement avec sa vision du monde.⁶

1 Citations sont traduites du slovène par Florence Gacoïn-Marks.

2 Ocvirk connaissait bien l'œuvre de Chestov. Sa bibliothèque comprenait les livres suivants : *L'Idée du Bien chez Tolstoï et Nietzsche*, *Pages choisies*, *Sur les Confins de la Vie* et *La nuit de Gethsémani*.

3 Léon Chestov: Lettre à Anton Ocvirk, 17. 5. 1932.

4 Léon Chestov: Lettre à Anton Ocvirk, 18. 11. 1933.

5 Il faudra attendre 1976 pour que, à l'initiative d'Andrej Capuder et dans sa traduction, la revue *Znamenje* publie le cours de Chestov intitulé « Kierkegaard et Dostoïevski ». Trente ans plus tard, le traducteur se rappelle les réticences du rédacteur en chef, Vekoslav Grmič (évêque socialiste) d'alors à publier le texte d'un dissident russe émigré.

- 6 Notons que les conversations avec Chestov est l'« entretien » ayant été le plus réimprimé. La réimpression dans l'ouvrage *Miscellanea* (1984) propose au lecteur un texte comportant des modifications manifestement dictées par la situation politique de l'époque : Ocvirk a supprimé l'introduction, l'épigraphe relatif à la recherche de Dieu ainsi que l'évocation de la situation en Union Soviétique (y compris la critique de Gorki). En revanche, la réimpression dans la revue *Tretji dan* en 2000 reprend la version originale du texte.

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Tone Smolej

RÉSUMÉ

Léon Chestov apparaît pour la première fois dans la presse slovène en 1925. Les critiques de l'époque mentionnent ses oeuvres ayant trait à Tolstoï envers lesquelles ils se montrent réservés. Le premier véritable médiateur de Chestov auprès des Slovènes est Anton Ocvirk. En effet, ce dernier a eu l'occasion de rencontrer le philosophe russe dans les années trente, à Paris où il effectuait alors ses études de 3^e cycle en littérature comparée. Chestov a bien accueilli le jeune intellectuel slovène dont il appréciait la grande culture. Ils discutèrent ensemble de la philosophie européenne. Chestov expliqua à Ocvirk aussi ses vues sur la littérature, en particulier concernant Shakespeare. Il condamna également la situation politique en URSS. Ocvirk a soigneusement consigné sur le papier ses discussions avec Chestov. Elles ont été publiées dans le recueil « Razgovori » (« Entretiens ») paru en 1933 et où sont regroupées les rencontres que le comparatiste slovène a faites à Paris avec des personnalités illustres. Ce livre a suscité une vive polémique entre Ocvirk et l'intellectuel de gauche Josip Vidmar qui doutait de la sincérité des vues de Chestov. Après 1934, le nom de Chestov disparaît de la presse slovène pendant plus de quarante ans.

ANNEXE: LETTRES DE LÉON CHESTOV À ANTON OCVIRK

Les six lettres de Chestov à Ocvirk (cinq en allemand et une en français) sont retranscrites ici littéralement par l'auteur du présent article. À ce jour, nous ignorons encore ce qu'il est advenu des lettres qu'Ocvirk a adressées à Chestov.

19, Rue Alfred Laurant
Boulogne sur Seine

17/V. 32

Die Nachricht, dass Sie krank wurden, mein lieber Herr Ocvirk, war für mich so überraschend, wie auch betrübend. Nun laut Ihres Briefes kann man hoffen, dass Sie bald wieder gesund sind: eine Woche geht schnell vorbei!

Sobald Ihr wieder gesund sind – bitte wieder zu mir zu kommen: Sie brauchen nur vor ein Paar Tagen mir darüber zu schreiben, und ich werde schon auf Sie warten. Es ist für mich eine wirkliche Freude Sie bei der Arbeit zu sehen. Mit jedem Mal überzeuge ich mich immer mehr, dass Sie nicht nur ein Interesse, sondern auch die nöthige Begabung haben, um die Philosophie zu studieren – und so etwas begegnet man nicht oft.

Mit herrzlichen Grüssen

L. Schestow

19, Rue Alfred Laurant
Boulogne sur Seine

23/V. 32

Es freut mich sehr mein lieber Herr Ocvirk zu hören, dass Sie sich schon viel besser befinden und dass Sie zu mir bald kommen werden. Nun bitte ich Sie nicht den Freitag, den 27/V, sondern den Samstag den 28/V zu kommen, da gerade an 27 abends meine Frau abreisen muss. So dass – auf baldiges Wiedersehen

Ihr ergebener

L. Schestow

P.S: Meine Adresse ist 19 (nicht 29) Rue Alfred Laurant

19, Rue Alfred Laurant
Boulogne sur Seine

27/VI. 32

Lieber Herr Ocvirk,

Die nächste Woche verreise ich. Vielleicht kommen Sie, um Abschied zu nehmen, zu mir Freitag, den 1 Juli um 4 Uhr? Abends leider bin ich nicht frei – aber von 4-6 Uhr die Zeit gehört noch mir.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen.

L. Schestow

19, Rue Alfred Laurant
Boulogne sur Seine

5/XII. 32

Lieber Herr Ocvirk,

Es tut mir sehr Leid, dass wir uns nichts zusammengetroffen Sonntag. Wann wäre es Ihnen möglich noch einmal zu mir zu kommen? Wollen Sie mir einen Tag fixieren oder es ist Ihnen lieber, dass ich es tue? Jedenfalls, falls Sie den nächsten Freitag (9/XII) abends frei sind, schreiben Sie mir nur eine Karte und ich werde auf Sie warten. Hoffentlich auf baldiges Wiedersehen

Ihr ergebener

L. Schestow

4/V. 33

Lieber Herr Ocvirk!

Soeben habe ich Ihr Brief erhalten. Sie schreiben, dass Sie Ende dieser Woche verreisen müssen – und heute schon Donnerstag ist. Falls »Ende« werde sagen Sonnabend – und falls Sie Freitag Abends (um 8 ½) frei sind, Sie können kommen zu mir – ich gehe nichts aus.

Ihr ergebener

L. Schestow

Boulogne sur Seine
19, Rue Alfred Laurant

[18. 11. 33]*

Cher monsieur,

Je vous remercie cordialement pour l'envoi de votre livre « Razgovori » et je regrette seulement que, ne sachant pas votre langue, je ne peux pas le lire et l'apprécier. Mais si Vous voulez avoir un bon lecteur et si vous avez encore des exemplaires libres peut-être enverrez vous un exemplaire à professeur A. Belikov. Subotica. Oblicev venac 4. Il collabore, autant que je sais, aux revues yougoslaves – et peut-être voudra-t-il faire un compte rendu de votre livre. Je vous serre cordialement la main

Votre dévoué

L. Chestov

* Datum poštnega žiga



Павел Кузнецов
Санкт-Петербург

Лев Шестов и Николай Бердяев: два типа русской религиозной философии

Из всех русских мыслителей первой половины XX столетия Лев Шестов и Николай Бердяев получили наибольшую известность за пределами России. Их часто упоминали вместе как выразителей особого российского «религиозного экзистенциализма», сформулировавших его основные положения задолго до Мартина Хайдеггера, Карла Ясперса и Жана-Поля Сартра. Во многом это справедливо. Но наряду с общими чертами их мировоззрения, столь же очевидны и различия. Данный текст посвящен анализу как несомненно-го сходства многих их идей, так и принципиальным расхождениям.

Жизненная и творческая судьба Льва Исааковича Шестова (1866–1938) во многом неотделима от судьбы его друга-оппонента Николая Александровича Бердяева (1874–1948). Они оба родились в Киеве и там же позна-

комились в конце 1902 года. Случайно они оказались вместе на встрече Нового, 1903 года, между ними возник спор, едва не окончившийся ссорой, но все завершилось благополучно, молодые философы перешли на «ты» и с тех пор началась их дружба, длившаяся более 35 лет. Позднее уже в эмиграции в Париже Лев Шестов в беседах, пожалуй, с единственным человеком, которого можно назвать его последователем – Бенджаменом Фонданом вспоминал об этом так: «Мы никогда не были согласны. Мы всегда сражались, кричали, Бердяев всегда упрекал меня в “шестовизации” авторов, о которых я говорю. Он утверждал, что ни Достоевский, ни Толстой, ни Киркегор никогда не говорили того, что я заставляю их говорить. И каждый раз я ему отвечал, что он оказывает мне слишком большую честь, и если это я, действительно изобрел... то должен был бы лопнуть от тщеславия».¹ В свою очередь в своей философской автобиографии *Самопознание* Бердяев следующим образом описывал их встречу: «Я познакомился с человеком, который остался моим другом на всю жизнь, которого я считаю одним из самых замечательных и лучших людей, каких мне приходилось встречать в жизни. Я говорю о Льве Шестове, который также был киевлянин. В то время появились его первые книги и меня особенно заинтересовало его книга о Ницше и Достоевском. Мы всегда спорили и у нас были разные мирозерцания, но в шестовской проблематике было что-то близкое мне. Это было не только интересное умственное общение, но и общение экзистенциальное, искание смысла жизни».²

В 1905 году в Петербурге издается четвертая книга Шестова, сборник афоризмов – *Апофеоз беспочвенности. Опыт адогматического мышления*, ставшая своего рода манифестом раннего периода его творчества. 70 лет спустя фран-

цузский исследователь русской мысли Жан-Клод Маркаде назовет эту книгу пророческой для развития философии XX столетия.³ В самом деле, утрата универсальной традиции, исчезновение корней, ощущение потерянности, бездомности, беспочвенности становятся общим и для культуры, и для философии прошлого столетия: Лев Шестов осознает и выражает это одним из первых. Трагический скептицизм мыслителя, подвергающего «деконструкции» устои и ценности современной цивилизации, является главной доминантой книги: «Нужно усомниться не затем, чтобы потом снова вернуться к твердым убеждениям... Нужно, чтобы сомнение стало постоянной творческой силой, пропитало бы самое существо нашей жизни».⁴ Вслед за Ницше Шестов «философствует молотом» – его метафизическое иконоборчество не знает пределов. Апофатическое ничто – конечная и одновременно исходная точка мыслителя. Ничто – как конец, завершение и одновременно абсолютная возможность...

С одной стороны, *Апофеоз беспочвенности* вызвал почти скандальный резонанс – появилось множество откликов, включая тексты Василия Розанова и Алексея Ремизова, с другой – Шестову казалось, что его книгу неправильно воспринимают и ее проблематику неверно истолковывают (кстати, и впоследствии такое впечатление будет возникать у него от большинства рецензий на его сочинения). В этот момент в марте 1905 года в журнале *Вопросы жизни* появляется пространная статья Бердяева *Трагедия и обыденность*, рассматривающая *Апофеоз беспочвенности* в связи с предшествующими работами Шестова. Этот текст один из лучших среди написанных о Шестове до его эмиграции из России в 1920 году. Бердяев, несомненно, высоко оценивает новую работу Шестова, но при этом оговаривается, что лучшей его книгой он считает предшествующую – *Досто-*

евский и Ницше. Философия трагедии. Апофеоз беспочвенности кажется ему опасным в том смысле, что, провозглашая адогматическое мышление в качестве абсолюта книга становится догматической... «Потерявшая всякую надежду беспочвенность превращается в своеобразную систему успокоения, ведь абсолютный скептицизм также может убить тревожные искания, как и абсолютный догматизм... Трагическая беспочвенность не может иметь другого “апофеоза”, кроме религиозного и тогда уже положительного».⁵ Именно в этом первом тексте Бердяева о Шестове (всего он напишет четыре больших статьи о своем друге, не считая мелких рецензий) проступает вся амбивалентность отношения мыслителей друг к другу. Как и для Шестова, основная метафизическая интуиция Бердяева – острое ощущение царящего в мире зла, которое не может быть оправдано никакими философскими системами, никакой теодицеей. Он такой же страстный спорщик, полемист, неоднократно говоривший, что для выражения собственных идей ему надо от чего-то оттолкнуться, вступить в полемику, – он должен мысленно представить себе оппонента и спроецировать его вовне. Бердяев с изначальным антиномизмом своей мысли и романтической бунтарской установкой оставался человеком, не приемлющим догматизм любого рода, все принудительное, навязанное извне – общественным мнением, коллективом или даже церковью. Как и Шестов, Бердяев определенном смысле он был метафизическим анархистом, религиозным индивидуалистом, космополитом, для которого «беспочвенность» являлась фундаментом творчества. Но при этом талант аналитика сочетался у него с синтетическим даром, огненная страстность – с духовной трезвостью, анархическая устремленность – с соборностью, рыцарский максимализм – с широтой и веротерпимостью, одиночество – с социальностью, апофатическое философствова-

ние – с катафатическим. Сложный, запутанный творческий путь молодого Бердяева(он был либеральным марксистом, кантианцем, испытал сильное влияние Ницше и т.д.) завершился принятием им христианства – и христианским мыслителем он оставался всю свою жизнь.

Что же касается Шестова, то для него антиномизм, беспочвенность, адогматизм, апофатичность остались определяющими характеристиками его мышления. Он был и остался «вечным богоискателем» так и не выразившим до конца свой «символ веры». По иронии судьбы, он застрял где-то между Афинами и Иерусалимом, Умозрением и Откровением, Ветхим и Новым Заветом осознанно отказавшись от окончательного выбора. Для анализа мировоззрения Шестова также очень существенно, что, в отличие от своего друга Бердяева, он не получил никакого профессионального философского образования, но не только не сожалел, а, напротив, всегда гордился этим. В России в начале XX века Шестова считали, скорее, писателем и литературным критиком, нежели философом: «Я никогда в университете не изучал философии, никогда не посещал лекций по философии и не считал себя философом... Меня принимали за литературного критика, так как мои первые книги были посвящены Шекспиру, Толстому, Чехову. Да я и сам себя считал, скорее, критиком...»⁶ И лишь позднее в эмиграции после появления таких книг, как *Власть ключей* (1922) и *На весах Иова* (1929), после того, как он начал читать лекции по философии в Сорбонне (исключительно из материальных соображений), Шестов получил статус «философа», хотя и совершенно особого рода. Это различное понимание предмета философии постоянно проявлялось в спорах с Бердяевым. Для Шестова даже Бердяев, презиравший «профессорскую философию», был, тем не менее, «слишком сдавлен немецкой филосо-

фией» и тем самым лишен внутренней свободы. Бердяев же, как уже говорилось, упрекал своего друга в «шестовизации» авторов, утверждая, что Шестов заставляет их говорить то, что они никогда не высказывали. На что он возражал Бердяеву не менее убедительно: «Только потому, что я не изучал философию в Университете, я сохранил свободу духа. Мне всегда ставят в упрек, что я цитирую тексты, которые никто не цитирует, и нахожу заброшенные тексты. Возможно, если бы я проходил курс философии, я цитировал бы только разрешенные тексты. Вот почему все цитаты я привожу в оригинале – латинском или греческом. Чтобы не сказали, что я их “шестовизирую”».⁷ Иными словами, можно сказать, что это был спор «философа» (Бердяев при всех оговорках относился к философии уважительно) и «антифилософа» – Шестова, который в своем творчестве следовал афоризму Паскаля: «Пренебрежение философией и есть истинное философствование». Оба мыслителя основывали свои идеи, в первую очередь, на личном опыте. Но следует отметить, что для Шестова собственный экзистенциальный опыт был более существенным, чем мнение величайших философских авторитетов. Его излюбленные герои – Авраам, Иов, Тертуллиан, Лютер, Паскаль, персонажи Толстого и Достоевского, Ницше и Кьеркегор – имеют к «профессиональной философии» весьма отдаленное отношение.

Из этих разногласий вытекает главный спор о вере и разуме, который они вели на протяжении всей 35-летней дружбы. В 1923 году в Париже на французском языке выходит книга Шестова *Гедсиманская ночь*, посвященная философии Блеза Паскаля. Бердяев в личном письме Шестову сразу же высказывает свои впечатления. Он говорит, что книжка очень хорошо написана, но ее концепция вызывает у него «живой протест»: «Ты упорно не желаешь знать,

что безумие Паскаля, как и апостола Павла, было безумием во Христе. Благодать ты превратил в тьму и ужас. Опыт ап. Павла, бл. Августина, Паскаля, Лютера не имел ни малейшего смысла вне христианства». ⁸ (Т. 1. С. 286) Главный упрек Бердяева Шестову заключается в том, что в полной мере проникать в христианскую драму Паскаля и других мыслителей могут лишь люди, находящиеся *внутри* христианства и сами обладающие подобным опытом, тогда как Лев Шестов стоит у его порога, так и не решаясь сделать последний шаг: «Я думаю, что статично и бездвижно неверие и скептицизм. Я вижу “выход” (против чего ты больше всего восстаешь), потому что я верующий христианин и до конца всерьез беру свою веру. “Выход” и есть движение, безвыходность же есть кружение... И ты, и Шлецер (друг и переводчик Шестова – П.К.), и все люди вашего духа восстаете против всякого, кто признает положительный смысл жизни. Но ведь признавать положительный смысл жизни и есть признак всякой религии. И напрасно вы думаете, что состояние верующего не трагично, а трагично лишь состояние неверующего. Как раз наоборот. Верующий большим рискует. Верующий рискует проиграть вечную жизнь, неверующий рискует только проиграть несколько десятилетий, что не так уж трагично и страшно». ⁹ Ответ Шестова также чрезвычайно интересен, он не отрицает важность христианского опыта, но при этом вносит существенные оговорки: «Опыта твоего я не отрицаю и отрицать не хочу. Я спорю с тобой, когда ты опыт, при посредстве готовых предпосылок разума, превращаешь в “истину”. Ты заявляешь, что о христианском опыте не могут судить стоящие вне христианства... Это очень характерно для тебя. В этом я вижу тот “этический идеализм”, от которого ты на словах открещиваешься. Так, как ты говоришь, говорят и католики... Это желание свой опыт признавать превыше всего, унаследова-

но от древней этики и воспринято христианством всех исповеданий и воинствующей философией всех оттенков». ¹⁰ Но, согласно Шестову, это право на обладание истиной является совершенно мнимым и борьбе со всеми, «обладающими истиной», он, собственно, и посвятил все свое творчество. Он убежден, что только опыт переживания смерти или какой-либо аналогичный опыт трагического переживания «открывает человеку глаза на суетность всяких земных привилегий, не исключая и моральных. Тебе это кажется “тьмой”, но мне кажется наоборот ужасом та “правота”, которой люди поклоняются, как поклонялись идолам. Ведь идола можно сделать не только из дерева, но и из идеи. “Единство” истины – один из таких идолов». ¹¹ Именно в личной переписке противоположность позиций друзей-оппонентов проявляется в полной мере. Если Бердяев абсолютный персоналист, близкий к религиозному экзистенциализму, его философия предельно антропоцентрична, то поздний Шестов все более и более теоцентричен (впервые это подметил известный историк русской философии отец В. Зеньковский). Бердяев стремится сблизить Бога и человека, тогда как для Шестова в духе ветхозаветных пророков между человеком и Богом все больше и больше разверзается бездна.

Таким образом, говорить о принадлежности Бердяева и Шестова к одному типу экзистенциальной философии вряд ли возможно. К концу жизни их мировоззрения все больше расходятся, хотя при этом они сохраняют теплые личные отношения. Различной оказывается и судьба их наследия во Франции, ставшей для обоих второй родиной, как, впрочем, и на Западе в целом. ¹² При жизни Бердяев имел значительно большую известность в мире, чем Шестов, и после Второй мировой войны был даже номинирован на Нобелевскую премию. Однако это была известность скорее не сколько

философа, метафизика, сколько знатока и исследователя «русской души», «русского коммунизма», православия и марксизма. Как свободный христианский мыслитель он плохо воспринимался и постепенно после Второй мировой войны оказался практически забыт. Тогда как известность Шестова именно благодаря его «беспочвенности», его критике рационализма, непринадлежности ни к одной из конфессий постепенно росла и достигла своего пика в 1966 году в столетие со дня его рождения, когда многие его работы были переизданы и переведены на европейские языки.

- 1 Benjamin Fondane, *Rencontres avec Leon Chestov*, Paris 1982, pp. 37–38.
- 2 Бердяев Н., *Самопознание*, Ленинград 1990, с. 133.
- 3 *Русская религиозно-философская мысль XX века. Сборник статей под ред. Н. П. Полторацкого*, Питтсбург 1975, с. 160.
- 4 Шестов Л., *Апофеоз беспочвенности. Опыт адогматического мышления*, Ленинград 1991, с. 88.
- 5 Цит. по: Баранова-Шестова Н., *Жизнь Льва Шестова*, т. 1, Paris 1983, с. 74–75.
- 6 Там же, с. 76–77.
- 7 Benjamin Fondane, *Rencontres avec Leon Chestov*, pp. 37–38.
- 8 Цит. по: Баранова-Шестова Н., *Жизнь Льва Шестова*, т. 1, с. 286.
- 9 Там же.
- 10 Там же, с. 287.
- 11 Там же, с. 288.
- 12 См.: *Русская религиозно-философская мысль XX века. Сборник статей под ред. Н. П. Полторацкого*, Питтсбург 1975.

Pavel Kuznecov

SUMMARY

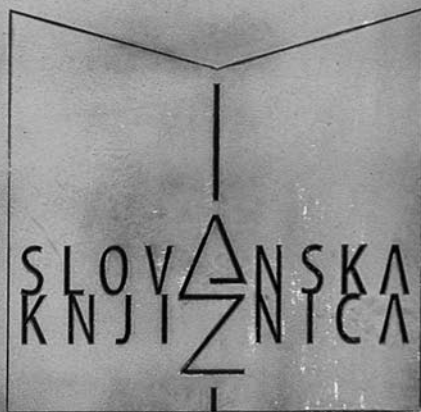
Among the Russian thinkers of the first half of the 20th century, Shestov and Berdiaev are the most well-known philosophers in the West. They are usually mentioned as representatives of a specific Russian “religious existentialism” who developed their most important ideas before Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and Jean-Paul Sartre. The article analyses the similarities and differences between their philosophical positions. Their personal relations, correspondence, essays and reviews written about one other, and especially the main topic of discussion in their life – truth, faith and reason – are discussed. Berdiaev highly appreciated the works of his friend and opponent, especially Shestov’s criticism of the rationalism of Western thought, but “groundlessnesses” in the early Shestov and the disconnection of faith and reason in the later Shestov seemed to him to be rather dangerous, even false. Shestov, however, who often presented himself as a “non-professional” philosopher as opposed to Berdiaev as a “professional” philosopher, held his friend as a thinker who had been “poisoned” by philosophical rationalism, particularly German philosophy from Kant to Hegel. One could say that what was at stake was a discussion between “philosophy” represented by Berdiaev and “antiphilosophy” represented by Shestov. In his thinking, Shestov followed Pascal, who once said: “To neglect philosophy means to be a genuine philosopher.”

Pavel Kuznecov

POVZETEK

Izmed ruskih mislecev prve polovice 20. stoletja sta na Zahodu najbolj znana Šestov in Berdjajev. Navadno se o njiju govori kot o predstavnikih posebnega ruskega »religioznega eksistencializma«, ki sta svoje najpomembnejše ideje razvila pred Martinom Heideggrom, Karlom Jaspersom in Jean-Paulom Sartrom. Članek razčlenjuje podobnost in različnost njunih filozofskih pozicij. Pozornost usmerja na njuno osebne odnose, korespondenco, eseje in knjižne ocene, ki sta jih pisala drug o drugem, ter predvsem na središčni predmet razpravljanja v njunem življenju – na resnico, vero in razum. Berdjajev je zelo visoko cenil dela svojega prijatelja in nasprotnika, posebno njegovo kritiko racionalizma Zahodne misli, »breztalnost« pri zgodnjem Šestovu ter razvezava vere in razuma pri poznem pa se mu je zdela nevarna ali celo napačna. Po drugi strani je Šestov, ki se je pogosto predstavljal kot »nepoklicni« filozof v nasprotju z Berdjajevom kot »poklicnim« filozofom, svojega prijatelja imel za misleca, ki ga je »zastrupil« filozofski racionalizem, posebno nemška filozofija od Kanta do Hegla. Lahko rečemo, da je šlo za razpravo med »filozofijo«, ki jo je zastopal Berdjajev, in »antifilozofijo«, ki jo je zastopal Šestov. Pri tem je Šestov sledil Pascalu, ki je nekoč dejal: »Zanemarjati filozofijo pomeni biti pristen filozof.«

Einspielerjeva 1
1000 Ljubljana
Odperta
od ponedeljka do petka od 8. do 20. ure,
ob sobotah od 8. do 12. ure.



L J U B L J A N A



Boris Šinigoj
Ljubljana

**VELIKI IN POSLEDNJI BOJ LEVA ŠESTOVA:
OD DRZNIH RAZKRITIJ BREZTALNOSTI MIŠLJENJA
DO STRAŠNIH RAZODETIJ SMRTI**

Kaj je filozofija? In njena naloga?

Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde:
il ne faut pas dormir pendant ce temps-là.

Blaise Pascal¹

Lev Šestov nam je v članku »V spomin na velikega filozofa-«² ohranil dragoceno pričevanje o srečevanjih z utemeljiteljem sodobne fenomenologije Edmundom Husserlom. Čeprav si je Husserl prizadeval za filozofijo kot strogo znanost, zasnovano na spoznavnih zakonitostih in samorazvidnostih razuma, čemur je Šestov vselej ostro nasprotoval, sta se iskreno spoprijateljila že ob prvem srečanju na filozofskem simpoziju v Amsterdamu leta 1928. Šestova je prijetno presenetilo, da je pobudo za srečanje

kljub vnaprejšnjemu idejnemu razhajanju dal sam Husserl.³ Še bolj ga je pritegnila Husserlova radikalna bivanjska zavzetost, s katero je poskušal s kartezijskih miselnih izhodišč znova razumsko utemeljiti filozofijo kot znanost o absolutnih resnicah. Obenem pa je v njegovi miselni drži prepoznal svoj drugi jaz, ki ga je znova izzval k bojevanju s sleherno samoumevnostjo znotraj mišljenja, da bi človeški um osvobodil lastnih spon in prebudil za resnična videnja.

Poudarjena bivanjska filozofska drža strogega misleca je Šestova spominjala na usodno izkušnjo »biti ali ne biti« in »časa, ki je skočil iz tirnic« Shakespearovega Hamleta, ki je njega samega spodbudila k filozofiji. Zato pozneje, ko se je bolje seznanil s Kierkegaardovo mislijo, ni bil več presenečen, da mu je Husserl prvi predlagal, naj se poglobi vanjo, saj je v radikalni drži strogega filozofa kmalu prepoznal živo utelešenje prelomnega *entweder–oder* slovitega Danca. Šestovovo pričevanje o skrajni bivanjski zavzetosti svojega velikega idejnega nasprotnika danes ne potrjujejo le zapiski redovnice Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, ki ohranjajo Husserlova razmišljanja iz zadnjih let življenja,⁴ ampak tudi filozofova zgodnja beležka iz leta 1906. Iz nje je mogoče razbrati pravo bivanjsko krizo in iskanje, ki razkrivata boj s samim seboj kot prvi in edini možni način filozofove biti na začetku njegove poti:⁵

Na prvem mestu imenujem splošno nalogo, ki jo moram rešiti zase, če naj se sploh imenujem filozofa. Mislim na neko kritiko uma, na kritiko logičnega in praktičnega, sploh vrednotujočega uma. Ne da bi si prišel v splošnih potezah na jasno o pomenu, bistvu, metodah, poglobitnih vidikih kritike uma, ne da bi domislil, zasnoval, utrdil in utemeljil obči zasnutek zanjo, prav zares ne morem živeti (*kann ich wahr und wahrhaftig nicht leben*). Muk nejasnosti, sem in tja blodečega dvoma sem se zadosti naužil. Moram priti do notranje trdnosti. Vem, da gre pri tem za veliko in največje, vem, da so na tem propadli veliki geniji; in če bi se hotel primerjati z njimi, bi moral že vnaprej obupati ...⁶

Šestov v nasprotju s Husserlovo bojaznijo pred tem, da bi prežgodaj obupal, vidi podobno kot Kierkegaard prav v obupu tisto mesto, od koder se poraja filozofija.⁷ Toda to je filozofija, ki se več ne opira na samorazvidnosti mišljenja, da bi dosegla absolutno veljavnost svojih spoznanj, ampak raje odkriva pravi obraz resnice v breztalnosti in negotovosti uma, v bivanjskih paradoksih in absurdnosti sveta, v človeških kapricah in naključni dolžini Kleopatrinega nosu, v norosti in brezumju, ki osvobajata prostor človekovega umevanja za nespametna in nerazumna videnja, za razloge srca in vero. Skratka to je filozofija, ki nas uči, kako vzljubiti prepad pod nogami, da bi se naučili leteti.⁸ In vendar je moral Šestov kot znanilec sodobne hermenevtike suma, ki vselej išče smisel filozofskih spraševanj globlje od njihovih ustaljenih oblik, ob prvem srečanju s Husserlom sam pri sebi vzklikniti: kako blizu sva si po izvorni filozofski drži in kako nepomirljivo se med seboj bijeta najina načina mišljenja. Kako nedoumljiva je filozofska usoda, da v idejnem nasprotniku navsezadnje odkriješ soborca in prijatelja.

Kajti ko sta se s Husserlom v pogovoru dotaknila ključnega vprašanja: »Kaj je filozofija?«, sta sprva trčila kakor mogočni gori, ki jima ni mogoče izmeriti teže ali ju kako drugače stehati, saj je le eden od njiju priznaval težnost v skladu z zakonitostmi razuma, medtem ko je drugi raje verjel Jobovi tehtnici, na kateri sta žalost in trpljenje težja od vsega morskega peska.⁹ In vendar sta se že v naslednjem trenutku srečala kakor v soglasju s starim hasidskim izrekom, ne kot gori, ki tega ne zmoreta, ampak kot človeka, ki si stopita naproti, da se objameta v pozdrav.¹⁰ Tedaj je Šestov, ki so ga osrčili veliki zgledi Dostojevskega, Tolstoja in Nietzscheja, stopil naprej in ognjevito zatrdil: »Filozofija je velik in poslednji boj.« Husserl pa ga je kljub nedeljenemu zanosu takoj ostro zavrnil: »Nein, Philosophie ist Besinnung!«¹¹ In vendar je z bivanjsko radikalnostjo svoje filozofske drže le potrdil Šestovov odgovor.

Če je torej pravi pomen filozofije boj, nedvomno ne gre za kateri koli boj ali poljubno merjenje moči. Še manj za golo besedno prerekanje, ki ne le Šestova, ampak tudi ruskega sodobnika Rozanova¹² spominja na pretep na besedni ravni in ga neredko srečamo tudi med filozofi. Da se je tega Šestov dobro zavedal, nam potrjuje z duhovitim dovtipom, ki mu ne manjka samoironije:

Boj je oče vsemu, vsemu kralj, je učil že Heraklit: pomembno je, da se bojuješ, zakaj se bojuješ, pa je že nekaj drugega ... Vsa zgodovina človeške misli – tako filozofske kot teološke – je zgodovina boja, in to ne boja na življenje, temveč na smrt. To nas navaja na misel, da predstava o resnici kot o nečem, kar ne prenese protislovja, izvira ravno iz strastne potrebe po boju. Starejši ljudje – filozofi in teologi so navadno starci – se ne morejo več pretepati s pestmi, zato so si izmislili, da je resnica ena sama, da bi se tako lahko preteпали vsaj na besedni ravni. Resnica, ki še zdaleč ni ‚ena sama‘, pa sploh ni taka, da bi se morali ljudje zaradi nje pretepati.¹³

Ko je Šestov v pogovoru s Husserlom zagovarjal filozofijo kot veliki in poslednji boj, mu torej ni šlo za običajno polemiko, ampak prej za odločilni duhovni boj, ki je vselej najprej boj s samim seboj kot filozofom. To je boj, s katerim si je tudi Šestov prizadeval vedno znova premagati ne druge filozofe, temveč samega sebe, kolikor je kot zagovornik miselne doslednosti še vedno koreninil v svetu občevezujočih razumskih samorazvidnosti, ki temeljijo na načelu izključenega protislovja. Ta boj je imenoval veliki in poslednji, ker si je z njim prizadeval utreti pot k duhovnemu motrenju edino potrebnega: ne s spekulativnim pristajanjem na neosebno logiko čistega uma, ampak s srčnim postavljanjem lastne biti pod vprašaj, ne s sovisnim sklicevanjem na samoumevne zakonitosti mišljenja, ampak z brezobzirnim razkrivanjem breztalnosti lastnega uma.

Če je torej smisel filozofije kot boja v tem, da meri na velike in poslednje reči onstran običajnih prerekanj o resnici in med-

sebojnih spodbijanij z besedami, kakšna je potem njena naloga? Šestov nam s Kierkegaardom odgovarja takole:

Naloga filozofije je, da se iztrga iz oblasti razumskega mišljenja in najde v sebi pogum (in tak pogum daje človeku samo obup), da išče resnico v tem, kar imajo ponavadi vsi za paradoks in absurd. Tam, kjer se po pričevanju naše izkušnje in razumevanja končajo vse možnosti, tam, kjer se po našem prepričanju upremo v steno absolutno nemogočega, kjer se z vso očitnostjo pokaže, da ni nobenega izhoda, da se je vse za vselej končalo, da nima človek več kaj početi in razmišljati, da lahko samo še gleda in se ohlaja, kjer ljudje opuščajo in morajo opustiti kakršne koli poskuse iskanja in boja, samo tam se ... začne pravi in resnični boj – in ta boj je naloga filozofije.¹⁴

Z drugimi besedami, naloga filozofije je, da nas nauči živeti v breztalnosti in negotovosti uma, da nas ohranja v budnosti z neutrudnim zastavljanjem neodgovorljivih vprašanj, dovzetne za resnico, ki ni samoumevna, za resnico, ki se skriva v paradoksu in absurdu, da nas pripravlja na nemogoče in nepredvidljivo, nezaslišano in nezamisljivo. Kajti šele tako nas filozofija usposablja za srčno vztrajanje v pričakovanju nepričakovanega, najsi nas opogumlja z ognjevitim zgledom Efežanovega »upanja v tisto, v kar ni mogoče upati«¹⁵ ali z odrešujočnostjo drznega apostolovega pričevanja o »upanju proti upanju«¹⁶, ki preraja obupane duše za »novo zemljo in novo nebo«¹⁷. In vse to le zato, da ne bomo zaspali, kakor so zaspali prvi Jezusovi učenci. Če namreč verjamemo Pascalu (in Šestov mu verjame), se v getsemanskem vrtu še vedno odvija eshatološka drama, ki bo kot Jezusov smrtni boj trajala vse do konca sveta. In tu lahko prispevamo svoj boj z lastno usnulostjo, tj. svojo filozofijo, da se z »upanjem, ki ne osramoti«¹⁸, pripravimo na poslednji konec, ki je obenem obljuba novega začetka.

Kajti v getsemanskem vrtu usnuli učenci so se pozneje v plamenih Duha še pravočasno prebudili v pričevanje in tako že na tem svetu okusili novost življenja, ki nas, tako vsaj še vedno

lahko iskreno verujemo in upamo, navsezadnje čaka onkraj tukajšnjih Aten in Jeruzalema, za neznanimi in še ne spoznanimi obzidji Nebeškega.

Dva vida?

Če je resničen samo drugi, kaj naj s prvim?

There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

William Shakespeare¹⁹

Da bi se podali na pot prebujenja iz dolgoletnega sna vnaprejšnjih filozofskih prepričanj o nujni občevaljavnosti in samozvidnosti človeških spoznanj, ki nam zastirajo pogled, rečeno s Shakespearom, »na mnoge reči tako v nebesih kot na zemlji«, se poglobimo v vprašanje resničnega spoznanja pri njegovem učencu Šestovu. Zdi se, da se Šestov tega vprašanja najgloblje dotakne z zgodbo o angelu smrti,²⁰ ki prileti k človeku, da bi mu ločil dušo od telesa. Zgodi se, da angel smrti pride prezgodaj. Tedaj se obiskane duše ne dotakne, vendar pred odhodom človeku neopazno pusti dvoje od svojih neštetihi očes, s katerimi zdaj ta vidi nekaj čisto novega, česar ni slutil niti v najbolj drznih sanjah. Kajti obdarjenec z novimi očmi zdaj lahko vidi ne kakor ljudje, temveč kakor angeli, kakor bitja, ki ne prihajajo z našega, temveč z drugih, nezemeljskih svetov.

Tak drugi vid naj bi po Šestovu med redkimi obdarjenci imela tako Platon kot Dostojevski, čeprav jima ni mogel biti vselej na voljo, saj se podarjeni vid v nasprotju s prirojenim vidom ne poraja iz naravne nuje, ampak iz nadnaravne svobode, ki si je nikdar ne moremo povsem prisvojiti. Kajti z njim in po njem se nam razkrivajo nezaslišane in neslutene resničnosti, ki za naravni vid ostajajo povsem nevidne in nedostopne. Zato se motrilcu z drugim vidom zgodi nekaj prelomnega, nekaj, kar ga za vselej zaznamuje, podobno kot se je to zgodilo junaku iz

podpodja pri Dostojevskem, ki je bil za skodelico čaja pripravljen žrtvovati ves svet, da bi ga le bil po njej odrešen, ali redkim zaljubljenecem v modrost v Platonovi votlini, ki so se vrnilo vanjo po mističnem vzponu k Dobremu: tam, kjer ljudje z naravnimi očmi vidijo resničnost, človek z drugim vidom poslej vidi zgolj sence in privide. In v tistem, kar ne obstaja za množico jetnikov v Platonovi votlini ali, rečeno s podpodnim junakom Dostojevskega, za »vsemstvo«²¹, ker je videti nemogoče in absurdno, človek z drugim vidom motri pravo in edino resničnost.

In vendar se tudi največji obdarjeneci z drugim vidom ne morejo izogniti »boju med dvema vidoma – naravnim in nenaravnim – boju, katerega razplet se zdi enako težaven in skrivnosten kot njegov začetek«²². In to ne velja le za Platona, čigar dialogi so dramatično nabiti z nasprotujočimi si pogledi različnih sogovorcev, ali Dostojevskega, ki vedno znova poskuša doseči pomiritev med različnimi nosilci prvega in drugega vida v svojih velikih romanih. Po Šestovu to še izraziteje kot za Platona ali Dostojevskega velja za Gogolja, kolikor je ta v svojih delih neumorno izpričeval bolešno občutenje, da nam in svetu vlada pravi resničnosti povsem odtujena razumska miselnost s svojimi groteskno odmišljenimi načeli.

Kakor Platon ni imel v mislih neke določene podzemne jame, ampak je z njeno prisodobno meril na ves kozmos kot na manjkavi svet množstva, in kakor je Dostojevski po vrnitvi iz katorge spoznal, da zunaj življenje v osnovi ni prav nič drugačno, tako tudi Gogolj z *Mrtvimi dušami* ni govoril samo o nekem okraju v Rusiji, temveč je z drugim vidom uzrl ves svet kot žalostno in zakleto kraljestvo. Še več. Po lastnem priznanju v junakih svojih del ni prikazoval in smešil drugih, ki bi jih bilo treba povzdigniti do sebe in svojega boljšega vida, ampak je nenehno ironiziral in postavljaj pod vprašaj samega sebe, kolikor je ostal kljub podarjenemu uvidu še vedno zakoreninjen v padlem človeškem svetu. Ali kot je to med bivanjem v Nici pozimi 1843/44

sam izpričal v svojem *Pravilu življenja v svetu*: »Začetek, koren in temelj vsega je ljubezen do Boga. Toda pri nas je ta začetek na koncu in mi vse, kar obstaja na tem svetu ljubimo bolj kakor Boga ...«²³

Zato lahko pritrdimo Šestovu, da je Gogolj podobno kot pozneje Dostojevski svoj drugi vid le s težavo in brez prave rešitve poskušal uskladiti s prvim: »Njegova dela, polna duhovitosti in neprimerljivega humorja, so najpretrsljivejša svetovna tragedija, in isto bi lahko rekli za njegovo osebno življenje.«²⁴ Je torej dar vida, ki odstira pravo resničnost, prekletstvo ali blagoslov? Ali v območju, ki je dostopno z drugim vidom prekletstvo in blagoslov sploh kaj pomenita? Mar se motrenje z očmi angela smrti ne izteza daleč onstran dobrega in zla? Si je potem smiselno zastavljati taka vprašanja? Ali pa se ravno v neodgovorljivosti takih in podobnih vprašanj skriva rešitev uganke drugega vida in njegovega odnosa do prvega? Ves smisel drugega vida je namreč po Šestovu »v tem, da bi zastavljali vprašanja, ki nimajo odgovorov, in sicer prav zato, ker tako trdovratno zahtevajo odgovore«²⁵. Mar pod pepelom navidezne absurdnosti takega početja ne žari iskra izvirnega človekovega hrepenenja po vrnitvi v izgubljeni raj, kjer neodgovorljiva vprašanja ne bodo več potrebovala svojega odgovora, ker bodo preprosto odveč?

Na neodgovorljiva vprašanja je tedaj bolje ne odgovarjati, ampak jim raje dopustimo, da v nas spregovorijo z molkom in prebudijo slutnjo neizrekljivega. Vendar to lahko dosežemo samo na osebni in bivanjski način. Kajti tam, kjer se končuje prvi vid se po Šestovu končuje vednost, in z drugim vidom se začne vera v to, da se »tukaj nekaj šele začneja, vendar se končuje drugje«²⁶. Tako počasi začenjamo slutiti, kaj nam je storiti s prvim vidom, če se nam odpre drugi, kako ravnati v razdvojenosti med nevedno vednostjo prvega in vedno nevednostjo drugega vida. Če sledimo Šestovovi apofatični zaobrnitvi filozofije od husserlovskega prizadevanja za strogo znanstvenost mišljenja

k drznemu sprejemanju nestanovitnosti kaprice in vsega, kar je breztalno in nenavadno v življenju, sicer sledimo temu, kar sta videla Platon iz svoje jame ali Dostojevski iz podpodja, vendar šele v prvi slutnji upanja in vere na poti k resničnemu življenju. Pa vendar, se morda prav tu, v srečevanju vednosti, upanja in vere kaže možnost posredovanja med obema vidoma, če ju že ne moremo spraviti, saj smo pri tem vselej v skušnjavi, da bi drugega podredili prvemu?

Da bi v sebi lahko bolje prisluhnili temu vprašanju, se ozrimo po živem zgledu posredovanja med prvim in drugim vidom. Zdi se, da je edinstven poskus takega posredovanja izpričal pozni Wittgenstein. Po mladostnem spoznanju meja logično strukturiranega sveta je z novim vidom nenadoma uzrl neizrekljivo in obmolknil.²⁷ Vendar ni ostal zgolj pri črki, temveč je resnično več let ohranjal zvestobo drznemu pričevanju svoje mladosti, dokler se ni kakor po vzoru Platonovih filozofov vrnil med jamske ljudi. Tu pa se ni posvetil le vsakdanji govorici kot nekdanj Sokrat, ampak tudi povsem neartikuliranim človeškim glasovom.²⁸ Tako je v poznejših filozofskih raziskavah jezikovnih iger tvegala izviren poskus povezovanja obeh vidov, naravnega in mističnega, da bi s simboliko neartikuliranih glasov, podobno kot podpodni človek Dostojevskega s kaprico, v nas prebudil slutnjo brezdanje globokosti in osvobajajoče neodgovorljivosti poslednjih filozofskih vprašanj.

Vloga neartikuliranega govora v Wittgensteinovem iskanju primernege odnosa do neizrekljivega se na simbolni ravni presenetljivo ujema s Tolstojevu zgodbo *Trije starci*, ki je bila filozofu najljubša. Govori o tem, kako je starce na samotnem otoku nekoč obiskal škof, ki je z ladjo po naključju priplul mimo. Kot božji služabnik jih je najprej vprašal, kako skrbijo za svoje zveličanje, služijo Bogu in molijo. Odgovorili so mu, da ne znajo služiti Bogu, da služijo samo drug drugemu in molijo: »Mi smo trije, vi ste trije, usmilit se nas!« Škof se je ob tej sveti preproščini ganjen

nasmehnil in jih ves preostali dan učil molitev »Oče naš«. Ko so se jo trije starci končno s težavo naučili, se je vrnil na ladjo in hvaležen Bogu, da mu je naklonil opraviti dobro delo, pomirjen odplul. Kmalu se je spustila noč, škof pa je še dolgo zamišljeno gledal na morje v smeri, kjer se je skrila otoček. Nenadoma je v daljavi uzrl luč, ki se je hitro bližala, dokler ni zagledal treh starcev, kako ozarjeni s svetlobo tečejo po vodi. Ko so dohiteli ladjo, so mu vsi trije v en glas zaklicali, da so pozabili naučeno molitev in ga prosili, naj jih še enkrat pouči. Tedaj se je škof v strahu pokrižal in rekel: »Vaša lastna molitev bo prišla k Bogu, starci božji. Nisem vreden, da vas jaz učim. Molite tudi za nas, grešnike.«²⁹

Razodetja smrti: razodetja resničnega življenja?

Только смерть и безумие смерти
 может разбудить людей от кошмара жизни.
 Lev Šestov³⁰

Tolstoj ni navdihoval le Wittgensteina, ampak tudi samega Šestova, zlasti s svojimi poznimi deli, kot so nedokončani *Zapiski blazneža* ali pa *Smrt Ivana Iljiča* in *Gospodar in služabnik*, v katerih se je ostareli pisatelj poglobil v vprašanje umiranja in smrti. Podobno kot Gogolj, po katerem je povzel naslov *Zapiskov*, se je tudi Tolstoj z literarno obravnavo poslednjih vprašanj dejansko lotil prevpraševanja samega sebe, preiskovanja lastne biti in nebiti. Vendar Tolstojeva pozna dela ne razodevajo samo skrajne bivanjske zavzetosti, ampak tudi mučno izgubo zaupanja in vere v smisel in samoumevnost npravnega in občestvenega reda, ki jo ob soočenju s smrtjo na vsakokrat edinstven način doživljajo njegovi junaki.

Tako v *Zapiskih blazneža* bogatega posestnika ob ugodni priložnosti za donosno zemljiško kupčijo namesto radostnega

zadovoljstva nenadoma brez vsakega vidnega zunanjega vzroka prevzame strašna in neznosna tesnoba. Tesnoba, ki se druží z neobvladljivim strahom in nepopisno grozo. Tesnoba, ki je po Tolstojevih besedah po svojem občutju primerljiva z mučno slabostjo pred bruhanjem in jo torej človek kljub njeni duhovni naravi čuti tudi telesno.³¹ To je tesnoba iz zgroženosti nad potekom lastnega življenja, ki se je junaku naenkrat dramatično razkrilo v vsej svoji vprašljivosti in absurdnosti nekega spokojnega večera v usnuli krčmi:

Zdi se, da je smrt strašna, vendar če se spomniš, če razmisliš o življenju, potem je *strašno umirajoče življenje*. Življenje in smrt sta se nekako zlivala v eno. Nekaj je trgalo dušo na dele, vendar je ni moglo raztrgati. Še enkrat sem šel pogledat usnule, še enkrat sem poskusil zaspati, spet vsa ista groza – rdeča, bela, kvadratna. Nekaj se trga, vendar se ne odtrga.³²

Kaj pomeni ta »rdeča, bela, kvadratna groza«, ki je sredi usnulega sveta tako brezobzirno vdrla v junakovo dušo in jo pognala na rob blaznosti? Prej v njej ni bilo ne dvomov ne negotovosti, življenje je teklo po vnaprej ustaljenih tirih, ni bilo odprtih in neodgovorljivih vprašanj, ampak samo bolj ali manj zanesljivi odgovori. Zdaj pa se je kakor v čarovniji naenkrat vse spremenilo, vsi odgovori, vsa gotovost in ustaljenost so se razblinili, čas je skočil iz tečajev, trdna tla so izginila v breztalnosti, jekleni voz življenja je iztiril in se ob poti zveržil do nerazpoznavnosti: »Ostala so samo velikanska in povsem nova vprašanja s svojimi večnimi, vsiljivimi sopotniki – nemirom, dvomom in nesmiselnim, nepotrebnim, glodajočim, a tudi neobvladljivim strahom.«³³

Mar se ni tesnobna duša s to »rdečo, belo, kvadratno grozo« šele zares prebudila? In ali ni ta groza z dna njenega globokega sna v ustaljenem in samozadostnem svetu priklicala neznano hrepenenje po resničnem življenju? Ali pa je v resnici utonila še globlje v lažni sen, kjer v nasprotju s skupnim svetom budnih

vsak usnuli sam zase sanja svojo namišljeno resničnost? Kdaj je torej prebujenje resnično in kdaj ni? Kje se tu končuje zdrav razum in kje začenja norost? Je mar vse skupaj zgolj čudaški privid neuravnovešenega uma? Če ohranimo kriterij splošne samorazvidnosti, potem je vprašanje že vnaprej odločeno in je Tolstojev junak obsojen na blaznost. Četudi tega drugi ne opazijo, se sam dobro zaveda: »Blaznost je v tem, da je vse, kar je bilo videti resnično in dejansko obstoječe, zdaj postalo prividno, in obratno, to, kar je bilo videti prividno, je zdaj videti edina resničnost.«³⁴

Vendar pri poznem Tolstojju prav ta blaznost poganja človeka onkraj vsakodnevne izkušnje in osvobaja dušo za slutnjo drugačnega življenja, za doslej povsem neznana vprašanja in neslutena videnja. Navsezadnje tudi za »poslednji drzni skok v negotovost«, ki ga za nas stori neka druga sila, in ne mi sami.³⁵ Tako nekako vsaj doživlja svoje soočenje z lastnim umiranjem in smrtjo Ivan Ilič, preprost državni uradnik in drugi Šestovov junak Tolstojevih poznih del, čigar duhovno trpljenje ob zavratni boleznii kljub prizadevanju, da bi ga posredoval drugim, ostaja skrito in nedostopno vsem, ki obkrožajo, celo njegovim najbližjim. Naposled se povsem izmučen in potrj znajde v popolni in brezupni osamljenosti, v »osamljenosti sredi gosto naseljenega mesta in svojih številnih znancev in družine, osamljenosti, kakor je popolnejše ne more biti nikjer, ne na morskem dnu ne v zemlji«³⁶.

Tedaj ga nezadržno preplavijo vprašanja, ki jim ne najde odgovora, v njem spregovori nezaslišani notranji glas, ki brez zadržkov postavi pod vprašaj vse njegovo življenje:

Morda nisem živel, kakor bi moral? Kako vendar ne, ko pa sem delal vse, kakor je bilo treba? ... Kaj tedaj zdaj hočeš? Živeti? Kako živeti? Živeti, kakor živiš na sodišču, ko sodni izvršitelj oznani: ‚Sodišče prihaja‘? Sodišče prihaja, prihaja sodba. Tukaj imaš sodbo. Ampak saj nisem kriv ... Čemu, zakaj vsa ta strahota? Razlage ni. Trpljenje, smrt ... Zakaj?³⁷

Umirajoči navsezadnje z grozo spozna, da stoji pred strašnim sodiščem, ki ukinja razliko med dobrim in zlim, pred nevidnim sodnikom, ki vsakogar obsodi. Ne le on, Ivan Ilič, vsi ljudje so krivi, saj se smrti ni mogoče upreti, kakor tudi tega, da smo že vnaprej obsojeni, ni mogoče razumeti: »Smrt prereže vse nevidne niti, s katerimi smo povezani na zemlji s sebi podobnimi bitji.«³⁸ Vendar je tako za Tolstoja kot za Šestova prav popolna osamljenost umirajočega človeka pred smrtjo neogibni pogoj in počelo resničnega spreobrnjenja duše.

Podobno kot v prvih dveh zgodbah, Tolstoj tudi v *Gospodarju in služabniku* človeka najprej predstavi v navadnih, splošno sprejetih pogojih obstajanja, da bi ga potem nenadoma prestavil v popolno bivanjsko samoto. Tokrat se to junaku zgodbe, podjetnemu podeželskemu trgovcu Brehunovu pripeti v eni sami zimski noči, ki jo mora zavoljo objestnega pohlepa po ugodni kupčiji s služabnikom preživeti v kočiji na prostem. Kljub nevarnosti, da ju v nenaseljeni pokrajini zamete snežni vihar, Brehunov do zadnjega neomajno verjame vase, v moč svojega uma in volje, ki sta ga že tolikokrat rešila v življenju. Ko se spominja prijetnih trenutkov, ki jih je pred nekaj urami preživel na toplem pri bogatem domačinu v Griškinem, sicer malce obžaluje, da se je še isti večer kljub metežu podal na pot. Vendar se tolaži z mislijo, da je prava resničnost njegovega življenja tam, v topli sobi, kjer so ga sprejeli kot spoštovanega gosta z vročim čajem in prigrizkom, in ne tukaj, v zasneženem polju, kjer zdaj sredi brezpotja tako neusmiljeno zmrzujeta s služabnikom, izgubljena in pozabljena od vseh.

Toda tudi v Brehunova z mrazom počasi zajeda dvom v pravilnost takega prepričanja. Mar ni napočil čas, da sprejme negotovost mejnega položaja, v katerem se je znašel po lastni samovolji, kot edino pravo resničnost in se pokončno sooči z nevarnostjo smrti? Ne, raje bo zapustil nemočnega služabnika in sani ter na konju sam poiskal pot do rešitve. Tako poskuša z lastno moč-

jo in iznajdljivostjo še zadnjič premagati nevidnega sovražnika, vendar ta postaja iz minute v minuto strašnejši. Brehunova kmalu po prvih kolebanjih pri iskanju prave smeri do rešitve ob predsmrtni grozi, ki se z divjim krikom iztrga iz konjevih prsi, nenadoma prevzame brezumen strah, da skoči s konja. Tedaj se v globokem snegu na robu obupa spomni svoje veljave v svetu, ki se je oprime kot poslednje rešilne bilke:

Gaj, kamenje, zakup, krčme, hiša z železno streho in žitnica, dedič ... Kako bo vse to obstalo? Kaj je to vendar? Ne more biti ... Mar ni vse to sen?³⁹

Toda kljub veliki želji, da bi se prebudil iz grdega zimskega sna, do prebujenja ne more priti. Vsaj ne do prebujenja v tem svetu. Pravo prebujenje se namreč tudi Brehunovu zgodi, ko se z zadnjimi močmi privleče do sani in v zanj doslej povsem nerazumnem vzhičenju loti vnetega oživljanja svojega služabnika, ki ga je prej tako ravnodušno zapustil. Ko ga po neuspešnem drgnjenju naposled želi ogreti z lastnim telesom in leže nanj, nenadoma sam odreveni v poslednji oslabeledosti. Tedaj začne čutiti »neko posebno srečo, ki je ni še nikoli prej doživel«, dokler ga v poslednjih trenutkih umiranja ne preplavi nenavadna ginjenost in se mu ob vsej ničevosti njegovega prejšnjega načina življenja v osvobajajočem objemu smrti razodene resnično življenje:

Grem, grem, je radostno, ganjeno govorilo vse njegovo bitje. Čutil je, da je svoboden in da ga nič več ne drži.⁴⁰

Vsi ti slovstveni junaki imajo svojo dejansko izhodišče in izvor v globokem življenjskem izkustvu in doživljanju Tolstoja samega. In to ne le v pogostih avtobiografskih podobnosti glede zunanjih okoliščin, ampak tudi v najglobljem duševnem smislu in duhovnih stiskah, ki so dosegle svoj vrh s starčevskim pobegom z doma in usodnim prehladom, ki je osamljenega pisatelja sredi bega priklenil na tujo posteljo na odmaknjeni železniški postaji, kjer ga je dohitela smrt. V toliko ima Šestov prav, ko nav-

zlic kritiki Bergsonove filozofije, da zaradi svoje posplošujoče pojmovne narave neogibno odpove pred vselej nepredvidljivim, kaotičnim in kapricioznim notranjim življenjem človeka, nazadnje pritrди misli francoskega filozofa, da so samo veliki umetniki vir za resnična notranja doživetja človeka.⁴¹

Vendar to nujno ne izključuje filozofov, vsaj kar se tiče bivanjskega motrenja poslednjih vprašanj ne. Zavzetost in neustrašna odkritost, s katero se je Tolstoj v zadnjih letih svojega življenja posvečal vprašanju umiranja in smrti namreč lahko po Šestovu primerjamo samo z razmišljanji največjih filozofov od starih Grkov naprej: »Če ima Platon prav, da filozofi ne stremijo k ničemur drugemu kakor k umiranju in smrti, ἀποθνῆσκειν καὶ τεθνᾶναι, potem moramo priznati, da se je malo kdo od naših sodobnikov tako v celoti predal filozofiji kot Tolstoj.«⁴² In čeprav se pozni Tolstoj loteva vprašanja smrti v obliki povesti in zgodb, mu ne gre toliko za visoko literaturo kot za neustrašno opisovanje »strašne sodbe«, v kateri življenjski ideali niso nič bolj zavezujoči od priložnostne kaprice in kjer nevidnega sodnika ne morejo ganiti še tako veliki dosežki človeka v svetu. Tako se na ozadju branja poznega Tolstoja navsezadnje tudi drzna Šestovova apologija norosti uma razkrije kot stremljenje po njegovi osvoboditvi za poslednjo resnico, kakor je to izpričano že v srednjeveškem ruskem izročilu jurodivov ali norcev za Kristusa.

Zato se za konec našega srečanja s Šestovom raje kot k Husserlovemu učencu Heideggru in njegovi fenomenološki opredelitvi človekove tubiti kot »biti k smrti«⁴³ še zadnjič obrnimo k Pascalu, da bi v sebi znova obudili dovezetnost ne le za izvorno bivanjsko, temveč tudi duhovno religiozno razsežnost tega najvznemirljivejšega od poslednjih vprašanj. Če namreč verjamemo Šestovovemu tolmačenju mističnega Pascalovega videnja Jezusovega smrtnega boja v getsemanskem vrtu, da je sam Bog dodal svoje neskončno trpljenje na Jobovo tehtnico in bosta ob koncu

sveta Božja in človeška žalost težji od vsega peska sveta,⁴⁴ potem se s tega eshatološkega zornega kota tudi Šestovova »razodetja smrti« ne kažejo le kot »razodetja resničnega življenja«, ⁴⁵ ampak celo samo smrt lahko vzremo kot skrivnostni dar. In to ne le v izročilu srednjeveških mističnih poezij svetega Frančiška, ki drzno slavi sestro smrt, ampak tudi v sodobni filozofski misli poznega Jacquesa Derridaja, ki ga s Šestovom poleg eshatološke naravnosti družijo tudi dediščina judovskega duhovnega izročila:

Dar, ki mi ga Bog izkaže s tem, ko me vzame pod svoj pogled in v svoje roke in mi pri tem ostane nedosegljiv, zastrašujoče nesomeren dar tega *mysterium tremendum* mi daje odgovornost, me prebudi k odgovornosti, ki mi jo daje, le tako, da mi (za)da smrt, skrivnost smrti, novo izkušnjo smrti.⁴⁶

- 1 »Jezus bo v smrtnem boju vse do konca sveta: v tem času ne smemo spati.« *Misli* (553), prev. Janez Zupet, Celje 1986.
- 2 Prim. L. Šestov, *Med razumom in razodetjem*, prev. Borut Kraševac, Celje 2001 (=MRR), str. 170–196.
- 3 Prav tam, str. 171.
- 4 Prim. S. Adalgundis Jaegerschmid OSB, »Pogovori z Edmundom Husserlom (1931–1936)«, *Bogoslovni vestnik* 4/1988, zlasti str. 446: »Filozofija je strastna volja po spoznanju bivajočega ... Vsa filozofija je filozofija začetka, filozofija življenja in smrti. Vedno znova začenjamo od začetka ...«
- 5 Prim. B. Šinigoj, »Prvi in edini možni način filozofove biti«, *Anthropos* 1–2/1992, str. 21–25.
- 6 Husserliana zv. II, uvod, str. VII–VIII; nav. po uvodni študiji Iva Urbančiča, v: E. Husserl, *Kartezijanske meditacije*, prev. Mirko Hribar in I. Urbančič, Ljubljana 1975, str. 14
- 7 Prim. L. Šestov, »Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof« (pet predavanj za Radio-Paris jeseni 1937), v: MRR, str. 81.
- 8 Prim. isti, »Getsemanska noč – Pascalova filozofija«, v: MRR, str. 62.
- 9 Prim. Job 6,2–3.
- 10 Prim. Martin Buber, *Pripovedi hasidov*, prev. Tomo Virk, Ljubljana 1991, str. 103.
- 11 »Ne, filozofija je razmišljanje.« Nav. po: MRR, str. 175.
- 12 Prim. Vasilij V. Rozanov, *Uedinennoe* (1916), Moskva 1990, str. 231, prev. Drago

- Bajt, Nova revija 158/1995, str. 77 in B. Šinigoj, »Dve filozofiji? In slovanska duša?«, Logos 1–2 /2005, www.kud-logos.si.
- 13 L. Šestov, *Atene in Jeruzalem*, Pariz 1951, fr. 39: »Prerekanja o resnici«, prev. B. Kraševac, *Literatura* 101–102/1999, str. 125.
- 14 *MRR*, str. 81–82.
- 15 Prim. Heraklit, fr. 18; Klemen Aleksandrijski, *Preproge* II, 17, 4.
- 16 Prim. *Rim* 4,18.
- 17 Prim. *Raz* 21,1.
- 18 Prim. *Rim* 5,5.
- 19 »V nebesih in na zemlji je več stvari, kakor o njih sanjajo v naši filozofiji.« *Hamlet*, 1.5.180
- 20 Najverjetneje gre za Šestovovo svobodno navezavo na staro talmudsko izročilo. Prim. L. Šestov, *Dostojevski in Nietzsche/Premagovanje samorazvidnosti (=PS)*, prev. B. Kraševac, Ljubljana 2002, str. 142 in *Talmud*, traktata Hagiga 2,2 in Ketuvot.
- 21 Skovanka iz ruske besedne zveze *vse my* (»vsi mi«), ki jo je Dostojevski vpeljal v *Zapiskih iz podpodja*; v nasprotju z »vsemstvom«, tj. z vsemi nami z zgolj naravnim vidom, ki se v vsakdanjem življenju podrejamo zakonu izključenega protislovja in samorazvidnim resnicam razuma (Šestov izraz včasih nadomešča s Kantovim izrazom *Bewußtsein überhaupt*, »splošna zavest«), se podpodni junak Dostojevskega neutrudno bori za edinstveno svobodo uma – s samovoljo in kaprico. Prim. *PS*, str. 149, op. prev.
- 22 *PS*, 143.
- 23 Nikolaj V. Gogolj, *Pravilo življenja v svetu*, v: isti, *Ispovest*, prev. Dejan Lučić, Vrnjačka Banja 2004, str. 70.
- 24 *PS*, 162.
- 25 Prav tam.
- 26 *PS*, 178.
- 27 Prim. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Logično filozofski traktat*, prev. Frane Jerman, Ljubljana 1976, teza 7: »O čemer ne moremo govoriti, o tem moramo molčati.«
- 28 Prim. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, I, 528 in 529, v: isti, *Werkausgabe*, zv. 1, Frankfurt am Main 1997, str. 440.
- 29 Prim. Lev N. Tolstoj, *Polikuška in druge povesti*, prev. Janko Moder et al., Ljubljana 1979, str. 235–241.
- 30 »Samo smrt in brezumje smrti lahko prebudita ljudi iz življenjske more.« L. Šestov, »Na strašnom sude. Poslednie proizvedenija L. N. Tolstogo«, v: *Na vesah Jova, Sočinenija v dveh tomah*, Moskva 1993 (=NVJ), str. 107.
- 31 L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe sobranie sočinenija*, Moskva 1928–1959 (=LNT), zv. 26, str. 470.
- 32 Prav tam (poudaril L. Šestov).
- 33 *NVJ*, str. 99.

- 34 *NVJ*, str. 107.
- 35 Prim. *NVJ*, str. 138.
- 36 Navedke iz Tolstojevih del navajam po obstoječem slovenskem prevodu, ki sem ga delno priredil v skladu z izvirnikom, v: L. N. Tolstoj, *Gospodar in hlapec in druge zgodbe* (= *GIH*), prev. Vera Brnčič et al., Ljubljana 1978, str. 199.
- 37 Prav tam, str. 198, 200.
- 38 *NVJ*, str. 136.
- 39 *GIH*, str. 293.
- 40 *GIH*, str. 298
- 41 Prim. *NVJ*, str. 127.
- 42 *NVJ*, str. 138.
- 43 Prim. Martin Heidegger, *Bit in čas*, prev. Tine Hribar et al., 1997, §§ 46–53 in str. 346, op. 6, ki v značilni fenomenološki redukciji navaja Tolstojevu povest *Smrt Ivana Iljiča* zgolj kot prikaz fenomena »pretresa in zloma tega ‚umira se‘«.
- 44 Prim. *MRR*, str. 75.
- 45 Prim. *NVJ*, str. 518–519.
- 46 J. Derrida, *Dar smrti*, prev. Saša Jerele, Ljubljana 2004, str. 44–45.

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THE GREAT AND FINAL STRUGGLE
OF LEV SHESTOV:
FROM DARING UNCOVERINGS
OF THE GROUNDLESSNESS OF THOUGHT
TO TREMENDOUS REVELATIONS OF DEATH

What is philosophy? And what is its task?

Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde:
il ne faut pas dormir pendant ce temps-là.

Blaise Pascal¹

In his paper entitled “In Memory of a Great Philosopher,”² Lev Shestov provides some valuable information about his encounters with the founder of modern phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Although Husserl strived to present philosophy as a strict science based on cognitive principles and the self-evidences of reason, which Shestov always strongly opposed, the two immediately became friends after meeting for the first time at a philosophical symposium in Amsterdam in 1928. Shestov was pleasantly surprised to learn that Husserl himself had given the initiative to meet in spite of being aware of the enormous differences in their thinking.³ He was even more attracted by Husserl’s radical philosophical passion and preoccupation with which he attempted, using Cartesian principles of thought, to reestablish philosophy as a science of absolute truths. At the same time, he recognized in Husserl’s rationality his own alter ego, which again challenged him to struggle with every self-evident or obvious matter of thought in order to free the human mind of its own bonds and awaken it for true revelations.

The emphatic and passionate philosophical attitude of this strict philosopher reminded Shestov of the fatal experience of “to be or not to be” and the “time out of joint” in Shakespeare’s Hamlet, which had drawn Shestov himself to philosophy. Later on, after becoming better acquainted with Kierkegaardian thought, Shestov was no longer surprised at Husserl’s suggestion to study more intensively the works of Kierkegaard, as he soon recognized in the radical attitude of this strict philosopher the true embodiment of the famous Dane’s fundamental statement *entweder-oder* (i.e. “either-or”). Shestov’s account of the radical philosophical attitude of his great intellectual antagonist is today confirmed not only by the notes of Sister Adelgundis Jaegerschmid, preserving Husserl’s contemplations from the last years of his life,⁴ but also by the philosopher’s early notes dating from 1906. These reveal a true existential crisis and a search, both uncovering his struggle with himself as the first and only possible means of a philosopher’s being at the beginning of his path:⁵

First of all I shall name a general task which I must solve for myself, if I am to call myself a philosopher at all. I am thinking about a certain criticism of the mind, a criticism of the logical and practical, even an evaluating mind. Without generally clarifying the significance, essence, methods and principal aspects of criticism of the mind; without creating, conceiving, strengthening and establishing a general concept for it, I truly cannot live (*kann ich wahr und wahrhaftig nicht leben*). I have indulged sufficiently in the torments of obscurity, of rambling doubt. I must attain inner certainty. I know this involves something great and the greatest, I know great geniuses have failed in this; and if I were to compare myself with them, I would have to fall into despair in advance ...⁶

In contrast with Husserl’s fear of falling into despair too early, Shestov takes Kierkegaard’s view and sees despair as the place where philosophy originates.⁷ Yet this philosophy is no longer

based on the self-evidences of thought in order to attain the absolute validity of its findings, but rather unveils the real face of truth in the groundlessness and uncertainty of the mind, in the existential paradoxes and absurdities of the world, in man's caprices and the coincidental length of Cleopatra's nose, in madness and insanity, which liberate the space of man's understanding of unreasonable and irrational seeing, for reasons of the heart and faith. In brief, this philosophy teaches us how to love the abyss beneath our feet so that we may learn to fly.⁸ And yet Shestov as the herald of the contemporary hermeneutics of suspicion, which always seeks the meaning of philosophical questionings far beneath their established forms, had to exclaim to himself upon his first meeting with Husserl: how close we are in our basic philosophical attitudes and how unrelenting is the struggle between our differing philosophical positions. How incomprehensible is the philosophical fate that one finds a fellow fighter and friend in an intellectual antagonist.

When, in their discussions, the two men touched on the key question: "What is philosophy?", they initially crashed like two mighty mountains whose weight cannot be measured or otherwise weighed. Only one of them recognized gravity according to the principles of reason, while the other preferred to believe in Job's scales, where sadness and suffering weigh heavier than all the sands of the sea.⁹ Yet the very next moment they managed to come together as if guided by the old Hasidic statement: not like mountains, which are incapable of this, but like humans who come together to embrace in greeting.¹⁰ It was then that Shestov, heartened by the great examples of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche, stepped forward and passionately asserted: "Philosophy is the great and final struggle." But Husserl immediately rejected this and, despite their shared enthusiasm, sharply replied: "Nein, Philosophie ist Besinnung!"¹¹ Yet his radical philosophical position nevertheless confirmed Shestov's reply.

If the true meaning of philosophy is therefore a struggle, then this certainly can't be just any struggle, let alone a testing of strength. And least of all a bare verbal quarrelling, which to Shestov, as well as to the contemporary Russian writer, Rozanov,¹² is reminiscent of a fight on the verbal level and is also quite common among philosophers. That Shestov was well aware of this is easily confirmed in one of his witty jokes, which is not lacking in self-irony:

The struggle is father to all, king to all, Heraclites once taught; the important thing is to struggle, but why one struggles is another story altogether ... The entire history of human thought – both philosophical and theological – is the history of a struggle, not a struggle for life, but for death. This leads to the idea that our conception of truth as something that cannot stand contradiction originates precisely in the passionate need for a struggle. Because elderly persons – philosophers and theologians are normally old men – can no longer fight with their fists, they came up with the idea that there is only one truth so that they could fight at least on the verbal level. The truth, on the other hand, is far from being 'a one and only,' and is certainly not something that people would have to fight over.¹³

When, in his discussion with Husserl, Shestov defended philosophy as the great and final struggle, he was not engaging in an ordinary polemic, but rather in a decisive spiritual struggle that is always first a struggle with oneself as a philosopher. This is a struggle in which Shestov endeavoured again and again not to conquer other philosophers, but his own self, inasmuch as he was still rooted in the world of intellectual self-evidences based on the principle of noncontradiction as a defender of the consistency of thought. He named it the great and final struggle, because through this struggle he attempted to find the way to contemplation of the only thing that is needed: not by speculatively accepting the impersonal logic of pure reason, but by heartedly questioning one's own being; not by systematically

referring to the self-evident principles of thought, but by unscrupulously uncovering the groundlessness of one's own mind.

If the meaning of philosophy as a struggle is therefore to aim for the great and final things beyond ordinary polemics on truth and mutual challenges with words, then what is its task? Shestov finds the answer in Kierkegaard:

The task of philosophy is to liberate itself from the power of rationalism and to find in itself the courage (and such courage gives man only despair) to search for the truth in what most people usually consider to be paradox or absurd. It is where, according to our experience and understanding, all possibilities end; where, in our opinion, we lean against the wall of the absolutely impossible; where it is very obvious that there is no way out, that all has ended forever, that man no longer has anything to do or contemplate, that he can only watch and cool down; where people are abandoning and have to abandon any attempts at searching and struggling whatsoever; it is only there that ... the real and true struggle begins – and this struggle is the task of philosophy.¹⁴

In other words, the task of philosophy is to teach us to live in groundlessness and uncertainty of mind, to keep us awake by relentlessly contemplating unanswerable questions, to make us sensitive to the truth that is not self-evident, to the truth concealed in the paradox and the absurd, to prepare us for the impossible and the unexpected, the unheard of and the unthinkable. For this is the only way that philosophy can prepare us to heartedly persist in expecting the unexpected, whether by encouraging us with the fiery example of Ephesian's "hope in that which is un hoped,"¹⁵ or with the redemptiveness of the Apostles' bold preachings of "hope against hope,"¹⁶ which awakens desperate souls for "a new heaven and a new earth."¹⁷ And all of this for the sole purpose of preventing us from falling asleep as did the first disciples of Jesus. If we are to believe Pascal (and Shestov did), an eschatological drama is still taking place in

the Gethsemane Garden as a mortal struggle of Jesus, and will continue until the end of the world. And here we can contribute our struggle with our own somnolence, i.e. our own philosophy, so that we may prepare ourselves, with “a hope that does not humiliate,”¹⁸ for the very end, which at the same time holds the promise of a new beginning.

For the disciples sleeping in the Gethsemane Garden later awoke in the flames of the Spirit in time to speak of this, and were able to taste in this world the novelty of life awaiting us – at least as far as we still sincerely believe and hope – beyond the present-day Athens and Jerusalem, behind the unknown and undiscovered walls of the city of Heaven.

Two eyesights? If only the second is real,
what should we do with the first?

There are more things in heaven and earth,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

William Shakespeare¹⁹

So that we may embark on the path of awakening from the long sleep of preconceived philosophical convictions about the necessity of the general applicability and self-evidence of human understandings that are obscuring our view on “more things in heaven and earth,” let us contemplate the question of true understanding according to Shestov. It seems that Shestov comes closest to this question in his story of the angel of death,²⁰ who comes to man in order to separate the soul from his body. Yet it happens that the angel of death comes too early. In this case the angel does not touch the visited soul, but imperceptibly leaves him a pair of its innumerable eyes, which now allow him to see something completely new, something he had not dreamed of in his most daring dreams. Being thus endowed with new eyes,

he can no longer see like people, but like angels, like beings who are not from our world, but from other, nonterrestrial worlds.

According to Shestov, Plato and Dostoyevsky were among the rare few endowed with this second eyesight, though it was not always at their disposal. This is because endowed eyesight, in contrast to natural eyesight, is not born of natural necessity, but of supranatural freedom, which can never be fully acquired. For it is with and by this eyesight that unheard of and unthinkable realities are revealed to us, realities which remain completely invisible and inaccessible to natural eyesight. This is a turning point for the observer with second eyesight, something that marks him forever. Something similar happened to Dostoyevsky's hero from the underfloor, who was willing to sacrifice the entire world for a cup of tea if he would only be saved from it afterwards. Or to the rare lovers of wisdom in Plato's cave, who returned to the cave after a mystic ascent to the Good: where people with natural eyesight see reality, a man with second eyesight henceforth sees only shadows and hallucinations. And in that which does not exist for the multitude of prisoners in Plato's cave or, in the words of Dostoyevsky's underfloor hero, for "vsemstvo"²¹ (all of us), because it appears impossible and absurd, he with second eyesight observes the true and only reality.

Yet even those with the greatest gift of second eyesight cannot avoid "the struggle between the two eyesights – natural and unnatural – the struggle whose outcome seems as difficult and mysterious as its beginning ..."²² And this not only applies for Plato, whose dialogues are dramatically packed with the opposing views of various speakers, or Dostoyevsky, who repeatedly attempts to reach a reconciliation between various protagonists with first and second eyesight in their great novels. According to Shestov, this is even more pronounced in Gogol, at least in those works in which he untiringly expressed the morbid feeling that we and the world are governed by rational thinking with

its grotesquely abstract principles, which is completely alienated from true reality.

Much like Plato did not have in mind a certain underground cave, but used it to allude to the entire cosmos as a lacking world of plurality, and just as Dostoyevsky came to realize after returning from katorga that life on the outside is basically not different at all, so Gogol in his *Dead Souls* did not speak only of a certain district in Russia, but with his second eyesight looked on the entire world as a sad and enchanted kingdom. Even more. As he himself confessed, the heroes of his works were not used to expose and ridicule those who should have been raised to the level of his better eyesight, but to continuously ironize and question his own self for as long as he still remained rooted in the fallen human world despite his endowed eyesight. Or as he revealed, during his stay in Nice in the winter of 1843/44, in *The Rule of Life in the World*: “The beginning, root and foundation of everything is love of God. But in our case this beginning is at the end and we love everything that exists in this world more than God ...”²³

We can, therefore, agree with Shestov that, in a similar way as Dostoyevsky later on, Gogol had considerable difficulty and no real solution in attempting to reconcile his two eyesights: “His works, filled with wittiness and incomparable humour, are the most moving world tragedy, and the same could be said of his personal life.”²⁴ Is, then, the gift of eyesight that uncovers true reality a curse or a blessing? Does a curse or blessing mean anything at all in the area accessible with second eyesight? Does observation with the eyes of the angel of death not extend far beyond good and evil? Is it then sensible to ask such questions? Or does the solution to the riddle of second eyesight and its attitude towards first eyesight lie precisely in the unanswerableness of these and similar questions? For according to Shestov, the entire purpose of second eyesight is “to ask questions that have no

answers simply because they so obstinately demand answers.”²⁵ Is there not, beneath the ashes of the apparent absurdity of such activity, a glittering flame of man’s original longing to return to lost Eden, where unanswerable questions will no longer require answers because they will simply be needless?

In such cases, it would be better not to respond to unanswerable questions, but rather allow them to speak inside us in silence and awaken a premonition of the unutterable. Yet this can only be attained in a personal and existential way. Because, according to Shestov, knowledge ends where the first eyesight ends, and the second eyesight marks the beginning of belief in the fact that “something is just beginning here, but ending elsewhere.”²⁶ And so we slowly begin to sense what we are to do with the first eyesight if the second opens up to us, and what to do when we are divided between the ignorant knowledge of first eyesight and the knowing ignorance of second eyesight. If we follow Shestov’s apophatic turn of philosophy from Husserl’s endeavours for strictly scientific thinking to the bold acceptance of the inconstancy of caprice and all that is groundless and unusual in life, we are following what Plato saw from his cave and Dostoyevsky from the underfloor, but only in the first premonition of hope and faith on the path towards true life. Yet precisely at the meeting point of knowledge, hope and faith there may be a possibility of mediating between the two eyesights, inasmuch as they cannot be reconciled, for we are always tempted to subordinate one to the other?

To hear this question more clearly in our minds, let us take a look at a living example of mediation between the first and second eyesight. It seems that the unique attempt of such mediation was demonstrated by the late Wittgenstein. After becoming aware of the limits of the logically structured world in his youth, he took on a new eyesight and suddenly saw the unutterable and fell silent.²⁷ Yet he not only made use of the written language,

but for several years remained truly faithful to the bold testimonies of his youth, until finally returning among cave men following the example of Plato's philosophers. Here he not only devoted himself to daily language as Socrates once did, but also to completely unarticulated human voices.²⁸ And so in his later philosophical studies of language games he risked a genuine attempt at connecting the two eyesights – the natural and mystical – using the symbolism of unarticulated voices to awaken in us, like Dostoyevsky's underfloor man with a caprice, the premonition of bottomless depth and liberating unanswerability of the last philosophical questions.

On a symbolic level, the role of unarticulated speech in Wittgenstein's search for an appropriate attitude towards the unutterable is surprisingly close to Tolstoy's story *The Three Hermits*, which was his favourite. The story speaks of hermits on a solitary island who were once visited by a bishop who happened to be passing by on a ship. As a servant of God, he first asked them what they were doing for their redemption and how they were serving God and praying. They replied that they did not know how to serve God, that they were only serving one another and praying: "Three are ye, three are we, have mercy on us!" Moved by such holy simplicity, the bishop smiled and spent the rest of the day trying to teach them the prayer "Our Father." After the three hermits had finally learned the prayer with considerable difficulty, the bishop returned to his ship and, thankful to God for letting him do a good deed, sailed away pacified. Night soon fell, but the bishop continued to stare out to sea, absorbed in thought, in the direction of the island. In the distance he suddenly noticed a light that was rapidly approaching, and then saw the three hermits running on the water, illuminated by light. When they reached the ship, the three of them called out in one voice that they had forgotten the prayer and asked him to teach it to them again. Struck by fear, the bishop crossed himself and

uttered: “Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. I am not worthy of teaching you. Pray also for us sinners.”²⁹

Revelation of death: a revelation of true life?

Только смерть и безумие смерти
может разбудить людей от кошмара жизни.
Lev Shestov³⁰

Tolstoy not only inspired Wittgenstein, but also Shestov himself, particularly his later works, such as the unfinished *Notes of a Madman* or *Death of Ivan Ilych* and *Master and Man*, in which the aged writer was deeply involved with the question of passing away and death. Like Gogol, from whom he borrowed the title of *Notes*, also Tolstoy began to question his own self, to examine his own being and nonbeing through the literary treatment of the last questions. Yet his later works not only reveal an extreme existential engagement, but also a deep loss of trust and faith in the sense and self-evidence of the moral and community order which his heroes always experienced in a unique way when confronting death.

For example, in the *Notes of a Madman*, the rich landowner, faced with a favourable opportunity for a profitable land sale, is suddenly overcome by a dreadful and unbearable anguish without any apparent external reason. An anguish accompanied by an uncontrollable fear and indescribable horror. An anguish which, in Tolstoy's words, is by its feeling comparable to the tormenting nausea felt before vomiting and which, despite its spiritual nature, man also feels physically.³¹ This is the anguish arising from the horror felt after looking back on one's own life, which suddenly and dramatically revealed itself to the hero in all its questionability and absurdity one peaceful evening in a drowsy inn:

Death seems dreadful, but if you remember, if you think about life, then *dying life is dreadful*. Life and death seemed to be blending into one. Something was tearing the spirit into pieces, but was unable to do so. Once again I went to see those who were sleeping, once again I tried to fall asleep, again all the same horror – red, white, square. Something is tearing away, but has not torn off.³²

What is this “red, white, square-shaped horror” that has, in the midst of a drowsy world, penetrated so ruthlessly into the hero’s soul and driven it to the verge of madness? Beforehand it had been free of any doubts or uncertainties, life had followed its ordinary course, there were no open and unanswered questions, just more or less reliable answers. Now, by some sort of witchcraft, everything has suddenly changed, all answers, all certainty and stability have vanished, time has jumped out of its hinges, solid ground has disappeared in groundlessness, the steel wagon of life has derailed and become distorted along the way to the point of unrecognizability: “All that has remained are the giant and completely new questions with their eternal, intrusive companions – restlessness, doubt, and a senseless, unnecessary, gnawing and even uncontrollable fear.”³³

Has not the anguished soul with this “red, white, square-shaped horror” only now truly awakened? And has not this horror drawn from the bottom of its deep sleep in a stable and self-sufficient world an unknown longing for true life? Or has it in reality drowned even deeper into a false sleep, where in contrast to the common world of those who are awake, each sleepy individual dreams his own imagined reality? So when is awakening real and when is it not? Where does common sense end and where does madness begin? Is it all merely a strange hallucination of an unbalanced mind? If we preserve the criterion of general self-evidence, the question is determined in advance and Tolstoy’s hero is condemned to madness. Even if others do

not notice this, he himself is well aware of it: “Madness is in the fact that everything which seemed real and actually existent has now become hallucinatory and vice-versa, what previously seemed hallucinatory now appears to be the only reality.”³⁴

In Tolstoy’s later period, however, it is precisely this madness that drives man beyond the daily experience and liberates the soul for the premonition of a different life, for completely unknown questions and undreamt-of visions. Ultimately even for the “last bold jump into uncertainty”, which is done for us by another force and not by ourselves alone.³⁵ At least that is how the confrontation with one’s own passing away and death is experienced by Ivan Ilych, a simple public servant and the second of Shestov’s heroes from Tolstoy’s later works, whose spiritual suffering in the face of an insidious disease remains concealed and inaccessible to all around him, even his close family, despite his efforts to reveal it. Finally, utterly exhausted and dejected, he finds himself in complete and hopeless solitude, a “solitude in the midst of a densely populated city and numerous acquaintances and family members, a solitude that cannot be more complete anywhere, neither in the depths of the sea nor in the earth.”³⁶

At that very moment he is irrepressibly engulfed with questions to which he can find no answer, and an unheard inner voice begins to speak inside him, unrestrainedly casting doubt on his entire life:

Maybe I did not live as I should have? How is that, if I did everything that had to be done? ... What, then, do you want now? To live? Live how? Live as you live in court, when the executor announces: ‘The court is coming’? The court is coming, judgment is coming. Here is your judgment. But I’m not guilty ... What for, why all this terror? There is no explanation. Suffering, death ... Why?³⁷

The dying man finally realizes in horror that he is standing in front of a dreadful court which has eliminated the difference

between good and evil, before an invisible judge who sentences everyone. Not only he, Ivan Ilych, but all people are guilty because it is not possible to resist death, and the fact that we are condemned in advance is impossible to understand. "Death cuts all invisible threads tying us together on earth with beings similar to ourselves."³⁸ Yet for both Tolstoy and Shestov it is precisely the complete solitude of a dying man in the face of death that is an unavoidable condition for and beginning of the true conversion of a soul.

As in Tolstoy's first two stories, *Master and Man* first presents man in ordinary, generally accepted conditions of existence, only to suddenly place him into a complete existential solitude. This time it happens one winter night to the hero of the story, Brehunov, a country merchant whose arrogant greed to conclude a favourable business deal forces him to spend the night outdoors in his coach together with his servant. Despite the danger of being caught in a snowstorm in the midst of an unsettled countryside, until the very end Brehunov staunchly believes in himself and in the power of his mind and will, which had saved him so many times in his life. Remembering the pleasant moments spent a few hours ago in the warm home of a rich native in Griškino, he nevertheless has some regrets about setting out on that night in spite of the snowstorm. But he finds comfort in the thought that the true reality of his life is in that warm room where he was received as a distinguished guest and served hot tea and snacks, and not here in a snowy field in the middle of nowhere, where he and his servant are freezing mercilessly, lost and forgotten by all.

But together with the cold, a certain doubt as to the accuracy of his convictions slowly began to penetrate Brehunov's mind. Was it not time for him to accept the uncertainty of the boundary position in which he had found himself because of his own self-will as the only true reality, and courageously confront the

danger of death? No, he will rather abandon his helpless servant and coach, and ride away on his horse to seek salvation alone. And so he attempts, one last time, to defeat the invisible enemy with his own strength and ingenuity, yet this enemy is becoming more frightful by the minute. Soon after his initial floundering in the search for the right path to his rescue and the piercing shriek released from his horse's lungs in fearful agony before death, Brehunov is suddenly overcome by a frantic fear and jumps from the horse. Lying in the deep snow on the verge of desperation, he remembers his reputation in the world, clutching onto it as if it were the last straw of his salvation:

Grove, rocks, lease, pubs, house with iron roof and granary, heir... How will all this subsist? What is this? It can't be... Is this not a dream?³⁹

Yet despite his enormous desire to awaken from a bad winter dream, this awakening cannot occur. At least not an awakening in this world. That is because the real awakening will happen to Brehunov when, with the last ounce of his strength, he drags himself to the sleigh and, in a state of completely incomprehensible enrapturement, begins to fervently revive his servant, whom he had previously abandoned with such indifference. After his rubbing proves unsuccessful, he wants to warm the body with his own and lies on his servant. Suddenly he himself becomes numb in his final weakness. It is then that he begins to feel "a special happiness that he had never experienced before," until, in his last dying moments, he is overcome by an unusual feeling which, faced with the worthlessness of his previous way of life, reveals true life in the liberating embrace of death:

I am going, I am going, his entire being exclaimed joyfully, deeply moved. He felt that he was free and that nothing was holding him back any more.⁴⁰

All these literary heroes have their own actual starting point and origin in the deep life experience of Tolstoy himself. Not

only in the frequent autobiographic similarities regarding external circumstances, but also in the deepest psychological sense and in spiritual distress, which reached their peak with the old man's escape from home and his fatal cold, which chained the lonely writer in the midst of his flight to an alien bed at a remote railway station, where he was visited by death.

Despite his criticism of Bergson's philosophy which, due to its generalizing, abstract nature, inevitably fails in face of the utterly unpredictable, chaotic and capricious inner life of man, Shestov is at least right when he ultimately confirms the French philosopher's thought that only great artists are a source for the true inner experiences of man.⁴¹

However, this does not necessarily exclude philosophers, at least not as regards the existential contemplation of the last questions. According to Shestov, the fervor and fearless candour with which Tolstoy devoted himself to the question of passing away and death in the last years of his life can only be compared to the reflections of the greatest philosophers from ancient Greece onwards: "If Plato is right in saying that philosophers aspire for nothing other than passing away and death, ἀποθνῆσκειν καὶ τεθνάναι, then we must confess that very few of our contemporaries devoted themselves so entirely to philosophy as did Tolstoy."⁴² And although the late Tolstoy tackles the question of death in the form of tales and stories, his intention is not so much to write high-class literature as to fearlessly describe the "dreadful judgment," where life's ideals are no more binding than an occasional caprice, and where the invisible judge cannot be moved by even the greatest achievements of man in the world. And so in the background of reading Tolstoy's later works, Shestov's daring apology for the insanity of the mind reveals itself as an aspiration for its liberalization for the final truth, as already expressed in the medieval Russian tradition of the "jurodivs" or fools in the name of Christ.

And so to conclude our encounter with Shestov, instead of looking at Husserl's disciple Heidegger and his phenomenal definitions of man's being-here as "being-towards-death,"⁴³ let us turn one last time to Pascal in order to reawaken in ourselves a susceptibility for not only the originally existential, but also for the spiritual and religious dimension of this most disquieting of the last questions. If we are to believe Shestov's interpretation of Pascal's mystical vision of Jesus' death struggle in the Gethsemane Garden, that God himself had added his endless suffering to Job's scale, and that at the end of the world the suffering of God and mankind would weigh heavier than all the sand in the world,⁴⁴ then from this eschatological point of view Shestov's "revelations of death" not only appear as "revelations of true life,"⁴⁵ but even allow us to see death itself as a mysterious gift. Not only in the tradition of medieval mystical poetry by St. Francis, who boldly glorifies sister death, but also in the contemporary philosophical thoughts of the late Jacques Derrida, who shares with Shestov an eschatological leaning as well as the heritage of the Jewish spiritual tradition:

The gift that God bestows upon me by taking me under his view and into his hands while remaining unreachable, the horrifyingly asymmetrical gift of this *mysterium tremendum* gives me responsibility, awakens me to the responsibility that he grants to me only by inflicting me with death, the mystery of death, the new experience of death.⁴⁶

Translated by Suzana Stančič

- 1 "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world: during this time we must not sleep." *Misli (Thoughts)* (553), translated into Slovene by Janez Zupet, Celje 1986.
- 2 Cf. L. Shestov, *Med razumom in razodetjem (Between Reason and Revelation)*, translated by Borut Kraševc, Celje 2001 (=MRR), pp. 170-196.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

- 4 Cf. S. Adelgundis Jaegerschmid OSB, "Pogovori z Edmundo Husserlom (1931-1936)" ("Conversations with Edmund Husserl"), Bogoslovni vestnik 4/1988, particularly p. 446: "Philosophy is a passionate will to know the being ... All philosophy is a philosophy of the beginning, a philosophy of life and death. We are always starting from the beginning ..."
- 5 Cf. B. Šinigoj, "Prvi in edini možni način filozofove biti" ("The First and Only Possible Means of a Philosopher's Being"), *Anthropos* 1-2/1992, pp. 21-25.
- 6 *Husserliana*, Vol. 2, Introduction, pp. VII-VIII; taken from the introductory study by Ivo Urbančič, in: E. Husserl, *Kartezijanske meditacije (Cartesian Meditations)*, translated by Mirko Hribar and I. Urbančič, Ljubljana 1975, p. 14
- 7 Cf. L. Shestov, "Kierkegaard – the Religious Philosopher" (five lectures for Radio-Paris, autumn 1937), in: *MRR*, p. 81.
- 8 Cf. *ibid.*, "Getsemanska noč – Pascalova filozofija" ("Gethsemane night – Pascal's philosophy"), in: *MRR*, p. 62.
- 9 Cf. *Job* 6:2-3.
- 10 Cf. Martin Buber, *Pripovedi hasidov (Tales of the Hasidim)*, translated by Tomo Virk, Ljubljana 1991, p. 103.
- 11 "No, philosophy is consideration." Quoted from: *MRR*, p. 175.
- 12 Cf. Vasilij V. Rozanov, *Uedinennoe* (1916), Moscow 1990, p. 231, translated by Drago Bajt, *Nova revija* 158/1995, p. 77, and B. Šinigoj, "Dve filozofiji? In slovanska duša?" ("Two philosophies? And the Slavonic Soul?"), *Logos* 1-2/2005, www.kud-logos.si.
- 13 L. Šestov, *Atene in Jeruzalem (Athens and Jerusalem)*, Paris 1951, fr. 39: "Prerekanje o resnici" ("Quarrelling over Truth"), translated by B. Kraševc, *Literatura* 101-102/1999, p. 125.
- 14 *MRR*, p. 81-82.
- 15 Cf. Heraclytus, fr. 18; Clement of Alexandria, *Preproge (Stromateis)* II, 17, 4.
- 16 Cf. *Rom* 4:18.
- 17 Cf. *Rev* 21:1.
- 18 Cf. *Rom* 5:5.
- 19 *Hamlet* 1.5.180
- 20 This is most likely Shestov's free association with the old Talmud tradition. Cf. L. Šestov, *Dostojevski in Nietzsche/Premagovanje samorazvidnosti (=PS) (Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche/Overcoming Self-evidence)*, translated by B. Kraševc, Ljubljana 2002, p. 142, and *Talmud*, Hagiga 2,2 and Kethuboth.
- 21 A word coined from the Russian expression *vse my* ("all of us") introduced by Dostoyevsky in his *Notes from the Underfloor*; in contrast to "vsemstvo," i.e. all of us with only natural eyesight, who in our daily lives are subordinating ourselves to the law of noncontradiction and the self-evident truths of reason (Shestov occasionally replaces the expression with Kant's *Bewußtsein überhaupt*, "general consciousness"), Dostoyevsky's underfloor hero is tirelessly struggling for the unique freedom of the mind – with self-will and

- caprice. Cf. *PS*, p. 149, translator's note.
- 22 *PS*, 143.
- 23 Nikolai V. Gogol, *Pravilo življenja v svetu (The Rule of Life in the World)*, in: same, *Ispovest*, translated by Dejan Lučić, Vrtnjačka Banja 2004, p. 70.
- 24 *PS*, 162.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 *PS*, 178.
- 27 Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Logično filozofski traktat (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus)*, translated by Frane Jerman, Ljubljana 1976, thesis 7: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."
- 28 Cf. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen I*, 528 in 529, in: same, *Werkausgabe*, Vol. 1, Frankfurt on Main 1997, p. 440.
- 29 Cf. Lev N. Tolstoy, *Polikuška in druge povesti (Polikushka and Other Stories)*, translated by Janko Moder et al., Ljubljana 1979, pp. 235-241.
- 30 "Only death and the madness of death can awaken people from life's nightmare." L. Shestov, "Na strašnom sude. Poslednie proizvedenija L. N. Tolstogo," in: *Na vesah Jova*, Vol. 2, Moscow 1993 (= *NVJ*), p. 107.
- 31 L. N. Tolstoj, *Polnoe sobranie sočinenija*, Moscow 1928-1959 (= *LNT*), Vol. 26, p. 470.
- 32 *Ibid.* (stressed by L. Shestov).
- 33 *NVJ*, p. 99.
- 34 *NVJ*, p. 107.
- 35 Cf. *NVJ*, p. 138.
- 36 The quotations from Tolstoy's works are cited according to the existing Slovene translation, which has been partly adapted according to the original version, in: L. N. Tolstoy, *Gospodar in hlapec in druge zgodbe (Master and Man and Other Stories)* (= *GIH*), translated by Vera Brnčič et al., Ljubljana 1978, p. 199.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 200.
- 38 *NVJ*, p. 136.
- 39 *GIH*, p. 293.
- 40 *GIH*, p. 298.
- 41 Cf. *NVJ*, p. 127.
- 42 *NVJ*, p. 138.
- 43 Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Bit in čas (Being and Time)*, translated by Tine Hribar et al., 1997, §§ 46-53 and p. 346, note 6, which in the style of characteristic phenomenological reduction, quotes Tolstoy's tale *The Death of Ivan Ilych* merely as a presentation of the phenomenon of "the shock and breakdown of this 'passing away.'"
- 44 Cf. *MRR*, p. 75.
- 45 Cf. *NVJ*, pp. 518-519.
- 46 J. Derrida, *Dar smrti (The Gift of Death)*, translated by Saša Jerele, Ljubljana

Boris Šinigoj

SUMMARY

The great and final struggle of Lev Shestov: from daring uncoverings of the groundlessness of thought to tremendous revelations of death

The paper represents three basic themes of Lev Shestov's thought. To remain faithful to Shestov's manner of consideration, these are expressed as open questions that can still challenge our minds. The first question is a very fundamental one: "What is philosophy and what is its task?" The second question concerns Shestov's cardinal epistemological idea of two eyesights: "If only the second is true, what should we do with the first?" And the third question is eschatological and perhaps the most profound: "Could revelations of death at the same time be revelations of true life?"

In one of his essays, Shestov tells us about his encounters with the founder of modern phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Although their approaches to philosophy were entirely different and even antagonistic, Shestov and Husserl immediately became friends after meeting for the first time at a philosophical symposium in Amsterdam in 1928. When they discussed the key question, "What is philosophy?", Shestov asserted with passion: "Philosophy is a great and final struggle." In spite of their common enthusiasm, Husserl immediately rejected him: "Nein, Philosophie ist Besinnung!" Yet he had nevertheless confirmed Shestov's reply with his radical philosophical position.

Consequently, for Shestov the task of philosophy is to teach us to live in the groundlessness and uncertainty of mind, to keep us awake by continuous contemplations of unanswerable questions, to make us sensitive to the truth that lies hidden in the paradox or the absurd. Hence, philosophy prevents us from

falling asleep, which happened to the first disciples of Jesus. If we are to believe Pascal (and Shestov did), an eschatological drama is still taking place in the Gethsemane Garden as a mortal struggle of Jesus, and will continue until the end of the world. That is why we should contribute with our own struggle, i.e. our own philosophy to prepare ourselves for the very end, which could at the same time be a new beginning.

From this point of view, the second and third questions should remain even more open. The second concerns two different eyesights relating to Shestov's obscure story about the angel of death, who now and then comes before one's time and then imperceptibly leaves a pair of his innumerable eyes. After many references to Dostoyevsky's capricious hero from the underfloor or Plato's famous cave allegory, Shestov finally opens the problem of the reconciliation of two different eyesights. Another solution to this problem may be found in the philosophy of the late Wittgenstein, who takes into account even unarticulated language to stress the mystical meaning of unanswerable questions. Wittgenstein's favorite story by Tolstoy, *The Three Hermits*, seems very close to this view.

Tolstoy's late stories were also of great interest to Lev Shestov, particularly from the eschatological point of view. Death is considered the only event in the world that can wake up our souls from life's nightmare. That is why Shestov undertakes a deep analysis of Tolstoy's stories in which this great writer deals with the question of passing away and death, which, according to Plato, has always been the real aim of all philosophers. Finally, it seems that Shestov's particular interest in the question of the revelation of death as the revelation of true life associates him not only with the old Russian tradition of fools in the name of Christ or the mystical poetry of St. Francis of Assisi, but also with the late philosophy of the postmodern thinker Jacques Derrida, who sees death as a mysterious donation of God.



Na simpoziju



Pavle Rak
Kranj

ŠESTOV »ONSTRAN« IN »TOSTRAN« DOBREGA IN ZLA

Zbrali smo se na simpoziju o Šestovu, simpoziji pa so ponavadi znanstveni. Pri nastopih na njih se uporablja objektivna, znanstvena metodologija, ki upošteva rezultate obstoječe znanosti (v danem primeru o Šestovu) ter znanstveno in čim celoviteje obravnava literatura o izbranem predmetu. Ponavadi se ne razmišlja na podlagi osebnih izkušenj in vtisov. Ravno nasprotno. Zahteva se objektivnost. Vendar se bom tokrat odločil za osebno obravnavo teme, saj mislim, da me v tem upravičuje Šestov sam, ki mu tako pisanje (na podlagi osebnih izkušenj in vtisov) ni bilo tuje. Pa ne le, da mu ni bilo tuje: zavzemalo je celo središčno mesto v njegovi filozofiji.

Šestovova temeljna misel je, da ves racionalistični idealizem ni nič drugega kot pripomoček, ki nam, ogroženim z nesmisлом življenja in trpljenja v tem življenju, pomaga prezirati tragično bistvo sveta. To misel Šestov zmeraj znova izpeljuje iz domnev-

ne osebne izkušnje svojih junakov od Avguština in Pascala do Tolstoja in Nietzscheja. Po njegovem nihče izmed njih ne argumentira v racionalnem, diskurzivnem pomenu te besede; vsi se odzivajo na osebno izkušnjo. In tudi pri njem samem ni nič značilnega za znanstveni pristop k problemom, če že ni vse njegovo pisanje od čudovito tekočega in jasnega literarnega sloga do načina argumentiranja in sklepov celo protiznanstveno. Zato si domišljam, da sem tudi sam upravičen do neznanstvenosti, pa naj bo, kar bo.

Znanstvenost, razum, védenje: proti temu se je Šestov boril vse življenje. Seveda, ne proti kateremu koli védenju in kateri koli znanstvenosti, ampak proti tisti znanstvenosti in tistemu védenju, ki se nanašata na Boga, vero, moralo, dobro in zlo. Na to, kaj je človek, in kaj človek lahko pričakuje od sebe in sebi podobnih. Kaj je človeško življenje in kaj ga ureja. Ali ga urejajo abstraktni, vendar vsem dostopni zakoni ali pa gre za bogočloveško tragedijo, ki je neizrekljiva in ni podložna nobenemu zakonu?

Od kod trpljenje, trpljenje enega samega nedolžnega otročka ali celo najmanjše nedolžne žuželke, in kaj narediti s tem trpljenjem, kaj narediti s človeško usodo? Zamižati pred njima, ju poriniti v domeno kantovskega *Ding an sich*, prekriti s tolstojevskim »Dobro je Bog«? In vse organizirati na razumen način ter navsezadnje zgraditi »kristalno palačo« večne sreče?

A kaj, ko nobena prihodnja večna sreča nima ničesar opraviti s sedanjim in preteklim trpljenjem, nasprotno pa velja, da vsako preteklo trpljenje spodkopava prihodnjo srečo. Vsa prihodnja sreča vsega sveta ne more upravičiti ene same solze nedolžnega otročka, piše Dostojevski, ponavljajoč Belinskega. In njuno pisanje povzema Šestov.

Največja norost – norost, ki je še toliko večja, ker hlini kar največjo učenost – je poskus teologije in filozofije omejiti vse-mogočnega Boga in ga obvezati z zakoni naše, človeške logike. Filozofi in teologi so skoz stoletja namesto vere podtikali strašno

nevero, namesto abrahamovskega zaupanja Bogu – uboge berogle zaupanja v védenje o tem, kaj je dobro in kaj zlo. »Nevernik« Šestov pa trdi, da je to védenje izvirni greh, ker samo sebe postavlja za absolutnega sodnika in kriterij nad Bogom. Vztrajno se bori za obstoj vere proti razumu. V tem je njegova velika zasluga za stvar vere v 20. stoletju, v katerem so pred grozotami svetovnih vojn in totalitarističnih sistemov kapitulirali mnogi učeni apologeti. Šestov je junak vere 20. stoletja. In ker ni bil pripadnik nobene religije, bi ga morale častiti prav vse, saj so temelji, ki jih je gradil, primerni za vsako pristno vero. Torej ni le junak vere, ampak tudi univerzalni svetnik 20. stoletja, upravičevalec verovanja – se pravi tudi upanja – v stoletju vojnega in totalitarističnega brezupa.

Toda ko beremo Šestova, se kmalu ovemo, da ga svetovne vojne in totalitaristični družbeni sistemi kot filozofa vere in tragedije sploh niso zanimali. Njegova filozofija bi bila taka, kakršna je, tudi brez svetovnih vojn in brez boljševiske revolucije. (V celotnem njegovem opusu o vojnah ne najdemo ničesar, najdemo le en sam članek, namenjen analizi revolucije, pa še o njem je, kot se spominja njegova hčerka, najraje molčal oziroma bi najraje videl, da ga sploh ni bilo.) Trpljenje o katerem piše, trpljenje, ki ga je treba »integrirati«, s katerim je treba živeti, je drugo. Ni zgodovinsko-socialno. Ne morem si pomagati – ko sem prebiral Šestovovo analizo tega trpljenja ob Dostojevskem in Nietzscheju, sem bil osupel. Gre za trpljenje, ki je neznansko, od katerega »ni večjega trpljenja na svetu« (Šestov ponavlja Nietzschejeve besede in jih namenja »primeru Dostojevski«); to je trpljenje zaradi prezira. Zanimive stvari odkrijemo, ko sledimo tej logiki: junakov Dostojevskega ne zanima trpljenje zaradi vojn in neznanskih družbenih razmer, pa tudi ne zaradi fizičnih ali moralnih muk nedolžnega dojenčka, ampak jih prizadeva le to, da se ne morejo upreti preziru. Užaljenost preziranega človeka, čista psihologija, bi rekel Šestov sam. »Solza nedolžnega otročič-

ka«, o kateri piše Dostojevski, je le retorika, ki naj bi prikrivala nekaj povsem drugega.

In kaj vse upravičuje »čista psihologija«? Izbira ni ne vem kako velika. Z ene strani védenje, razum, krepost, ki so sadovi védenja o zakonih dobrega in zla (»čista psihologija« s tem seveda nima kaj početi), z druge strani iracionalizem, apriorno nevedenje, samovolja Boga in človeka. Še huje: ko gre za iracionalizem užaljenega človeka, se njegova užaljenost dokaj hitro izenači z maščevalnostjo, vendar z zelo selektivno in izprijeno maščevalnostjo, ne z maščevalnostjo do tistih, ki so ga užalili, ampak do drugih, do slabih, nedolžnih, ki so krivi, ker s samim svojim obstojem omogočajo tujo nasilnost. Užaljeni se zadovolji s prezirom do vseh šibkejših od sebe. To je pristno stališče »podtalnega človeka«. (Če res dosledno sledimo tej logiki, užaljeni prezira – ali zaničuje – tudi tistega otročička in njegovo solzo, ki z nebogljenostjo izsiljuje »pravice« šibkih in s tem samo poskuša ovirati močne. Močnejšim po drugi strani ne more vrniti prezira, trdi Šestov ob primeru Dostojevskega: v Sibiriji so ga roparji in morilci prezirali, on pa jih je za ta prezir povzdignil na prestol »najbolj nadarjenih ljudi v vsem našem narodu«.) Užaljeni bo torej preziral slabe, vendar povzdigoval roparje in morilce, se pravi močne, brezobzirne, nadljudi.

To je Šestov našel pri Dostojevskemu in Niethscheju. In to je imenoval »filozofija tragedije« ter postavil nasproti optimističnemu racionalističnemu idealizmu. Če mu sledimo, izbira res ni velika: ali plehka, ostudna laž ali pa resnica preziranega, ki se strne v stavek: »Naj ves svet propade, če je to potrebno, da bi jaz pil čaj.« Toda kot vemo, je resnica vedno nad lažjo, pa naj bo še tako ostudna.

Čigava resnica? Resnica Dostojevskega? Nietzscheja? Samega Šestova? Ali resnica ruske »podzemne« zavesti? In zakaj le ruske? Ali ni to tudi resnica zahodnega »nihilizma« vse do naših dni? Kaj se tu ponuja namesto »razumskega dobrega«, te sebične,

samozadovoljne, preračunljive laži?

Junaki vere znajo biti fanatiki. Doslednost v čemer koli, celo v oporekanju racionalizmu, je blodnja racionalizma samega. Fundamentalizem je nezaželen otrok racionalizma, ki je z neomajno logiko neusmiljene jurisprudence pritiral do absurda racionalistične predpostavke o nagrajevanju dobrega in kaznovanju zla. Vmes pa se da vtihotapiti marsikaj.

Seveda, »razumsko dobro« je površno, neradikalno, spekulativno in špekulativno. Brez duha. To je stoletna téma in stoletna prevzetnost Rusije, ki ji je pri srcu mistična vera: prezirati Zahod, ki k dobrim dejanjem sili le z zakonom, ki pozna le drobnjakarsko, sebično dobro, in temu postavlja nasproti dobroto svobodne duše, ki deluje, ali pa ne deluje, le iz same sebe, ne zaradi zunanjega zakona. Posledice v Rusiji poznamo: veliko govoričenja o duši in veliko brezobzirnosti v vsakdanjem življenju. Kot da se Bogu ne more dati, kar je Božjega, in cesarju, kar je cesarjevega.

Vendar to ni nobena posebnost Rusije. Tudi na Zahodu so poznali uporniško mišljenje, ki se je postavljalo po robu racionalističnemu idealizmu. To mišljenje je »z one strani dobrega in zla« poveličevalo moč ali svobodo, segajočo čez meje samovolje (koliko črnila je bilo porabljenega za povzdigovanje »filozofije« markiza de Sada, za odpravo kazenskovzgojne logike in ustanov ali za obrambo junakov, kot je bil ropar Claude Mesrine). Če je edini nasprotnik racionalistična laž, če res ni drugega nasprotnika in je vse drugo pravzaprav dobrodošlo v boju proti temu edinemu nasprotniku, tedaj nam ni druge pomoči. Moramo trpeti posledice preozke izbire.

Šestov (in prenekateri drug filozof, ki se je spustil v boj proti razumu) se ne more več umakniti. Njegova racionalnost je v iracionalnosti, njegova doslednost v nedoslednosti. Védenju o dobrem in zlu postavlja nasproti nevedenje, ki je »onstran«. In če ta »onstran« ni še kako drugače opredeljen, če se izmika vsaki drugi

opredelitvi, to utegne biti alibi za radikalno samovoljo, ki se prevečkrat konča ne »onstran«, ampak »tostran« najbanalnejšega zla. Zla, ki prvotno ni bilo hoteno, vendar se ga le z omejenimi sredstvi boja proti racionalizmu ne moremo več znebiti.

(V tem je poglobitna razlika med nevedenjem o dobrem in zlu, ki ga pridiga sodobna filozofija, in nevedenjem, ki ga najdemo pri Dioniziju Areopagitu ali Maksimu Spoznavalcu. Stara apofatika ne izključuje »katafatičnega približevanja« in se končuje v absolutnem védenju, le da popolnoma druge vrste. In poleg racionalizma in iracionalizma pozna še kategorijo ljubezni.)

Kaj pa je Šestova prisililo v boj proti laži idealizma? Prizori brezupa, ob katerih vsaka ideja dobrega ni le nemočna, ampak tudi nesmiselna? Teh prizorov je v Rusiji zvrhana mera, tudi če odmislimo trpljenje, ki ga povzroča znana ruska posebnost – odnos oblasti do lastnega naroda.

* * *

Ulica v središču velemesta. Globoko, temno »dvorišče vodnjak«. Ob stranskem vhodu mojega spremljevalca in mene čaka sedemdesetletna starka živahnega pogleda, s katero sva se dogovorila za sestanek, da bi ji poskusila pomagati. V stanovanju, v katerega se pride samo po stranskem stopnišču, ima namreč več kot dvajset psov, ki jih je reševala na ulici pred zimo, pred lakoto, pred ubojem. Ženska ima dve fakultetni diplomi, govori tekoče in razgibano, pojasnjuje, kaj se ji je zgodilo, namreč da so že obljubljeni stavbo za pasje zatočišče nenadoma nekому prodali, vsi psi pa so ostali kar pri njej. Kaj bi lahko storila? Izročila nedolžne živali surovi smrti? No, potem pa se je nadaljevalo. Psi so poginjali, najdevala je druge. To traja že več kot petnajst let.

Že na stopnišču je tak smrad, da moj spremljevalec ostane zunaj; pripravljeni denar bo oddal potem, ko se s starko vrneva iz stanovanja. Z njo pa se pazljivo zrineva skoz napol priprta vrata, da živali ne bi pobegnile ven. Čeprav je zima, čeprav so

okna razbita in slabo zadelana le s kartonom ter je v stanovanju mraz, je vonj res neznanski. Kaj bo šele poleti? Nesrečnih živali je toliko, da jih sama nikakor ne more peljati ven. Vse delajo tu, v stanovanju. Najmanj deset let ga ni nihče pospravil. Pred sedmimi leti je bil požar, po hodniku in sobah so še zogleneli kosi pohištva, med njimi pa kupi pasjih iztrebkov, visoki po pol metra in več. Ponekod brli lučka, ponekod je tema (starka me prosi, naj ji kupim več žarnic, ker sama ne more v trgovino, zaradi vonja, ki puhti iz nje, je namreč ne pustijo noter). Psi dolgo lajajo, nekateri pridejo pozdravit neznanca, nekateri bi se radi igrali. Potem me trumoma spremljajo pri težavnem prebijanju skoz vlažen gnoj. Včasih med njimi izbruhne prepir. Truma se vali sem ter tja, ves hodnik in vsi prostori so jih prepolni, vse je črno, umazano, tla so spolzka in neznosno smrdi ... Ker ne vidim nobenega prepoznavnega kosa pohištva, vprašam starko, kje sploh živi, kje spi. V kopalnici, mi odgovori. In doda, da o vsem tem ne smem govoriti »tam, kjer ni treba. Lahko me pošljejo v norišnico, potem pa bodo vse te pse kratko malo pobili.«

Pripoveduje tudi, da je nekoč imela na stopnišču »podnajemnike«: ker stransko stopnišče uporablja le ona in ga ima zaklenjenega, je pozimi dovolila, da so se tam naselili človeški brezdomci, da ne bi pomrli od mraza, pa tudi, da bi ji malo pomagali pri psih. Ni se obneslo. Med njimi so bili prepiri hujši kakor med živalmi. Alkohol, noži, požar ... V nekaj mesecih so odnesli sedem mrtvih. Zdaj je stopnišče spodaj skrbno zaklenjeno. (Taka zapuščena stanovanja, v katerih so se naselili brezdomci, sem že videval, pa tudi pretepe med njimi, brcanje ležečega na tleh v glavo, brezup in nesmisel.)

Pekel, kako je videti pekel, če je to, kar vidim, stanovanje izobražene, kulturne ženske? Gre mi na bruhanje, pa ne samo zaradi vonja, ampak predvsem zaradi neznosnega obupa. In vse to je posledica ljubezni, posledica želje pomagati nedolžnim bitjem. Kje je tu razum? Njegove meje so bile očitno že zdavnaj preko-

račene. Kaj je človeško, kaj racionalno dobro v takem primeru? Nič, prazen nič, velika laž. Vse velike človeške besede lahko ob takem prizoru takoj vržemo v smetnjak. Toda kako živeti naprej? Samo tako, da pozabimo. Pa če ne moremo pozabiti?

* * *

Ne bi me presenetilo, če bi kje prebral, da je tudi na Šestova odločilno vplival kak podoben prizor nesmiselnega trpljenja, nesmiselne ljubezni, nesmiselnega napora pomagati. In je ves racionalizem, ves idealizem, celotno védenje o dobrem in zlu poslal k vragu.

To bi vsekakor bolj razumel kot pa trpljenje zaradi prezira morilcev in razbojnikov.

Pavle Rak
Kranj

SHESTOV “BEYOND” AND “ON THIS SIDE” OF GOOD AND EVIL

Although this is a scientific symposium, I will risk a totally non-scientific approach (I am not pretending to objectiveness or to a complete knowledge of scientific literature about Shestov), namely: I will base my contribution on a subjective, personal impression of certain mobiles which generated Shestov's ideas and some of their consequences. I hope I have the right to do this: Shestov himself used a non-scientific, personal approach in his writings. All rationalism, particularly idealistic rationalism applied on questions about the sense of human life, was the main target of his attacks. He wrote that in this field rationalism is nothing but a lie that helps us to misunderstand the tragic essence of life. And that idea is clearly the consequence of Shestov's own personal experience, and the pretended personal experience of his heroes – Augustin, Luther, Pascal, Tolstoy, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. In Shestov's case, everything from his literary style to his manner of argumenting and drawing conclusions has the mark of a non-scientific, if not anti-scientific, approach. So, I think I also have the right to expose my personal impressions to the public.

Science, rationalism, knowledge – these are the original sin in Shestov's interpretation. Is human life directed by abstract laws, obeying human logic, or are we dealing with the anthropic tragedy, the inexpressible, obeying no laws, at least not the laws of idealistic rationalism?

This question, quoted by Shestov, is taken from the works of Belinsky and Dostoevsky: is it possible to justify the sufferings

of the innocent creature, not only the small baby, but the least of innocent insects – that is, to justify it by future happiness for all? Is it possible to rationalize suffering, to hide it like Kant did when he created the notion of Ding an sich, or to hide it behind the “Good is God” of Tolstoy?

Not at all, says Shestov. Future eternal happiness has nothing to do with past suffering, but precisely the contrary: any past suffering undermines future happiness.

The greatest madness of all, especially great because it pretends to be the greatest cleverness, is the attempt of theology and philosophy to limit almighty God and bind Him by the laws of our own human logic. Over the centuries, philosophers and theologians alike have attempted to replace fate with the worst disbelief, to replace abrahamic trust in God with the poor crutches of our knowledge of good and evil. “Nonbeliever” Shestov was constantly fighting for the rights of faith, against the ratio. That is his great merit for the cause of faith in the 20th century, when – faced with the atrocities of world wars and totalitarian regimes – many well-read apologists capitulated. In that sense, Shestov is a 20th century hero of faith. As he was not a follower of any religion or church, all of them should venerate him. The foundations he was building are appropriate for any true believer. Shestov – a universal saint of the 20th century, a justifier of faith in times of military and totalitarian despair?

But Shestov the philosopher of faith and the philosopher of tragedy was not at all interested in world wars and totalitarian socialist systems. His philosophy could be just what it was – free of any wars or totalitarian systems generated by the Bolshevik revolution or any other socialist movement (in all his writings we can find nothing about wars and only one article about bolshevism, which he disliked so much, as his female companion writes, that he never talked about it and even preferred it had never been written). The suffering that Shestov writes about,

the suffering that should be “integrated,” that should be “lived with,” is completely different. It is not historically or socially conditioned.

Shestov had to deal with suffering that is extreme, perhaps the greatest suffering of all (he uses the words of Nietzsche, applying them in particular to Dostoevsky), that is, the suffering caused by disdain. Some interesting things can be found when following this logic: not the suffering caused by wars, and not the suffering caused by unbearable social circumstances, and not the suffering caused by the physical or moral pains of the innocent baby were in the focus of interest of Shestov’s tragic heroes. These heroes are interested in their own personal experience, i.e. that they are incapable of fighting against a very personal disdain. The feeling of being offended, pure psychology, Shestov would say. And what does this “pure psychology” justify? The choice is not too big. It is either knowledge, ratio and virtue as the fruit of the laws of good and evil, or it is irrationalism, a priori ignorance of such laws, the self-will of God and mankind. Even worse: when we speak of the irrationalism of an offended man, his feeling of being offended easily becomes a need for vengeance, a very selective and strange vengeance, that is, not vengeance against those who caused the offence, but vengeance against others, against the innocents, who are guilty because, by their mere existence, they make possible the aggressiveness of others. The offended man can satisfy himself with the disdain of all others who are weaker than him (he cannot return disdain to the powerful, says Shestov, evoking the case of Dostoevsky, who suffered from the disdain of robbers and killers, elevating them to the throne of “the most talented men among all our peoples”). This means that the offended man will disdain the weak and venerate robbers and killers, that is, the mighty and the ruthless. That is what Shestov finds in Dostoevsky and in Nietzsche. He named this “the philosophy of tragedy” – as op-

posed to optimistic, rationalistic idealism. If we follow Shestov, the choice is really poor: either the insipid, shallow lie, or the truth of the disdained, summarized in a single sentence: "Let the whole world perish, if this is necessary for me to have my cup of tea." As we know, the truth is always better than a lie, even if it is such an ugly truth.

Whose truth is this? Dostoevsky's? Nietzsche's? Shestov's? Or the truth of the Russian "underground" conscience? Why only Russian? Isn't it the truth of Western "nihilism" up to now? What does this truth offer in place of the "rationally good," of that selfish, self-contented lie?

The heroes of faith could also be the fanatics. To be consistent in anything, even in the negation of rationalism, is an aberration of that same rationalism. Fundamentalism is the non-wanted child of rationalism which, with the adamant logic of jurisprudence, drives to absurd consequences the assumptions of rewarding good and punishing evil. Between the two you can smuggle anything you want.

Of course, "rational good" is superficial, nonradical, speculative. Nonspiritual. That is the eternal subject and the eternal vanity of Russia: to disdain the West, which compels to good deeds by force of law, which knows only a selfish good, a good that pays for itself; and to oppose all the goodness of a free soul, which agitates or does not agitate only from itself, and not for the sake of outside law. As for Russia, the results are known: much talk about soul, and a great deal of recklessness in everyday life. As it is not possible to give to God what belongs to God, it is also not possible to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.

But this is not only a particularity of Russia. The West is also acquainted with rebel thinking, as opposed to rationalistic idealism. Thinking that is "beyond good and evil" in its glorification of power, or liberty that transgresses the boundaries of self-will

– how much ink was used to glorify the “philosophy” of Marquis de Sade, how much to obtain the abolition of punitive logic and institutions, or to defend “heroes” like the murderer Claude Mesrine? If the only enemy is the rationalistic lie, if there really is no other enemy and everything else is welcome in the struggle against this unique enemy – then nothing can help us. In such cases we are obliged to bear the consequences of a choice that is too narrow.

Shestov (and many other philosophers engaged in the struggle against rationalism) does not have the possibility of retreat. His rationality is in irrationality, his consistency in inconsistency. The knowledge of good and evil is opposed by ignorance that is “beyond.” But if that “beyond” is not marked in some other way, if it is outside of definition, it could very well turn into an alibi for the radical self-will, which often ends not “beyond,” but on this side of the most banal evil. The evil which was not wanted, but which we are unable to rid ourselves of by a mere struggle against rationalism.

(That is the main difference between the ignorance of evil and good preached by contemporary philosophy, and the ignorance found in Areopagit or Confessor: the old apophatics does not exclude a certain degree of “kataphatic approach,” and it ends in absolute knowledge, though such knowledge is of an absolutely other kind. Yet, besides rationalism and irrationalism, that old apophatics also knows the category of love.)

What forced Shestov into a struggle against the lie of idealism? The scenes of despair which make every idea of good not only helpless, but senseless? And, God knows, Russia is full of those scenes, even if we do not mention the suffering caused by a well-known Russian particularity – the treatment of the people by their own government.

* * *

A street in the centre of a metropolis. A meeting with a woman who keeps some 20–30 dogs in her apartment on the first floor. A friend and I want to help her. She is a good-looking lady in her seventies, with lively eyes, two high-school diplomas, good manners, a distinguished way of speaking... but, you would do better not to stand too close to her, after a few seconds it becomes unbearable.

She explains what happened: some 15–20 years ago (who knows exactly), the town authorities promised her a house in which she could have a dog asylum. The dogs were already gathered. In the last minute, somebody made a deal on the house: no more asylum. What to do? Subject the innocent animals to a cruel death? Well, in the years that followed, the story continued. Some dogs were dying, others were found, saved from the winter cold, hunger or disease, from killing.

It stinks so bad on the stairs that my friend stays outside. The money he brought will be delivered later, when we return from the flat. She and I slowly enter the double door, careful not to let the dogs escape. Although it is winter and the windows have no glass, but are only covered with paper and it is cold inside – the smell is terrible. What will it be like in the summer? The poor animals are constantly indoors, as the woman is unable to take them for a walk. They do everything here, in the flat. For more than 10 years no-one has cleaned the flat. That would be impossible now. Seven years ago there was a fire in the hallway and rooms, which is still visible in the charred pieces of furniture. Between them, wet dogs and dung-heaps half a meter high. Poor lighting (later she begs me to buy her some lightbulbs, she simply cannot – they won't allow her to enter any store because of the smell). The dogs bark incessantly, some of them come to greet an unknown face, some would like to play. The entire troop follows me as I explore, with difficulty, their living space. The troop rolls around me, they are everywhere, everything is

black, slippery, stinking... I cannot see any recognisable piece of furniture, so I ask her where she sleeps. In the bathroom. And she asks me not to tell anyone about all this “in inappropriate places; they could send me to the madhouse, and all these dogs would simply be killed.”

She also tells me that she once had “subtenants” on the back staircase: being the only user, she let vagabonds in in the winter, not only to help them endure the extremely cold winter, but also to help her a little with the dogs. This did not turn out too well. The quarrels between them were worse than between animals. Alcohol, knives, fire... in a few months, seven corpses were evacuated. Now, the staircase is strictly locked (I have already seen such abandoned flats occupied by homeless people, I have seen the clashes between them, kicks in the head of those lying on the floor, hopelessness, senselessness).

What, then, does hell look like, if this is the flat of an educated, intelligent woman? I am sick, not only because of the awful smell, but above all because of the helplessness and despair. These are the consequences of love, the consequences of the desire to help innocent creatures. Where is reason in this case? Evidently, its boundaries are far behind us. What is the human good, the rational good in this case? Nothing, a great big lie. When you see scenes like that, all those big human words can be thrown directly into the dustbin. But, how can we continue living? By forgetting. And if we cannot forget?

I would not be surprised to learn that Shestov was also struck by such a scene of senseless suffering, a senseless effort to help. So he damned, once and for all, rationalism, idealism, the entire knowledge of good and evil.

Translated by Suzana Stančič

Pavle Rak

SUMMARY

The author tries to understand why Shestov is permanently and sometimes so vigorously against the entire rationalistic philosophical tradition, especially that which deals with rationalistic theology and morality. He takes for granted some of Shestov's statements, bringing them to their implicit consequences. In the first place, there is Shestov's development of a philosophy of tragedy. Tragedy is, for Shestov, more real than any logical thought itself, and this is a strictly personal feeling which is neither explicable nor rationally attainable. As far as Shestov's heroes are concerned, i.e. Dostoevsky or Nietzsche, we are speaking about suffering that is "greater than any other suffering on earth" – suffering caused by the disdain of others. Can we believe there is no greater suffering? Of course not. But, how is it possible that Shestov, after Nietzsche, affirms this? The author's conclusion is not a deductive one. He believes that, in developing his philosophy of tragedy, Shestov really goes beyond the borders of good and evil – in the sense that, confronted with the absurdity of great suffering, a sensible man like Shestov loses control of his emotions and statements and, given the hopelessness of the situation, he is capable of damning all human explanations and all vain efforts elaborated within theology and morality.

The conclusion is rather demonstrative: descriptions are given of some helpless and absurd cases of suffering which should bring us to understand his irrational reaction to them.



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ON LEO SHESTOV'S BALANCE: BEYOND TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

“Oh that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up” (*Job* 6:2-3). Leo Shestov took these bitter confessional words as an epigraph to the most characteristic and shrill of his works, *In Job's Balances. On the Sources of the Eternal Truths*, and added to it a few more, prophetic and terrible, from Plotinus: “A great and last struggle waits human souls” (*En.* 1, 6, 7).

Epigraphs, like ancient oracles, “do not speak and conceal, but mark” (Heraclites 14 M), even if they speak, as in this case, for themselves. In this way, for example, speaks also another epigraph from *Apotheosis of Groundlessness: Nur für Schwindelfreie*, “Only for those who are not afraid of dizziness.”

It demands care, a special tact of thinking, when its ground – common sense – slips away from under the feet; when you find

yourself on the way beyond the standard norms, accessible themes and obligatory truths of mind to the horizon of “divine groundlessness” (Shestov), where all is possible and nothing is initial and final; where the whim is higher than the law; where the obvious is more mysterious than the secret, and the wonderful penetrates the order of things more deeply than their own nature.

To rely on “commonplaces” or “self-evidences,” on any metaphysics, criticism or dogmatics, which speaks on behalf of Truth in the face of this horizon, means to step into an abyss. Beyond the cults of common sense there is nothing to amuse the judgment. The only idea which is allowable there is a shocking, inadmissible one – especially for those who try to get rid of the illusiveness of their own life by the tree of knowledge of “outward things.”

Today *the apotheosis of groundlessness* has a double sense. It is not only a title of one of Shestov’s works in which it is evident how he “wasted his talent on totally unserious things.”¹ It is also the shortest formula of all his philosophy, an image which was assigned to it in the history of modern ideas and which apparently carries a completely definite meaning.

The establishment of such an image is quite natural. For all his life Shestov kept fidelity to the free, adogmatic spirit of the above-mentioned book and its desperate plan – “to plough up the killed and trampled-down field of modern thought,”² and “to get rid once and for all of any sort of the beginnings and ends, which were thrust upon us with such unclear persistence by all founders of great and not so great philosophical systems.”³

But there is another side of the image that is no less natural and evident. I mean the negative, pejorative sense which is implicated in “the deification of groundlessness” as a general characteristic of Shestov’s philosophical confession. This sense is obstinate and direct, like a stake. It does not demand substantiations and cannot be challenged. For it is ridiculous and silly “to

think” in the face of the obvious: the idea beyond its reasonable ground is also beyond its own valuable reality, i.e. on the other side of possible truth and falsehood.

According to Shestov, there is, of course, no reason to fight against reason, but there is still less reason to defend reason against its own shadows. Why would one paint the devil, if the painted devil is so bad? And if the critical arguments of mind are so “good” (i.e. great and terrible enough to have no alternative), if they “do speak for themselves,” why are they so frightening in our eyes? What, in general, do they “speak” of? Under the guise of “everything,” and of its “objective truth,” they speak of nothing but of themselves and their own validity. They speak of how should everybody think and how, in practice, thinks nobody but our depersonalized “everybodyness,” i.e. *vsemstvo* (F. M. Dostoevsky) or *das Man* (M. Heidegger). But at the same time they keep absolute silence about the real, responsible contents of thinking, about how the concrete philosopher or the concrete shoemaker thinks. To judge according to these measures, true thinking means to play blindly. The stake and the cross of common sense are nothing more than a bluff of mind, a cowardice and a self-deception of reason, which thinks it is better to see nothing than to turn away from the evident, and which nevertheless sacrifices nothing with such ease as obvious things if they are beaten out from the chorus of obligatory truths and cannot teach us anything “useful.”

Shestov’s precept is simple:

If you have kept bright eyes and sensitive hearing – throw away tools and devices, forget methodology and scientific quixotics and try to trust in yourself. So what, if you will not extract obligatory judgments and if you will see the rams in rams? It may be a step forward. You will forget to look together with everybody, but you will learn to see where nobody could see, and not to speculate but to conjure, to call out alien words for totally unprecedented beauty and greatest forces.⁴

The horror, ancient horror of reason, which is experienced in the face of the fluctuations of the ground on which common sense relies, is of a completely mythological kind. *The real thought can be only a thought of your own.* And to understand this it is not necessary to read Leo Shestov or Johann Wolfgang Goethe. This idea also belongs to “everybodiness.”⁵

Common sense prompts (to itself) that its reasonable alternative simply cannot exist. That is why there is no question. Only what is more reasonable: to follow or to contradict requirements of mind (judgment). Only a little fool – Ivan from Russian fairy-tales – chooses for himself the road to death, and not to marriage, health and richness. Cognition is not a fairy-tale, but a vital (and always essential) reality. As soon as you realize this, you will find yourself in safety – in the center of arguments that open the general way from Reason to Truth. The instantaneousness of such a resettlement is provided by ideality, by the meta-physical character of the common sense zone. Reason is not late on its borders cut out from non-committal banalities. It at once directs to the center, to the recognition *of senselessness of thinking in the face of the evidence of being*, from which all the infinite prospects of knowledge take their beginnings. Only now the real (instead of the far-fetched) problem of choice comes up: at which prospect it is necessary to stop and which argument it is reasonable to accept as rational, i.e. the most weighty and reliable one. And only now also appears a quite different opportunity: to take breath, to refrain from immediate judgment, and not to glance over the nearest, but the farthest prospects, over ghostly horizons of cognition which may be open from the zone’s center. At this moment it is not necessary to strain the eyes and imagination. It is simply enough *to recollect* that all these attracting and seemingly inaccessible horizons have already been overcome and rejected once. On behalf of the banal truths they were just under our feet. We just crossed them, after

we have stepped within the limits of the zone. And if it is so, does the infinity of our commonsensical ways to Truth appear to be too bad?

It is clear which one of these opportunities Leo Shestov realized in his work. His questions – as well as answers from the zone of self-evidences – speak for themselves:

Is it not the main task of our time to learn the art of bypassing (and even destroying) all those numerous outposts, which were built in olden time by powerful feudal lords of spirit under different pretexts and which are still considered as insuperable, even “natural” barrier to the movement of our thought by virtue of eternal conservatism of cowardly and short-sighted human nature? For what one has to finish? What for the last word? What for the world-outlook?⁶

In order to live, to survive, they answer. *We are forced* to reckon with the imperfection of our own nature, its limited potentialities and, in particular, its “cowardice and short-sightedness,” about which Shestov himself writes. Precisely, we are “forced.” We necessarily have to reckon with them, as well as, whenever possible, to struggle with them. It is important to remember that this struggle is nothing else than their own *direct manifestation*.

I tried to speak to the mountain, to move the sea. It did not move. I tried to conjure all material world: ‘Be scattered.’ It was not scattered. What therefore? Nothing therefore! I know also something else. I tried to conjure an empty, obviously senseless superstition based on nothing, since only God knows about childhood where it is taken from – and all in vain. It stands as strong as mountains, rivers and seas! So go away with your “therefore” and your human experience! However, it’s useless to lay yourself out. Besides the fact that we are not capable of it, we also do not want to break off delusion and to be released from charms of a seeming reality. Even events of recent time which were tremendous enough to wake a deadman had no effect on anybody. People wait patiently that all things fall into

place again and that it is possible to begin to live just as they used to, pleasantly and carefree. How long will this beating of people still go on?⁷

“Events of recent time” which are spoken of here are the events *of any time* if one ponders over them seriously. And the business of Shestov’s philosophy is a business *of any philosophy* (if one keeps in mind Plato’s “secret for people”).

There is only one problem: *to test the spirit for its presence on that side of things-in-themselves means to behold the end of the natural light of reason.*

It is not necessary to lose one’s mind to solve its childish cunning: coming from the outside, its light is the only thing that kindles the soul inside the zone of self-evidences. “Zone’s” own light is nothing but a gloom, in which masters of metaphysical time, who has learnt when thinking is silly and ridiculous and when it is permissible, are immersed without taking notice that their reason, mastering the new fear and the new rhythmic discipline, has been switched inadmissibly off. “Fear is a faint of freedom,” Shestov liked to repeat after Kierkegaard. And if such a faint does not frighten (and, on the contrary, even inspires) us, if the lesson of school freedom is perceived by us as a lesson of the necessity of life, this changes practically nothing: *the insensibility to the insult does not rescue one from being insulted.* Light, which is gloom’s disguise, only blinds its priests.

In the zone covered and consecrated by mind we learn *to see only what we think* (anything else here is simply not present) and *to think only what we do* (anything else here does not occur). Such science of “vision” forces us to develop our thinking for the sake of the best arrangement in the sensual world and results *in the full transformation of a person*, if this science is imposed (there is no other opportunity to keep identity) on nothing less than a fundamental religion of the zone – on initial belief in available spiritual practices in senselessness of thought

in the face of the obvious and its conventional transcriptions. The person begotten by science and religion of common sense is begotten for a new life – for a feat of maturity. These science and religion promise to give us all for the loss of innocence, namely a sound body and spirit, peace of mind, riches of house, greatness of name, good fortune, etc. And you can get all these on one condition – if you strictly follow the precept of judiciousness. This is not a condition, but a fairy-tale. Only that this tale's end is not too fairy: the main hero – a knight of Truth – faces his death.

And the true story is that he kills himself: *those who do not think while looking at something, will never see what they are looking at*, in our special case – the philosophy of Leo Shestov.

The boldness of thinking was always considered by Shestov as more essential and more primordial than its adequacy. For him it was a sign of thought's *authenticity*, “not a casual sin of man, but his great privacy.”⁸

“Why not? The only point is that this sign is *too* private and not too *evident*,” the common sense authorities reply. And in any case the obvious point is that to be anxious about the whole world which is avoided for the same reasons and on the same paths as your own philosophy, means to fall into an empty self-flattery. This is exactly what really must be feared, instead of alleged “suppression” of the lifeworld by speculative senses and by the “authority of keys” – a vicarial, sacred mission of philosophical truths.⁹ It is ridiculous to be frightened by pure ideas taken from the ore of life. They are pure in so far as they are faultless and safe. Pureness is a source of salutariness of any idea, a pledge of its sobriety and depth. It is not dangerous to be pure; it is dangerous to be false. The separation of thinking from irrational stratifications of life gives an essence to cognition – to a process the value of which for the world culture cannot be exaggerated. The search for truth is a sacred precept of

human history, its major spiritual mover. This is an indisputable and even banal fact. Yet *for this reason*, according to Shestov, this very fact does not deserve the human reason's trust. The philosopher answers:

As far as that goes, I again admit that the ideas *an sich*, which are absolutely bad to my taste, do not exist: I'm still capable now to watch with pleasure the development of the idea of progress, with factories, railways, balloons, etc. But nevertheless it seems to me a naivety to hope that all these knick-knacks (I speak about ideas) can become a subject of serious human searches. If that desperate struggle of man against the world and gods, which the legend and history narrates, is possible, it is enough to recollect, for instance, Prometheus. This is so certainly not because of truth and because of idea. A man wants to be strong, rich and free, a man wants to be a tsar in the world – just this miserable, worthless man created from ashes, which is right before your eyes as ruined as a worm by the first casual push – and if he speaks about ideas, this is only because he is disappointed about the success of his true task. He feels like a worm, he is afraid that he will once again turn into dust from which he was created, and he lies, pretending that his poverty is not frightful to him, if only the truth would be found out. Let us forgive him his lie...¹⁰

The lie, which common sense forgave, the philosopher did not forgive himself. He knew exactly what he did when he made up his mind to undertake a risky and the most unpromising and inexcusable enterprise according to sensible measures, namely to come out of a general game around judgment's "validity," to give up the image of the teacher of life, to stop hiding an inescapable fear of his own poverty behind the pious admiration of truth's dignity and to expose his fear and sin. What is demanded immediately by mind is to look in the face of "groundlessness" and not to go blind, not to be horrified. What is demanded from a man is to begin to see clearly, after having understood how groundless is this requirement, how ridiculous the important

look and how cynical the awe, with which we invariably perform our own compositions if we have received the assent of the common sense authorities. A man who makes up his mind to take this way (and this alone) should “be ready never to leave the labyrinth.”¹¹ This is precisely what convinced Shestov that another, special “exit,” another, “spare” freedom does not exist. In a word, “to hell with underground!” (Dostoevsky)

As I said before, freedom of thinking was always appreciated by Shestov above its formal validity and consistency. This does not mean, however, that he simply turned the zone of self-evidences upside down or that he transformed truth from an object of logic cult into an object of mystical sacrifice. This zone is bottomless: the stream of transcriptions of the self-evident has no end and edge. In order to present it in the upturned mode it is necessary to take the plunge headfirst into it. The fall into an abyss will really seem then as an ascension to heavens. The truth contained in this general illusion is that in flight we shall not break our head: the temptation by cognition – the gravitation to truth – is strong as much as it is eternal. However, what is the truth here? Is it not too one-sided, if it is equalized with the “object” of cognition? And is it not necessary to be in order to see in it only a transcendent and anonymous Gnostic reality? To whom and to what its lesson’s possibility speaks of?

The opportunity of any lessons, any extractions from the past and the present speaks only of the existence of our thinking and life in the world, but says nothing about their contents – either about the truthfulness of our thoughts, or about the meaningfulness of our being. In other words, this opportunity keeps absolute silence about *the reality of the world* in which we live and reflect, a reality by which we are temporary and fully supported as casual, uninvited visitors who speak a foreign language, though we feel and behave completely as if we were at home, as if we were masters here. Yet the world paid us an unexpected

visit, and so we are compelled “to stop everything” and to teach the stupid “object” our own and unique language – eternal laws of *the good, the true and the beautiful*, i.e. the Word of God, the Prose of things and the Poetry of cosmos. This deformation of our sensuality together with illusiveness of our practice is inevitable if we take lessons from the lifeworld time and again, but then we suddenly find out for ourselves, and try to prove to all, that the world “truly” is, as it seems, in accordance with our “foundations” and that, in its own essence, it can be reduced to the rational sum, to logic of “ideas” taken from it. We just cannot “find out” anything else, for the world seen in the zone of self-evidences is nothing but a zone turned upside down, where what is necessary is replaced by what is true, what is casual by what is false, and what is possible by what is conceivable – and the impossible by the unthinkable, the real by the rational, the unreal by fiction, the natural by the logical, the supernatural by the mystical, etc. – up to the final point in view of reason according to which *the self-evident is nothing but the existing itself*. When reason quarrels with mind, they only amuse one another: they will always find *a common language*. But what, in terms of “true knowledge,” we are talking about? Not only that we rationally attribute our own values to being, but we also still believe to have “a reasonable basis” to assert that anything else simply does not exist! It is not Shestov with his adogmatics that is “on that side of truth and falsehood,”¹² but our trustful truthfulness, as well as European rhetoric. However, even this is not the point. The problem is not that the tree of knowledge is a myth (eventually, everyone should know this). The problem is that this myth corrupts *life*.

“For a living human being the ‘tree of knowledge’ is a threat to the dearest,”¹³ wrote Shestov. What is the basis of this deepest Shestov’s belief? In fact, freedom so praised by him turns to be a pure arbitrariness if it breaks with its substance – the intelli-

gible necessity. The deformation of sensuality during cognition of the objective world should not confuse anybody. It is natural, it is a blessing, if this cognition promotes growth of rationality of our conceptions. Feelings only miss the true, necessary state of affairs, consideration of which is peculiar to human reason, as Spinoza taught. Reason is the highest instance of thought, a source of its pureness and salutariness. Under the influence of affects we all do foolish and nasty things. On the other hand, reason is innocent by its very nature: when we think, we “do not do” anything bad and dangerous. We just gently behold world around us, bearing the responsibility for the course of our subjective ideas, and not for the objective course of things. This feeling is quite ordinary and sensible. It did not even occur to us that, from the very beginning, it harbors in itself a sincere danger, that it is also *a sort of thought* for which it is necessary to be responsible, that “pure thoughts” are *all, without exception, internal feelings* rejected by us as causing trouble in the world (they are different modes of our belief, hope and love), and that cognition is a process of their realization in life and thus *a creation* of the lifeworld in no less degree than its restrained contemplation. To decline the responsibility for the lifeworld “objects” in our cognition means to lose human dignity. It makes a man *nobody* in the strict sense. It deprives him of any individuality, originality and uniqueness, and transforms him into *something* that perceives the world, into an one-dimensional abstract “I” not capable to rouse either love, or hatred. Simultaneously, this transcendental subject is by himself indifferent to another’s dignity: it does not matter to him at all which face, name and fate do we have and what is going on in our hearts. As if bewitched, he constantly turns his back on them and looks afar, to the horizon of Truth where there is no living soul, but only reasons and conclusions of nobody’s, autonomous, mythical Reason which promises good fortune of a general order to our life. Looking

from his back, this subject still seems to be a human being – a conductor who knows the exit from the empire of lie and illusion. But if what has happened to heroes of terrible folk legends would happen also to us, if we manage, by some desperate cry from the heart, to force our conductor to respond and turn back, then we would shudder at a man, who determined the way for us and whom we so persistently and obediently followed. Instead of a face – disgrace: an egg, an emptiness, a chasm. It would be no wonder, if we take to our heels, cursing the “subject” and all his “truths” by the worst names. But what if he was waiting for it? What if he presented us with his terrible look and transformed us *into himself* thanks to our best intentions to offend his non-existent dignity with names of our non-being? There is nowhere (and from nobody) to run away here: the chasm itself is not dangerous, and the “ground” turns out to be a danger.

The deformation of sensuality that reaches the level at which we do not recognize ourselves anymore speaks not of the nature of reason, but of the nature of its cult. Nobody does sacrifice truth as easily as the one who “piously” serves it. And it does not matter whether this service is celebrated by the priest of mind or by the priest of reason. They are both – ourselves. And they both blindly trust their own eyes. But if the priest of mind is blind from his birth and just miserable in his attempts to pass off in contemplation, the priest of reason is blinded by himself and frightens *those who do not “do” anything when they think they will never know what they do.*

There is nothing more dangerous for the lifeworld than “to feel” in it like spectators, whereas, in practice, we are its creators: everything depends on us, including its “objective” creations and, in particular, the expansion of transcendental subjectivity. Deceiving feeling, reason deceives itself. Deceiving itself, it corrupts life: it makes legal in life all that is made by the soulless order-of-perceived-from-the- outside-necessity and for

what nobody should and cannot bear the moral responsibility. It is too well-known what “Freedom” and what “Orders” have grown in 20th century on this lifeground poisoned by fertilizers of all ideas of Enlightenment rationalism that have lost their dissenting spirit and become “testimonies.” Only when such a ground is cultivated and proliferate, when truth that resists to the human subject becomes not only an abstract “fantasy” of philosophers, but also a quite concrete and aggressive *reality of life* which transforms people into real “phantasmagorias” (Shestov), it is not self-destructive, because it continues to build of itself the divine principle and, indulging its ambitions and fears, obstinately clings to itself and to such life as if it were a saving “ground.”

Does it not appear, then, that the point of reason’s honor is to cultivate its own “groundlessness” and, in self-evident threat to the truthfulness of our knowledge, to open “a basic, the most enviable privilege of divinity that is most incomprehensible to us”¹⁴ once and forever in it?

The cult of reason is a central one in a mythological cognitive practice, which amuses itself by illusion of a theoretical struggle against all myths. This struggle is illusory not because of its unsuccessfulness, but because of its senselessness: we do not serve to the truth at all by measuring the myth with its measures and thereby replacing it in our consciousness by our own fiction. *The myth is replaceable only with another myth*, i.e. with another wonderful legend that fascinates the imagination. Children very well know this. You will never swindle them with lessons and notations, and precisely here we should study them. It is to block the mouths of babes and sucklings to no purpose, when we describe in a pious way the “real” state of affairs which does not give opportunity to miracles – feats of Heracles or tricks of the charming Aphrodite. If our imagination is captured only by the most tedious and down-to-earth myths, myths about

the myth itself, which we judge as a sin against the truth, this does not reveal the victory of Reason over the passion for creating myths, but only the scarcity of our quasi-scientific fantasy and the weakness of our everyday memory. Imagination can be captured only *by the miraculous*. The one who does not want to be charmed by the real world in considering the truth as a personal, animated and spiritualized reality, has no other choice but to be fooled by his own “world view,” i.e. by self-evidences, because the experience and the arguments of mind and reason prove as two and two that the truth is in opposition to the human subject and remains impersonal, inert and dead, even if we daub it the name of God.

One needs not to be Shestov, a man of “pitch-dark mind” (V. V. Rosanov), in order to make the same choice:

Jerusalem sees the last in God – that is why all the “immediate data of consciousness” do not seem to it as final truths. The *Book of Revelation* promises that the man will eat of the tree of life (*Rev* 2:7). It repeats Isaiah’s prophecy: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (*Rev* 21:4). – “He will swallow up death in victory” (*Isa* 25:8). All this does coincide neither with our understanding, nor with the data of experience... Yet it is just here where the question of Truth’s sources takes its origin: are not reason and experience the real origins of Truth? Or else the fall of the first man in pursuit of knowledge blocked for us the source of Truth, and only redemption understood as destruction of knowledge (Luther’s version of redemption) will free us from sin and horrors of life and bring us to Truth?¹⁵

The only reason why a lie that opposes this *living truth* of revelation is not mythical is that it does not belong to the myth. And moreover – it is its curse. Of course, it is science that pronounces an anathema against the myth because of its “irrationality”, thereby ascertaining (not without self-satisfaction) its half-natural and half-forced “death.” Yet what is value of such a rational diagnosis, if it is presupposed by the detriment of our

disciplined, sterilized sensuality and if we relate it only to the myth about Truth's spirituality and freedom, while professing, on the same "obvious" basis, the myth about its objectivity and necessity in a selfless way and calling it "knowledge" without doubt?

It may be that there is nobody in modern philosophy, who would attach such a great importance to the opposition of these myths, with exception of Shestov. But he was also fully aware that they oppose each other exactly as myths. In his view, they do not try to win over the blanket of "truthfulness." They do not need it either as a blanket, or as a fig-leaf: they are clean in the face of the real, although they paint it in opposite colors. There is absolutely no need to mix them in order to see that they are essentially inseparable and complementary, i.e. in accord with each other as plot lines of *one and the same* miraculous story, which narrates to spite the obvious not about general "truth" and truth in general, but about man – both the true creator and the true creation. Truth is by itself beyond the realm of the myth. It is unconnected not only with the spirit and soul, but also with the body. When we add two apples to another two and thus get four, we do not deal with "truth" at all. We deal only with apples.

Surely, it can happen that we get not even this in the myth – and most certainly it proves true. This is exactly what troubles our enlightened consciousness, namely that the myth does not want to "know" anything and would reduce all the apples of the world to the one and only apple, turning it into the greatest devilish temptation, rather than to agree to count these apples "piece by piece" and "according to the rules." The myth seems to be naïve to us, and a man who "thinks" in the face of its obligatory truths is considered an ignorant. The program of science, on the other hand, is to *minimize* thinking, to turn a situation, in which one has not to think but only *to know* what to say and

to do, into a general situation of human existence. This situation bans not only childish whim, but also the very themes of mythological thinking. Even immortality of the soul – the only thing that can truly inspire man according to Dostoevsky and Shestov – does not seem to us worthy of a serious philosophical consideration in comparison with the objects of knowledge. The extent to which we have lost the art of thinking is demonstrated by the fact that even what is the most fragile, the most free and problematic in the world – the order of our own thinking – seems to be the order of inanimate things that is anonymous, natural and necessary. Meanwhile, it would be enough to think over the only mythological topic which is still not prohibited by science, the topic of the caducity of any flash, in order to admit, in total accord with the evolutionary theory, that “anything can originate from anything whatsoever, that A can be unequal to A,”¹⁶ just as I can be unequal to I. And if Logos, as it was taught by philosophers from time immemorial, rules the *world*, it does it by looking circumspectly at Mythos which begot it, i.e. – in the eyes of common sense – exactly at “anything whatsoever.” This begetting did not take place “once upon a time,” not *some time* in general – this is the way how the begetting takes place in fairy-tales. It also did not take place “once and forever,” *sub specie aeternitatis* – this is the way only the stupidities which nobody can correct or “gods of philosophers” (B. Pascal) with whom nobody argues are begotten. This begetting takes place each time and each time in the shortest instant of that spontaneous spiritual initiation, emotional revelation or existential shock, in which narratives cease to put us to sleep. It turns out that the preservation of the self and the feeling of reality, in putting upside-down-turned mythological horizons endlessly into the everyday world, are vitally problematic. In other words, it happens against our will, but *at our own risk*, that the myth begins to speak of our being and that we have to stop *keeping*

silence, if nobody around us (and especially those who imagine themselves to be half-gods) wants to see this. In this way even reason with its victorious apocalyptic “from Myth to Logos” is out of business. This is the only human exception from divine rule: Logos cannot originate from “anything whatsoever.”

We are troubled by the reality of the impossible which is verified by the myth. Yet is it not so that, in the sober forgetfulness of it, we forget ourselves? Are we gods, for whom everything is possible and who have no need either for common sense, or for counting? Are we stones in which freedom of being coincides with freedom of rest and fall? What is the use of the total soberness of our knowledge if it totally intoxicates our thought? The guaranteed truthfulness of impersonal knowledge demonstrates not the mortality of myth, but the mortal danger of thoughtless treatment of it. It is exactly truth as a universal attribute of knowledge which is, according to Shestov, *a lie* that blocks the way to truth as a living substance of revelation, *as a reality of free, personal, solely existent thinking*.

This way has the only sense: to free the thought from the burden of non-being in the face of knowledge by reviving the gift of God, the miracle of thinking as *a creation of the impossible*. This does not require the “revival” of myth. Our consciousness is mythologized enough even without that. We made the school truth of equality of the impossible and the unthinkable into the law of thinking, which turned out to be more fundamental than Aristotle’s “dialectical law of equality” long ago. And it was long ago that we turned Aristotle himself, as well as Spinoza, into a fool (at Hegel’s court) who held the equality of the necessary and the sensible (and the knowable) to be a theoretical maxim. In other words, considering things as necessary, Aristotle did not see the natural inclination of mind, with the inevitability of which we simply have to deal, but the creative principle, which has to guide us in cognition and which supposedly was followed

by the philosopher himself, who “found” in the world exactly the same as any sane fool. Teaching of this absurd maxim is in the compulsory program of all schools that deal with quasi-scientific “purification” of living thinking: in the program of primary “school of common sense” in which our soul is sterilized and depreciated under the guise of fighting against imprudence, and in the program of “high school of knowledge” in which our spirit is sterilized and depreciated under the pretence of fighting with mythmaking.

Shestov himself gave a full account of the inevitability of this two-sided sterilization which is provided by the equality of universal school maxima and the natural inclination of mind to present the world in the light of necessity. Nevertheless, he was also aware that to give in to the inevitable means is not to show “wisdom,” but stubborn idolatry. You need not think too much in order to give in to the mechanical gravitation of the school order of thinking and to demonstrate once again that its grip is deadly in the straight sense of the word – it robs our sinful souls and exhales the blessed spirit from us. Yet can we do without thinking on our own? Is not thinking “necessary” for the only reason that it is capable to lift us over the routine of being and to make the most improbable things possible? After all it is a miracle – to overcome the impossible, our own nature, not by understanding what is “peculiar” to all of us in it and in ourselves and everywhere, but what goes contrary to our natural self-satisfied capacity to see in everything what is due to see, and in every existence the emanation of impersonal entity that only hides itself behind the school mask of the “object of cognition” and remains a free, stirring and incomprehensible being, even if we know all necessity that resides in it. If the impossible is required in order to approach the living origin of revelation, the mystery of Creator in the self and in the world, then this requirement *must be met* without making helpless gestures, re-

ferring to the authority of the childish horror stories – to the godless and unthinkable nature of the impossible crammed in school myths about unreality. If paradise is lost forever and if our God is dead, it is only because we do not stop to dig the grave for our miraculous gift – the grave of our truths which are irreproachably absurd in their “total necessity.”

Only in overcoming the magical forces of gravitation of ground, only in cognition of the *freedom of flight* there is a real life and a real dignity of thinking. If we want to understand this divine vocation of man, we have no need to refer to the word of God. The main thing is not that “the apotheosis of groundlessness hides in itself the absolute ground of Old Testament revelation.”¹⁷ “The main thing is to learn to think that if people [...] were sure that there is no God, this would mean nothing. And if it were possible to prove as two and two that there is no God, it would still mean nothing. Some would say that you cannot demand this from man. Of course not! Yet it is God that always demands the impossible from us.”¹⁸

Did Shestov himself meet this requirement? Was he capable to follow his philosophical way up to the very end, “to open God’s world, in which one could really live and die, for himself and for everybody?”¹⁹ However, these questions themselves are more foolish than the answers “yes” and “no” if we relate them to the general consideration of his work. Only God knows the answer (which depends on our belief or disbelief in His existence), for nobody else can know *our* souls. Only the souls, and not Shestov’s “texts,” will answer whether his hopeless and immortal work succeeded. Whether or not we were capable to reply to his philosophical apotheosis in the same way as he himself replied to the violent speeches of Jove and Plotinus.

Die glühende russische Erde – with this he remained in the memory of his followers (L. Zimni). It is an idle question whether the fire of the earth would outweigh the “sand of the sea.” We

must finally take a stand with regard to a different thing: “how long still” – how long still it will burn? Or smoulder, namely as weighted, casual and, so to say, well-tempered bitterness in the mouth? Do we have *anything what we could clearly say* as an answer to the call of this name – “burning Russian land?”

- 1 For this estimation of *Apotheosis of Groundlessness* by J. Ajhenvald, see B. Fondane, *Rencontres avec Leon Chestov*, Paris 1982, p. 66.
- 2 L. Shestov, *Apofeoz bespočvennosti*, Sankt-Peterburg 1990, p. 54.
- 3 *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
- 4 *Op. cit.*, pp. 172-173. – Cf. L. Shestov, *Načala i konci*, *Sobr. soč.* 5, Sankt-Peterburg 1911, pp. 193-197.
- 5 About the metaphysical sense of *vsemstvo*, see L. Shestov, *Na vesah Iova*, Paris 1975, pp. 25-93.
- 6 L. Shestov, *Apofeoz bespočvennosti*, pp. 35-36.
- 7 L. Shestov, *Na vesah Iova*, p. 154.
- 8 L. Shestov, *In Job's Balances. On the Sources of the Eternal Truths*, Paris 1975, p. 235.
- 9 See L. Shestov, *Vlast ključej (Potestas Clavium)*, Berlin 1923.
- 10 L. Shestov, *Načala i konci*, p. 192.
- 11 L. Shestov, *Apofeoz bespočvennosti*, p. 59.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 178.
- 13 N. Baranova-Shestova, *Žizn Leva Shestova*, t. 2, Paris 1982, p. 193.
- 14 L. Shestov, *Na vesah Iova*, p. 213.
- 15 A note of Shestov from the archive of A. Lazarev; see N. Baranova-Shestova, *Žizn Leva Shestova*, t. 2, p. 212.
- 16 L. Shestov, *Apofeoz bespočvennosti*, p. 109.
- 17 The letter of the father S. Bulgakov to Shestov of the 22th of October 1938, N. Baranova-Shestova, *Žizn Leva Shestova*, t. 2, p. 192.
- 18 L. Shestov, *Afini i Ierusalim*, p. 269.
- 19 The letter of E. Husserl to Shestov of the 3rd of July 1929; see N. Baranova-Shestova, *Žizn Leva Shestova*, t. 2., p. 331.

Nikolai Ivanov

SUMMARY

The contribution presents contemplations based on Shestov's thoughts on groundlessness. When thinking loses the ground under its feet, says Shestov, the horizon of "divine groundlessness" opens up. This means that if we continue to lean on the self-evidences of our reason as if they were that which truly exists, we arrive at an abyss. It appears that we are only giving, through reason, our own values to being. This is because the reasons of reason speak of themselves and their validity and say nothing about the real. In this way reason also deforms our sensuality, deceives our feeling. Within the range of reason we learn to see only what we think, and at the same time think only because we want to find our way as best as we can in the sensual world. The cult of reason is the central cult of our mythology, a mythology of knowing introduced by the biblical story about the tree of knowledge. This cult is a lie that blocks the truth. Yet the truth as Shestov and we ourselves see it as followers of his thought does not mean the revival of the myth. Because reason says nothing of the real world in which we live, true thinking can only be free, personal thinking – thinking in groundlessness, which, despite being confronted by the limited possibilities of our own nature, is at the same time a continuous "divine" creating of the impossible. Such thinking is "necessary" because it is the only thing capable of pulling us out of the routine in our lifeworld and making the impossible possible.

Nikolaj Ivanov

POVZETEK

Razprava predstavlja razmišljanje ob iztočnicah Šestovove misli o breztalnosti. Ko se mišljenju izmaknejo tla pod nogami, se, kot pravi Šestov, odpre obzorje »božanske breztalnosti«. To pomeni, da če se še naprej opiramo na razvidnosti našega razuma, kot da bi bile to, kar resnično je, zaidemo v brezno. Pokaže se, da biti s svojim razumom pridajamo le svoje lastne vrednosti. Razlogi razuma namreč govorijo o sebi in o svoji veljavnosti ter molčijo o resničnem. Razum pri tem deformira tudi našo čutnost, zapeljuje naše čutenje. V območju razuma se učimo videti le to, kar mislimo, hkrati pa mislimo le zato, da bi se kar najbolje znašli v čutnem svetu. Kult razuma je središčni kult naše mitologije, mitologije spoznavanja, ki jo vpeljuje biblična zgodba o drevesu spoznanja. Ta kult je laž, ki blokira resnico. Vendar resnica, za katero gre Šestovu in tudi nam kot dedičem njegove misli, ne pomeni oživitve mita. Ker razum ne pove ničesar o resničnem svetu, v katerem živimo, je resnično mišljenje lahko le svobodno, osebno mišljenje – mišljenje v breztalnosti, ki je, ob tem da se sooča z omejenimi možnostmi naše lastne narave, hkrati nenehno »božansko« ustvarjanje nemogočega. Takšno mišljenje je »nujno« zato, ker nas je edino zmožno iztrgati iz rutine v našem življenjskem svetu in narediti nemogoče mogoče.



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BREZTALNOST IN ŽELJA NEMOGOČEGA

Naslov našega simpozija postavlja vprašanje in terja razmislek o enem izmed temeljnih pojmov Šestovove misli, ki prečka področja literature, filozofije in religije, o »breztalnosti«. Naj na vprašanje takoj za silo odgovorim: *bespočvennost* ali »breztalnost« je nekaj takega kot *eksistencialni korelat suspenza razumskih resnic*. O njej bom v nadaljevanju razmišljal – in njeno pravkar podano opredelitev skušal razgrniti – v kontekstu dihotomije, ki jo je Šestov sam povzdignil v naslov svojega največjega dela *Atene in Jeruzalem* (1938). Ta dihotomija metonimično povzema nasprotje, ki ga Šestov v poznejšem delu svojega opusa tematizira v različnih oblikah, in sicer kot nasprotje med razumom in vero, med grško modrostjo in judovsko-krščanskim razodetjem, med filozofijo in Biblijo oziroma filozofsko spekulacijo in biblično mislijo, med Heglom in Jobom ali med drevesom spoznanja in drevesom življenja. V razmisleku o breztalnosti, okvirjenem z dihotomijo Atene–Jeruzalem, želim priti do živ-

ca Šestovove misli, do tega, kar v naslovu prispevka imenujem »želja nemogočega«.

V zgodovini evropskega mišljenja so po Šestovu zmagale Atene; zmagala je modrost oziroma filozofija nad razodetjem oziroma biblično mislijo. V perspektivi te presoje se njegova lastna filozofija pokaže kot korenita kritika zgodovine filozofije, še več, kot najgloblje eksistencialno angažiran boj proti razumu in njegovim resnicam, ki zahtevajo pokorščino.

Preden v poglavitnih potezah skiciram obrise Šestovove historiozofije, bi rad opozoril na posebnost njegove filozofske hermenevtike. Njegova interpretacija nikdar ni *close reading*, počasno in postopno razgrinjanje teksta s sledenjem različnim pomenom in možnostim branja, ampak se osredinja na nekatere ključne trditve, ki so hkrati ključ do zgodbe evropske filozofije, ter jih citira in parafrazira v zmeraj novih izpeljavah. Šestovov pogled je pogled od daleč, vendar pogled z vpogledom, ki ima pred očmi ves čas to, za kar pod vidikom celote zgodbe v resnici gre – pogled z višine v globino. Kataskopija: Šestov je zmeraj za korak spredaj, za korak naprej v globino, in zmeraj ob trmastem zavrtavanju v peščico izbranih trditev načenja koreninski splet predpostavk, iz katerih raste miselna zgradba kakega filozofa. Pri Kantu, filozofu uma *par excellence*, ki v svojih treh kritikah ob zavrnitvi tradicionalne filozofske metafizike zarisuje tri območja uma kot – ob pravilni rabi uma v njih – področja njegove lastne moči, je takšna predpostavka um sam oziroma upravičenost njegove oblasti. V Šestovovih očeh se je Kant s svojo kritiko uma »obrnil na razum«¹, zaupal jo je razumu samemu. Zato Šestov v slovitem Kantovem prebujenju iz »dogmatičnega dremeža«, o katerem beremo v uvodu h *Kritiki čistega uma*, sprevideva vzpostavitev nove dogme, »dogme o suverenosti razuma«².

V Šestovovi historiozofiji, ki jo tu torej lahko le skiciram, je »odkritelj« razuma Sokrat. Ta je namreč po Šestovovem opažanju odločil, da so dokazane, razumsko razvidne resnice vredne

več od nedokazanih, denimo od tistih, ki prihajajo pesnikom od bogov. S tem je hkrati postal odkritelj resnice, in Šestov sam njeno vladavino skoz vso nadaljnjo zgodovino filozofije zmeraj znova in izmenično opisuje s pridevki samorazvidnosti, večnosti in nujnosti. Kakšna je *takšna* resnica?

Najprej in predvsem je »metafizična«: nevidna, vendar *vidna* za razum. Z razumom je uzrta, se pravi razvidena oziroma prepoznana kot (samo)razvidnost, prosojnost tega, kar je. Samorazvidnost resnice zato, strogo gledano, ni vidnost nečesa samo po sebi razvidnega, ampak razvidnost, ki se razkrije – ki se je vselej že razkrila – razumu. Resnica torej preide iz nevidnosti v samorazvidnost po razumu. Nadalje je *večna*, ker ne nastaja v času, vendar določa vse, kar v času nastaja in propada. Sama brez časnega izvora, dela prosojno tako-bit stvari – in je v svetlobi tega »tako je« prisiljujoča resnica, resnica, ki človeka sili – ki človeka vselej že prisili –, da jo sprejme: iz njenega »tako je« govori »tako mora biti«. Glede na ta »mora« pa je resnica zakon. Zakon protislovja pravi: $A = A$, in s tem govori: A ne more biti hkrati B; A je *nujno* A.

Zakon protislovja je kot temeljni zakon logike, podlago vseh drugih resnic oziroma zakonov, postavil Aristotel in s tem v Šestovovih očeh postal zavarovatelj Sokratovega odkritja. Tako je Božja beseda tudi v srednjeveški filozofiji, ki je skušala razumsko dokazati resnico razodetja, morala dobiti »bлагослов zakona protislovja ali kakega drugega 'zakona'«³. Pod vladavino razumskih resnic oziroma zakonov se je znašel celo Bog. V srednjeveški filozofiji, denimo, ob zakonu protislovja v območje Božje vseмогоčnosti prav tako ne spada zakon *quod factum est infectum esse nequit*: tega, kar se je zgodilo, tudi Bog ne more narediti, da se ni zgodilo. Takšni zakoni niso odvisni od Božje volje, ampak so sami brez volje: »Z njimi ni mogoče govoriti, ne moremo jih prositi niti prepričevati – torej se jim je treba ukloniti.«⁴

Po Šestovu je Bog filozofov v novoveški filozofiji postajal čedalje bolj vezan z razumskimi resnicami. Spinozova racionalizacija božjega ga na primer pelje k sklepu, da »je pravo ime Boga nujnost«⁵, Hegel pa naj bi to racionalizacijo končal in Boga filozofov dokončno spremenil v malika razuma z zajetjem drugosti božjega v gibanje absolutnega duha, ki se te drugosti z *Be-greifen*, delom pojma, postopno o-veda in si jo prisvaja – in Husserl naj bi za njim šel še dlje, s tem ko je resnico v njeni absolutni samogotovosti ločil tako od Božjega kakor od človeškega obstoja.⁶

Vrh tega Šestov pri Sokratu, v njegovem istenju spoznanja oziroma védenja z vrlino, opaža tudi stično točko med resničnim – pod vidikom nujnega – in dobrim, se pravi med ontologijo in etiko. Epiktet, predstavnik ene izmed filozofskih šol, ki so izšle iz Sokrata, pravi: »Začetek filozofije je pripoznanje svoje nezmožnosti in nemožnosti/nemoči [*synaísthesis tês autoû astheneías kai adynámias*] pred nujnostjo.«⁷ *Resnica, ki jo razum prepozna kot samorazvidnost in pripozna kot nujnost*, torej omeji obzorje človeške misli in dejanja ter s tem, da v tem obzorju hkrati *razmeji mogoče od nemogočega, terja uravnanje človeške želje*. Pripoznanje oziroma sprejetje je v isti sapi tudi že pokoritev nujnosti, prevod ontologije v etiko, s katerim nujnost na ontološki ravni vznikne kot dolžnost na etični. Zato je bila naloga filozofije, kot poudarja Šestov, pripeljati človeka do tega, da vzljubi nujnost in si ravnanje v skladu z njo voljno naloži kot dolžnost. Še več: njena naloga je bila *vzgoja človeške želje*, da bi se za načelom resnice *sub specie necessitatis* gnala kot za najvišjim dobrim.

Vesoljno ontološko-etično veljavo razumskih resnic nakazuje Šestov s preinterpretirajočim namigom na »zvezdno nebo nad mano in moralni zakon v meni« z začetka Kantove *Kritike praktičnega uma* takole: »Večne resnice so svetile pred Kantom in tudi po njem še naprej svetijo nad nami kakor nepremične zvezde

in po njih se orientirajo šibki smrtniki ...»⁸ Resnice na nebu, ki so bile pred človekom in tudi pred Bogom, ki so nad človekom in tudi nad Bogom – te resnice so nekako tudi spodaj; spodaj so utemeljuječ: človeku dajejo tla, *Grund* v pomenu »temelja« oziroma »razloga«, na katerem stoji na zemlji. Utemeljujejo njegovo bivanje glede na to, kar je oziroma kar mora biti in kar si je zato treba želeli. Vendar tla – in tu se oglašča Šestov korak globlje od filozofije, s katero se bojuje – v resnici daje in s tem želi tlakuje pot razum. Čeprav se razum v zgodovini filozofije predstavlja le kot medij, v katerem se razkriva resnica, z uziranjem oziroma razvidevanjem resnici v resnici ne omogoča tega, da preide iz nevidnosti v samorazvidnost, ampak jo postavlja. Razumske, se pravi z razumom razvidene resnice so resnice razuma.

Pa vendar v zgodovini filozofije obstajajo izjeme. Nekateri misleci so, kot pogosto ponavlja Šestov, »izgubili tla pod nogami« in poznajo breztalnost, ki nastopi tedaj, ko razumske resnice zgubijo veljavo utemeljevalne instance in obvisijo v zraku: Pascal, ki je začutil brezno, pa ne na levi, kot z mislijo na breztalnost pripominja Šestov, ampak pod nogami,⁹ Kierkegaard, ki je prav tako imel izkušnjo brezna in vrtoglavice,¹⁰ ter pred njima, ne da bi sam to tako imenoval, nemara Luther. In za njimi Dostojevski, ki je v liku »podpodnega« oziroma »podtalnega« človeka ustvaril prvo pravo kritiko uma, ki ni njegova apologija tako kot Kantova.¹¹

Breztalnost je »okoliščina«, ki v literaturi Dostojevskega spremlja in obdaja podtalnega človeka. Ta deluje znotraj privajenih načinov razmišljanja, in sicer tako, da na primer z »dva plus dva je pet« spodkopava tla, na katerih stoji normalni človek. Vendar podtalje nima tal: podtalni človek sam stoji brez opore, v breztalnosti, ki je vsenaokoli in torej kot vsepovsodna okoliškost ni nič temeljnega, središčnega ali opornega.

S suspenzom, razveljavitvijo večnih resnic zgoraj in odprtjem *Ab-grund*, bre(z)dna spodaj, skratka, v breztalnosti pa Šestov

na Kierkegaardovi sledi zasnavlja tudi svojo eksistencialno filozofijo.¹² To je filozofija, ki se ne ozira več k večnim resnicam in, če že kaj, uči »človeka živeti v negotovosti«¹³. Ta filozofija ne išče več resnice pri razumu in njegovih možnostih. Te so, kolikor so v dosegu razumske presoje uresničljivega iz resničnega, omejene in zato tostran ločnice, ki mogoče, se pravi to, kar bi se v skladu z razumsko verjetnostjo lahko zgodilo, razmejuje od nemogočega. Omejene so prav z razmejitvijo, z od-ločitvijo nemogočega, katere druga stran ni nič drugega kakor zamejitev mogočega v razumsko možnost, ki jo je hkrati treba sprejeti kot edino mogočo mogočnost.

Šestovova eksistencialna filozofija se torej začneja tam, kjer se razumu pokaže, da človek, brez tal pod nogami, stoji pred nemogočim – na kraju, kjer razum ne vidi nobene možnosti. Ta kraj je za oko razuma brezizhoden in nemogoče za človeka, ki gleda s tem očesom, absurdno.

Kot nas pouči Lewisov in Shortov latinsko-angleški slovar, je *absurdum* to, kar je *out of tune*, »razglašeno«. Absurdno je torej tisto, kar ni uglaseno in ne sozveni z razumom, z njegovimi resnicami oziroma zakoni. Vendar zato nikakor ni nesmiselno. Namesto da bi se mišljenje utemeljevalo v razumu in njegovih resnicah, zadene ob absurd ter se ob njem preobrne in drugače uravna. Absurdno je rezko v razmerju do razuma in zanj nemogoče. Absurdno je neko mogoče, ki je nemogoče za razum. Absurdna je *za razum nemogoča* mogočnost. Da pa bi v nemogočem sploh vzniknila mogočnost, je potrebno oko vere. Z vero se mišljenje vsekakor ne neha, kajti vera je »dimenzija mišljenja«¹⁴. Drugače rečeno: ko mišljenje zadene ob absurd, se v dimenziji vere uravna po meri absurda. *Absurdum mensura*.

Pred tem, kar je za človeka nemogoče, daje mišljenju drugo dimenzijo vera v Boga. V breztalnosti se človeku v nemogočem odpre vse-mogočnost, vendar le po veri v Božjo vsemogočnost. Le razumskih resnic sproščena *Božja vsemogočnost človeku v veri*

naklanja vse-mogočnost. Kajti »pri Bogu je vse mogoče«, pravi evangelist Marko (10,27), ali pa »Bogu namreč nič ni nemogoče« evangelist Luka (1,37); in tudi Abraham je pri žrtvovanju Izaka, kot je ugotovil že Kierkegaard, veroval »po moči Absurda«¹⁵, se pravi izhajajoč iz tega, da je za Boga vse mogoče. To, kar je nemogoče za človeka, je mogoče za Boga – in je z gledišča razuma absurdno. Toda absurd ni možnostno omejen kakor razum. Absurdna možnost je za *razum nemogoča*, pa vendar za *vero mogoča* mogočnost. Absurdna možnost je *nemogoča mogočnost*, mogočnost vere. To ni nobena potencialnost, še neporabljena možnost obstoječega niti njegova z-možnost kot celota takšnih možnosti, ampak čista, *absolutna možnost*.

Mišljenje pred to možnostjo je drugačno. Ne da bi se oziralo k večnim resnicam na nebu, ki ga silijo k tlom, v breztalnosti, v kateri se zanj odprla razsežnost vere, leti – in leti sproščeno v *želji nemogočega*. In ker »nemogočnost je kamniti zid«¹⁶, se iz brezizhodnosti čez zidove nemogočnosti dviguje proti vse-mogočnosti.

V tem mišljenju pa je drugačna tudi raba razuma. Žrtvovanje razuma ni potrebno: odpovedati se razumu ne pomeni žrtvovati ga, ampak otresti se njegovega »sovražnega jarma«¹⁷. Tedaj, ko se mišljenje ob absurdu preobrne v dimenziji vere, torej ne gre za žrtvovanje – ali vsaj ne, podobno kot pri Abrahamovem žrtvovanju, za žrtvovanje s končno žrtvijo, za izvršeni *sacrificium intellectus* –, ampak za odpoved skriti pretenziji razuma, njegovi pretenziji po avtonomnosti, po tem, da bi bil samoza-konodajna instanca. Instanca, ki v resnici sama sebi izstavlja svoj zakon.

Še več: to mišljenje se odpoveduje zakonu protislovja, vendar spet le kot zapovedovalni, ne pa tudi kot izvrševalni instanci. Noče se vezati na razumski dokaz niti se povsem odvezati od njega. Fondane pojasnjuje: »Toda zakaj bi se odpovedali razumskemu dokazu? Da bi bili *logični*? Če imamo svobodo, da ga

zavržemo, imamo enako svobodo, da ga uporabimo.«¹⁸

Mišljenje, umerjeno v dimenziji vere, torej ob odpovedi pretenzijam razuma ne žrtvuje logosa. Ne žrtvuje osnovne logičnosti oziroma gramatične pravilnosti jezikovne matrice, ki omogoča njegovo lastno diskurzivno strukturiranje. Po drugi strani poteka v nenehnih paradoksnih obratih. S paradoksom, mislenjem proti razumskemu mišljenju in mimo njega, se pridviguje nad njegovo omejenost. Vendar je še zmeraj diskurz in njegovo dis-kuriranje je nenehno re-kuriranje k prvinam logičnega mišljenja v gramatiki. Kajti paradoks ohranja »logiko« jezika in v njej preobrača logiko mišljenja.

Naj se vrnem za korak ali dva nazaj. Rad bi opozoril, da Šestov interpretira inavguralni dogodek tako tradicionalne kakor tudi svoje filozofije v bibličnem ključu. Po eni strani ustoličenje razuma na začetku zgodovine filozofije prisposodablja z biblično zgodbo o človekovem padcu, v kateri se tako prepletejo niti skupne zgodbe Aten in Jeruzalema: razumsko spoznanje postane sad drevesa spoznanja, Sokrat postane Adam, njegova etika nauk padlega človeka itn. Po drugi strani pa Šestov na rojstnem kraju svoje lastne filozofije zarisuje lik človeške eksistence pred nemogočim ob pomoči biblične zgodbe o Jobu.

Pri interpretiranju te zgodbe sledi Kierkegaardu, ki se je ob problemu meja božje vseomogočnosti odvrnil od Hegla in filozofske spekulacije ter stopil na Jobovo stran. Kot pravi Kierkegaard, *Jobova knjiga* na koncu, ko Job dobi nazaj vse, kar je izgubil – premoženje, otroke in zdravje, premoženje in leta življenja celo dvojno –, prikazuje Božjo vseomogočnost v »ponovitvi«. Vrnitev izgubljenega namreč Kierkegaard razume kot ponovitev, ki nastopi tedaj, ko je »po vsakršni človeški modrosti in verjetnosti nemogoče«¹⁹.

Ponovitev Jobu prinaša *restoratio in integrum* in je za Joba torej popolna vrnitev izgubljenega. Glede na to, da ni v človeški, ampak v Božji moči, jo lahko imenujemo dogodek nemogoče-

ga. Glede na to pa, da Bog to, kar je bilo, naredi, da ni bilo, kot njeno dogodkovno bistvo razume Šestov, je navsezadnje *vrnitev istega*. Bog naredi nemogoče mogoče: izgubo premoženja, otrok in zdravja naredi, da jih ni bilo – in tisto, kar je bilo pred tem, na začetku, se vrne, ker Bog vmesno naredi za nekaj, kar »ni bilo«, isto na koncu. Pri ponovitvi torej ne gre za to, da bi se kratko malo obnovilo staro stanje, ampak je konec, po vrnitvi vmesnega v nič, v »ni bilo«, isti z začetkom. Ponovitev je prek izničenja vmesnega vrnitev istega iz nebiti v bit.

V svoji interpretaciji *Jobove knjige* Šestov povezuje Božjo ukinitvev zakona *quod factum est infectum esse nequit* s kierkegaardovsko ponovitvijo tako, da pri tem ponovi potezo, ki jo je naredil Kierkegaard v razlagi Abrahama pri žrtvovanju Izaka, ko je Abrahamu položil v usta besede: »To [žrtvovanje, op. V. S.] se ne bo zgodilo, če pa se kljub temu zgodi, mi bo Bog po moči absurda podaril novega Izaka.«²⁰ Kierkegaard tako privaja k besedi dogajanje v Abrahamovi notranjosti in Abrahamu, tu celo v premem govoru, daje izreči, česar v biblični pripovedi ne govori. Interpretirajoč napolni njegov biblični lik z vero, pa ne, denimo, z vero, da je za Boga mogoče vse, se pravi *kar koli*, ampak s popolnoma določno in določeno vero. To je vera, ki je določena z željo, in sicer z željo po novem – ponovljenem, tj. istem – Izaku.

Čeprav je ta razlagalna poteza *in-ventio*, iznajdba, ki prihaja kot biblični pripovedi kongenialno polnilo v Abrahamovo notranjost, je vendarle eisegeza.

Šestov jo ponovi ob Jobovem liku. Po njegovih besedah je Job nič manj kot »zahteval [poudaril V. S.], naj bo to, kar je bilo, kot da ni bilo, naj bo požgano imetje, kot da ni bilo požgano, naj bodo tu otroci, ki so bili pomorjeni, kot da niso bili pomorjeni, naj bo zdravje tako kot prej«²¹. Job sam naj bi torej zahteval izničenje preteklosti, se pravi vmesnega časa, časa »nečloveškega« trpljenja, v katerem je bil brez premoženja, otrok in zdravja. Sam

naj bi verjel, da mu bo Bog vrnil, kar mu je vzel.

Tu imamo vsekakor opravka z razlago neizrečenega v *Jobovi knjigi*. Vendar Job v resnici ne zahteva vsega tega, ampak, ko hoče tožiti Boga pri Bogu, izrecno le pravdo z Bogom, ki implicira zahtevo po Božjem priznanju, da ima on sam prav, se pravi, da ni kriv zla, ki ga je zadelo. Želje nemogočega, želje po vrnitvi premoženja, otrok in zdravja, ne izreče nikjer. Vprašanje je seveda, ali morda Jobova tožba ne implicira zahteve po vračilu; vendar če jo, nikakor ne nujno zahteva prav po *takšnem* vračilu, po vračilu natanko tega, kar je izgubil. Vrh tega pa: če bi Job zahteval, ali tedaj Bog z vrnitvijo izgubljenega ne bi izpolnil njegove zahteve in ali ta vrnitev ne bi bila *vračilo*, se pravi dejanje nadomestitve, odkupitve oziroma poravnave, ki spada v ekonomijo menjave, ne pa Božji *dar* zunaj takšne ekonomije? In dogodek nemogočega v *Jobovi knjigi*, kierkegaardovska ponovitev, je dar, vnovični Božji dar izgubljenega. Kajti Job ne dobi vsega vrnjenega na zahtevo, ki bi jo Bog priznal za upravičeno. Vse dobi nazaj šele po Božjih govorih iz viharja, ki mu ne dajejo prav, ampak z ogibanjem Jobovi zahtevi dopuščajo dvojni, Božji in človeški prav, oziroma, še natančneje, *šele potem, ko sam odstopi od tožbe* (prim. Job 42,6.10). Božji dar je *vrnitev istega brez vračila*.

Job s Šestovovimi besedami »zahteva«, vendar to ni njegov glas, ampak glas želje nemogočega. Ali torej nad Božjo podaritvijo nemogočega prevlada človeka želja nemogočega od Boga? Ta želja prav gotovo nikakor ne računa na človekovo lastno moč niti ne na človeško moč sploh. V petdesetem aforizmu iz zadnjega dela svojega *magnum opus Atene in Jeruzalem* Šestov pribija: »Človek se spominja Boga, ko hoče nemogoče. Za mogoče se obrača na ljudi.«²² Pa vendar: čeprav želje nemogočega ni brez vere, ki je »velikanska moč«²³, in njene izpolnitve ni brez presežne moči, brez vsemogočnosti Boga, ki o-mogoči nemogoče, ima v Šestovovi misli kljub temu prednost, in sicer *kot*

njena lastna želja. Nemara ni naključje, da Šestov obravnava samo tiste biblične primere, ki jih je mogoče razlagati, kot da Bog takšno željo izpolni, in nobenega primera, ko je ne. Zunaj obravnave pri tem ostaja vprašanje Božjega klica, ki predhaja človeški želji in drugače konfigurira razmerje med njo in Božjo željo. Na primer klica, ki spravi Abrahama na pot v obljubljeni deželo in k žrtvovanju Izaka.

Ali vse to torej pomeni, da Bog *mora* izpolniti željo nemogočega? Da je človeška želja nujno »želja Drugega« in da Bog ne more, da ji ne bi prišel naproti? In da je tudi volja Boga, da jo izpolni? Se torej tej želji, ki ne pripoznava nujnosti, po drugi strani uklanja celo Bog? Ali je Bog navsezadnje tu, ne da človeku izpolni željo mogočega, ampak nemogočega?

Šestov sredi petega aforizma pravi: »Človek si od vsega na svetu najbolj želi zaživeti po svoji volji ...«²⁴ Čeprav ta stavek trgam iz konteksta, po moji presoji vendarle samosvoje govori o prednosti človeške želje pred Božjo: o želji svoje lastne volje, o tem, da naj se vse godi po njej.

Naj končam s sumničavim namigom. Morda ima prav Berdjajev, ko pri Šestovu opaža večjo bližino z Nietzschejem kakor z Biblijo.²⁵ Šestov Nietzscheja graja le tedaj, ko se z izpovedjo ljubezni do usode ukloni nujnosti,²⁶ sicer pa je Nietzsche zanj pod navideznim ateizmom predvsem spodbijalec razumskih resnic in borec za mogočnost onstran njih. Nietzsche je v njegovih očeh odkril nekaj, kar je pomembnejše od večnega vračanja enakega, namreč da je to, kar »je bilo« naredi v »ni bilo«, *volja*. Pod večnim vračanjem enakega se torej pri Nietzscheju skriva volja do moči – in ta se Šestovu samemu odkriva kot »sila neskončne moči«, sila absolutne svobode in neskončne ustvarjalnosti, stvariteljica vse-mogočega oziroma, navsezadnje, kot »Luthrov *creator omnipotens ex nihilo faciens omnia*«. ²⁷

Skratka, morda je želja nemogočega želja vsemogočnosti po Božji volji omogočene volje. Moje lastne.

- 1 Lav Šestov, *Atina i Jerusolim. Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolimis?*, srb. prevod, Budva: Mediteran, 1990, str. 76.
- 2 N. d., 11.
- 3 N. d., str. 185.
- 4 N. d., 205.
- 5 Léon Chestov, *Les favoris et les déshérités de l'histoire: Descartes et Spinoza*, Mercure de France, junij 1923, str. 666.
- 6 Prim. Ramona Fotiade, *Conceptions of the Absurd: From Surrealism to the Existential Thought of Chestov and Fondane*, Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford, 2001, str. 205.
- 7 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusolim*, str. 67 in drugje.
- 8 N. d., 11.
- 9 Lev Šestov, *Getsemanska noč. Pascalova filozofija*, v: isti, *Med razodetjem in resnico. Izbor iz filozofskih del*, prev. Borut Kraševc, Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2001, str. 42.
- 10 Lev Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, v: n. d., str. 99.
- 11 Prim. Lev Šestov, *Nietzsche in Dostojevski. Premagovanje samorazvidnosti*, prev. Borut Kraševc, Ljubljana: LUD Literatura, 2002, str. 155; prim. tudi opombo na str. 18 v *Atina i Jerusolim*.
- 12 Šestov in njegov učenec Benjamin Fondane, ki je največ pripomogel k razširjanju Šestovove misli v Franciji, sta to misel sredi tridesetih let 20. stoletja z izrazom *philosophie existentielle* razločevala od prvih poganjkov nemškega in francoskega »eksistencializma«. Prim. Fotiade, *Conceptions of the Absurd*, str. 6.
- 13 Lev Shestov, *All Things are Possible. Penultimate Words and Other Essays*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977, str. 12.
- 14 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusolim*, str. 21.
- 15 N. d., str. 148.
- 16 N. d., str. 229.
- 17 Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, str. 87.
- 18 Benjamin Fondane, *Léon Chestov et la lutte contre les évidences*, Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger, julij-avgust 1938, str. 34.
- 19 Sören A. Kierkegaard, *Ponovitev. Filozofske drobtinice ali drobci filozofije*, prev. Franc Burgar, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1987, str. 213.
- 20 Seren Kjerkegor, *Strah i drhtanje*, srb. prevod, Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1975, str. 180.
- 21 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusolim*, str. 207.
- 22 N. d., str. 305.
- 23 Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, str. 93.
- 24 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusolim*, str. 262.
- 25 Opažanje Berdjajeva navaja Pavel Kuznecov v spremni besedi h knjigi *Med razumom in razodetjem*, str. 230.

26 Prim. Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalem*, str. 138.

27 N. d., str. 134.

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GROUNDLESSNESS AND THE WISH FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

The title of our symposium raises a question and propels us to reflect on one of the basic concepts of Shestov's thought, which traverses the realms of literature, philosophy and religion – "groundlessness." Allow me, for the moment, to answer this question: *bespochvennost*, or "groundlessness," appears to be *an existential correlate of the suspension of rational truths*. In my contribution I will examine groundlessness and attempt to unfold its definition within the context of the dichotomy that Shestov himself put into the title of his most important work, *Athens and Jerusalem* (1938). This dichotomy metonymically epitomizes the opposition that Shestov deals with in various forms in his later opus, namely, the opposition between philosophy and faith, between Greek wisdom and Jewish-Christian revelation, between philosophy and the Bible or philosophical speculation and biblical thought, between Hegel and Job or between the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. In pondering groundlessness within the framework of the dichotomy between Athens and Jerusalem, I want to get to the nerve of Shestov's thought, to the point which, as the title of my paper suggests, I have named "the wish for the impossible."

According to Shestov, Athens triumphed in the history of European thinking; wisdom or philosophy triumphed over revelation or biblical thought. In the perspective of this judgement, Shestov's own philosophy appears to be a radical critique of the history of philosophy, perhaps even a deepest existentially engaged fight against reason and its truths, which demand obedience.

Before proceeding to outline the principle features of Shestov's historiosophy, I would like to draw attention to the peculiarity of his philosophical hermeneutics. Shestov's interpretation never appears to be close reading, the slow and gradual unfolding of a text which traces different meanings and possibilities of reading. It rather concentrates on some key statements which are simultaneously a key to the story of European philosophy, and it quotes and paraphrases them time and again. Shestov's view is a view from afar, yet a view with insight which, from the aspect of the whole of the story, never loses sight of what it is really all about – a view from above into the depths. A catasopia: Shestov is always one step ahead, i.e. a step ahead into the depths, and, while stubbornly piercing a handful of statements he has chosen, always tackles a root intertwinement of suppositions from which grows the edifice of thought of a philosopher. For Kant, a philosopher of reason *par excellence*, who in his three critiques rejected traditional philosophical metaphysics and outlined three realms of reason as areas of its own power, if reason is properly used in them, such a supposition is reason itself and justification of its power. In Shestov's eyes, Kant in his critique of reason "turned to reason,"¹ entrusting it to reason itself. That is why Kant's famous awakening from the "dogmatic slumber" described in the introduction to his *Critique of Pure Reason* is perceived by Shestov as the creation of a new dogma, the "dogma of sovereignty of reason."²

In Shestov's historiosophy, which I can only briefly outline here, the "discoverer" of reason is Socrates. According to Shestov, it was Socrates who decided that proven, rationally evident truths were superior to unproven ones, i. e. those coming to poets from the gods. In this way, Socrates also became a discoverer of truth, with Shestov himself describing its reign throughout the entire subsequent history of philosophy using the attributes of self-evidence, eternity and necessity. What is *such* a truth like?

First and foremost, it is “metaphysical:” invisible, yet *visible* to reason. Through reason it is seen, i.e. brought to evidence and recognised, as (self)-evidence, as the transparency of that which exists. For this reason, the self-evidence of truth is not, strictly speaking, the visibility of something that is evident in itself, but the evidence that discloses itself – that has always already been disclosed – to reason. Truth therefore passes from invisibility to self-evidence by means of reason. Furthermore, truth is *eternal*, because it does not originate in time, yet determines all that originates and disintegrates in time. Having no temporal origin itself, truth makes transparent the “being-so,” or *So-sein*, of things. In light of this “it is so,” it is a compelling truth, a truth that compels man – that has always already compelled him – to accept it. For the meaning relayed by “it is so” is “it must be so.” In view of this “must,” however, truth is the law. The law of contradiction says: A is A, which means that A cannot simultaneously be B; A is *necessarily* A.

It was Aristotle who established the law of contradiction as the fundamental law of logic, as the basis of all other truths and laws, and consequently became, in Shestov’s eyes, the insurer of Socrates’ discovery. Hence, the word of God also had to obtain a “blessing from the law of contradiction or some other law”³ in mediaeval philosophy, which attempted to rationally prove the truth of the revelation. Even God himself was placed under the reign of rational truths or laws. In mediaeval philosophy, for example, the law of contradiction does not belong to the sphere of God’s almighty power – and neither does the law *quod factum est infectum esse nequit*: even God cannot undo what has happened. Such laws do not depend on the will of God, but are themselves without a will: “It is not possible to talk with them, we cannot beg or convince them – therefore, we must submit to them.”⁴

According to Shestov, in modern philosophy the God of philosophers gradually became increasingly more bound by ration-

al truths. Spinoza's rationalisation of the divine, for example, led Shestov to the conclusion that "the real name of God is a necessity,"⁵ and it was Hegel who, in his judgment, brought this rationalisation to an end and finally transformed the God of philosophers into an idol of reason by including the otherness of the divine in the movement of the absolute spirit, which is gradually becoming aware of this otherness through *Be-greifen*, the work of a concept, and appropriating it. Yet Husserl allegedly went even further when he separated truth in its absolute self-certainty from both the divine as well as from human existence.⁶

Moreover, Shestov also sees in Socrates' identification of knowledge with virtue a point of contact between the real – under the aspect of the necessary – and the good, i.e. between ontology and ethics. Epictetus, a member of one of the philosophical schools that emerged out of Socrates' thought, says: "The beginning of philosophy is an acknowledgement of one's own inability and impossibility/powerlessness [*synaísthesis tês autoû astheneías kai adynamías*] in face of necessity."⁷ *The truth which reason recognises as self-evidence and acknowledges to be a necessity*, thus limits the horizon of human thought and deed and, by simultaneously *delimiting the possible from the impossible* in this horizon, *demands the adjustment of a human wish*. Acknowledgement or acceptance is, at the same time, a submission to necessity, a translation of ontology into ethics, by which necessity on the ontological level emerges as a duty on the ethical level. That is why the task of philosophy was, Shestov stresses, to lead man to the point where he comes to love necessity and willingly assumes acting in accordance with necessity as his duty. Even more: this task was *to educate the human wish*, so that it would strive for the principle of truth, *sub specie necessitatis*, as the supreme good.

Shestov points to the universal ontological-ethical value of rational truths with an preinterpretative allusion to "the starry

sky above myself and the moral law inside myself” from the beginning of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, by saying: “The eternal truths shined before Kant and also after him, and it is after them that weak mortals orientate themselves...”⁸ But the truths in the sky that existed before man and also before God, the truths that exist above man and also above God – these truths are also below in a way; when below, they make ground: they offer ground to man, *Grund* in the sense of the “foundation” or rational “reason” on which man stands on earth. They are ground for his existence with regard to that which exists or must exist and, therefore, that which man should wish for. Yet ground – and here Shestov has gone one step further than the philosophy he is fighting against – is in reality being given and the path of desire paved by reason. Although it is presented in the history of philosophy only as a medium in which truth discloses itself, reason does not actually enable truth to pass from invisibility to self-evidence by seeing and bringing it to evidence, but sets it up. Rational truths, i.e. those brought to evidence through reason, are truths of reason itself.

There are, nevertheless, exceptions in the history of philosophy. As Shestov often says, some thinkers “lost the ground under their feet” and are familiar with the groundlessness that emerges when rational truths lose the value of a grounding instance and are left hanging in the air: Pascal, who began to sense an abyss, though not on his left, as Shestov remarks in connection with groundlessness, but under his feet,⁹ Kierkegaard, who also had the experience of abyss and dizziness,¹⁰ and before them perhaps Luther, who did not name it this way. And after them, of course, Dostoyevsky, who created the first real critique of reason in the figure of the “underground” man, which is not his apology as is Kant’s.¹¹

Groundlessness is a “circumstance” which, in Dostoyevsky’s literature, accompanies and surrounds the underground man.

This man acts within the frames of accustomed ways of thinking, undermining the ground on which normal man stands by saying, for example, “two times two is five.” Yet the underground has no ground: the underground man himself stands without support, in a groundlessness spreading all around and surrounding him on all sides offering no ground, centre or support.

On the other side, following Kierkegaard’s lead, Shestov conceives also his own existential philosophy by means of suspense, abolishing eternal truths above and opening *Ab-grund*, abyss below, that is, in groundlessness.¹² This is a philosophy that no longer turns to eternal truths and, if anything, teaches “man to live in uncertainty.”¹³ It does not seek truth in reason and its possibilities. Inasmuch as they are within reach of rational judgment of the realisable out of the real, these possibilities are limited and, therefore, on this side of the line, which delimits what is possible or what in all rational probability could happen, from the impossible. They are limited precisely by delimitation, by separation of the impossible, whose other side is nothing other than the enclosure of the possible in the rational possibility that must be accepted as the only possible possibility.

Shestov’s existential philosophy thus begins at the point where it is shown to reason that an individual without ground under his feet stands before the impossible – at a place where reason sees no possibility at all. For the eye of reason, there is no way out of this place, and the impossible is absurd to the individual who sees with the eye of reason.

Absurdum, as Lewis and Short’s Latin-English dictionary tells us, is what is “out of tune.” Absurd is thus that which is not in tune and does not sound together with reason, with its truths or laws. Yet it is for this reason by all means not senseless. In spite of finding ground in reason and its truths, thinking hits against the absurd and then reverses and adjusts itself differently. Ab-

absurd is harsh in relation to reason and is impossible for it. Absurd is a certain *possibile* that is impossible for reason. Absurd is a possibility that is *impossible for reason*. But for possibility to emerge in the impossible at all, one requires the eye of faith. In any case, thinking does not end with faith, for faith appears to be a “dimension of thinking.”¹⁴ In other words: when thinking hits against the absurd, it adjusts itself in the di-mension of faith according to the measure of the absurd. *Absurdum mensura*.

Before that which is impossible for man, it is faith in God that gives thinking another dimension. When in groundlessness, the all-possibility opens for man in the impossible, but only through faith in the almightiness of God. *Only divine almightiness freed from rational truths presents the all-possibility to a man of faith*. For “with God all things are possible,” says evangelist Mark (10:27), or “with God nothing will be impossible,” says evangelist Luke (1:37); and, as Kierkegaard already established, it was Abraham sacrificing Isaac who also believed “by the power of the Absurd,”¹⁵ assuming that everything is possible with God. What is impossible for man is possible for God – and from the point of view of reason, it is absurd. Yet in terms of the possibility, the absurd is not limited as reason is. The absurd possibility is *impossible for reason*, yet nevertheless *a possible possibility for faith*. The absurd possibility is an *impossible possibility*, a possibility of faith. It is neither a potentiality, an unused possibility of what exists, nor its capability as an entirety of such possibilities, but a pure, *absolute possibility*.

Before this possibility, thinking is different. Without looking towards eternal truths in the sky that are forcing it to the ground, in a groundlessness in which the dimension of faith has opened for it, thinking flies – and flies with ease *in the wish for the impossible*. And because “impossibility is a stone wall,”¹⁶ it rises from straits over the walls of the impossible towards all-possibility.

In such thinking, the use of reason is different as well. There is no need to sacrifice reason: to renounce reason does not mean to sacrifice it, but to shake off its “hostile yoke.”¹⁷ Therefore, when thinking reverses itself alongside the absurd in the dimension of faith, it is not a sacrifice that is at stake – or at least not, as in the case of Abraham’s sacrifice, a sacrifice with a final victim, a performed *sacrificium intellectus* –, but a renouncement of the hidden pretension of reason, of the pretension to autonomy, to be a self-legislative instance. To be an instance which in reality issues its own laws.

Still more: this thinking renounces the law of contradiction, but again only as a commanding and not also as an executing instance, too. It does not want to rely on rational proof, nor release itself from it completely. Fondane explains: “But why should we renounce rational proof? To be *logical*? If we have the freedom to reject it, we have the same freedom to use it.”¹⁸

Thinking measured in the dimension of faith does not, when renouncing the pretensions of reason, sacrifice *lógos*. It does not sacrifice the basic logicalness or the grammatical regularity of the language matrix that enables its own discursive structuring. On the other hand, it runs in incessant paradoxical turns. By paradox, by thinking contrary to rational thinking and bypassing it, his thinking rises above its limited condition. Yet it is still a discourse, and its dis-coursing is an incessant re-coursing to the elements of logical thinking in grammar. For the paradox is what preserves the “logic” of a language and *reverses the logic of thinking within it*.

Let me go back a step or two. I would like to point out that Shestov interprets the inaugural event of both traditional and his own philosophy in the biblical key. On the one hand, he represents the inauguration of reason at the beginning of the history of philosophy through the biblical story of the Fall of Man. In this story the threads of the story common to both Athens

and Jerusalem are intertwined: rational knowledge becomes the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Socrates becomes Adam, his ethics a doctrine of the fallen man, etc. On the other hand, Shestov draws on the birthplace of his own philosophy the figure of human existence before the impossible. And he draws it with the help of the biblical story about Job.

In his interpretation of this story, Shestov follows Kierkegaard, who, facing the problem of the limits of divine almightiness, turned away from Hegel and philosophical speculation, and sided with Job. As Kierkegaard says: at the end of *The Book of Job*, when Job gets back everything he has lost – his property, children and health, his property and years of his life even in doubly – the almightiness of God is presented by “repetition.” Namely, Kierkegaard understands the return of all that Job has lost as repetition that occurs when it is “in *all* human wisdom and probability impossible.”¹⁹

Repetition brings *restoratio in integrum* to Job, and thus for him represents the complete return of what he has lost. Because it is not within the power of man, but of God, it may be called an event of the impossible. But considering the fact that God undoes what has happened, as Shestov understands the essence of repetition, it is ultimately *the return of the same*. God makes the impossible possible: he undoes the loss of property, children and health – and what was before that, at the beginning, returns, because God has turned the time in-between into something that “was not,” just *the same* in the end. Repetition, therefore, does not simply involve the restoration of the primary state of things; the point is that the end – after the things that happened in-between have returned into nothingness, into “was not” – is the same as the beginning. Repetition is the return of the same from non-being to being by annihilation of the in-between.

In his interpretation of *The Book of Job*, Shestov links God’s cancellation of the law *quod factum est infectum esse nequit* with

the Kierkegaardian repetition by repeating the move made by Kierkegaard in his explanation of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, when he put into Abraham's mouth the following words: "This [a sacrifice, my note] will not happen, but if it nevertheless happens, God would give me a new Isaac through the power of the absurd."²⁰ In this way, Kierkegaard verbalizes what is happening inside Abraham and, by the use of direct speech, makes Abraham say what he does not say in the biblical narrative. In interpreting the biblical figure of Abraham, Kierkegaard fills it up with faith – not with the faith that everything, i.e. *anything*, is possible with God, but with an utterly specific and distinctive faith. A faith determined by the wish for a new – repeated, i.e. the same – Isaac.

Although this explanatory move is *in-ventio*, the invention that comes into Abraham's interior as a congenial fulfillment is nevertheless an eisegesis.

Shestov repeats it in his explanation of Job. In his words, Job did nothing less than "*demand* [my emphasis] that what happened should be as if it had not happened, that the burnt property should be as if it had not been burnt, that the children who were killed should be, as if they had not been killed, that his health should be as before."²¹ Supposedly, Job himself demanded the annihilation of the past, that is, of the time in-between, a time of "inhuman" suffering, in which he was left without his property, children and health. He himself allegedly believed that God would return what he had taken from him.

Here we are dealing with an interpretation of the unsaid in *The Book of Job*. Yet in reality Job does not demand all of that at all. In wanting to accuse God in front of God, he demands only to have a lawsuit with God, a case implying his request for God's acknowledgement that he is right and is not guilty of the evil that struck him. Nowhere does he voice the wish for the impossible, the wish for the return of his property, children

and health. The question is, of course, whether Job's accusation actually does imply a request for return; but if it does, it by all means does not imply a request for precisely *such* a return, for the return of those very things which he had lost. Furthermore, if Job had voiced a request for that, wouldn't God have fulfilled his request by returning all that he has lost, and wouldn't this return be *a recompensation*, i.e. an act of compensation, redemption or settlement belonging to the sphere of exchange economy and not *a gift* of God outside of such economics. And the event of the impossible in *The Book of Job*, the Kierkegaardian repetition, is a gift, a repeated divine gift of all that has been lost. For Job does not get everything back on a request which God recognizes as justified. He gets it all back only after two divine speeches from a whirlwind which do not proclaim he is right, but, avoiding Job's request, permit a double, divine and human right, more specifically, *only after he himself withdraws his request* (cf. Job 42:6.10). The gift of God is *the return of the same without recompensation*.

Using Shestov's words, Job "demands," yet this is not his voice, but the voice of the wish for the impossible. This wish certainly does not in any way count on man's own power, or on human power in general. In the fiftieth aphorism from the last part of his *magnum opus*, *Athens and Jerusalem*, Shestov says: "A man remembers God when he wants the impossible. For the possible, he turns to men."²² But nevertheless: although the wish for the impossible cannot exist without faith, which is "an immense power,"²³ and its fulfillment cannot occur without the transcendent power, without the almightiness of God, which makes the impossible possible, it has priority in Shestov's thought precisely as *its own wish*. It is perhaps no coincidence that Shestov discusses only those biblical cases that can be explained, as though God fulfills such wishes, and ignores those in which wishes are not fulfilled. In this way, the question of

God's call which precedes man's wish and configures differently the relation between man's wish and God's wish remains undiscussed. For example, the question of the call that sets Abraham on his way to the Promised Land and to the sacrifice of Isaac.

Hence, does all of this mean that God *must* fulfill the wish for the impossible? That the human wish is necessarily a "wish of the Other" and that God has no choice but to meet it? That it is also the will of God to fulfill it? Does, on the other hand, even God submit to this wish which does not acknowledge the necessity? And finally, is God here not to fulfill the wish of the possible, but of the impossible?

In the middle of the fifth aphorism, Shestov says: "Man's ultimate wish in the world is to live according to his own will..."²⁴ Although this sentence had been taken out of its context, in my judgment it nevertheless uniquely speaks about the priority of the human wish before the divine wish: about the wish of one's own will, about everything happening in accordance with one's will.

Let me conclude with a suspicious hint. Perhaps Berdyaev is right in observing that Shestov is closer to Nietzsche than to the Bible.²⁵ Shestov rebukes Nietzsche only when Nietzsche submits to necessity confessing his love of fate;²⁶ otherwise, he judges this German thinker to be first of all a challenger of rational truths and a fighter for the possibilities beyond such truths. In Shestov's eyes, Nietzsche discovered something that is more important than the eternal return of the same: what makes "it was" become "it was not" is *will*. So, concealed behind Nietzsche's eternal return of the same is the will to power, and this very will reveals itself to Shestov as a "force of endless power," a force of absolute freedom and infinite creativity, a creator of all-possibility or, finally, as "Luther's *creator omnipotens ex nihilo faciens omnia*."²⁷

In short, the wish for the impossible is perhaps the wish for the almightiness of will made possible by the will of God. Of my own will.

Translated by Suzana Stančič

- 1 Lav Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalim. Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolimis?*, Serbian translation, Budva: Mediteran, 1990, p. 76.
- 2 *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 3 *Op. cit.*, p. 185.
- 4 *Op. cit.*, p. 205.
- 5 Léon Chestov, *Les favoris et les déshérités de l'histoire: Descartes et Spinoza*, Mercure de France, June 1923, p. 666.
- 6 Cf. Ramona Fotiade, *Conceptions of the Absurd: From Surrealism to the Existential Thought of Chestov and Fondane*, Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford, 2001, p. 205.
- 7 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalim*, p. 67 et al.
- 8 *Op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 9 Lev Šestov, *Getsemanska noč. Pascalova filozofija*, in: Lev Šestov, *Med razodetjem in resnico. Izbor iz filozofskih del*, Slovene translation by Borut Kraševc, Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 2001, p. 42.
- 10 Lev Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, in: *op. cit.*, p. 99.
- 11 Cf. Lev Šestov, *Nietzsche in Dostojevski. Premagovanje samorazvidnosti*, Slovene translation by Borut Kraševc, Ljubljana: LUD Literatura, 2002, p. 155; cf. also footnote on page 18 in *Atina i Jerusalim*.
- 12 In the mid thirties of the past century, Shestov and his pupil, Benjamin Fondane, who contributed the most to the dissemination of Shestov's thought in France, used the term *philosophie existentielle* to separate this thought from the first outbursts of German and French "Existentialism." Cf. Ramona Fotiade, *Conceptions of the Absurd: From Surrealism to the Existential Thought of Chestov and Fondane*, Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, University of Oxford, 2001, p. 6.
- 13 Lev Shestov, *All Things are Possible. Penultimate Words and Other Essays*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977, p. 12.
- 14 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalim*, p. 21.
- 15 *Op. cit.*, p. 148.
- 16 *Op. cit.*, p. 229.
- 17 Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, p. 87.
- 18 Benjamin Fondane, *Léon Chestov et la lutte contre les évidences*, Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger, July-August 1938, p. 34.
- 19 Sören A. Kierkegaard, *Ponovitev. Filozofske drobtinice ali drobci filozofije*, Slovene translation by Franc Burgar, Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1987, p. 213.
- 20 Seren Kjerkegor, *Strah i drhtanje*, Serbian translation, Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1975, p. 180.
- 21 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalim*, p. 207.
- 22 *Op. cit.*, p. 305.

- 23 Lev Šestov, *Kierkegaard – religiozni filozof*, p. 93.
- 24 Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalem*, p. 262.
- 25 Berdyaev's observation cites Pavel Kuznecov in the afterword of Shestov's anthology in Slovene *Med razumom in razodetjem*, p. 230.
- 26 Cf. Šestov, *Atina i Jerusalem*, p. 138.
- 27 *Op. cit.*, p. 134.

Vid Snoj

SUMMARY

The paper discusses the concept of groundlessness in Shestov's thought within the framework of the dichotomy between Athens and Jerusalem, or reason and faith, which marks Shestov's late work. Groundlessness emerges when rational truths in which philosophy has grounded human existence are left hanging in the air, and a man loses the ground under his feet. It is, on the other hand, precisely here that Shestov's own existential philosophy begins, namely, where there is no possibility left for reason. Here only the eye of faith sees the possibility that is not possible for reason, being thus an impossible, absurd possibility, and the all-possibility opens itself for man through faith in the almightiness of God. Before such a possibility, Shestov draws the figure of human existence with the help of the biblical story about Job. In his interpretation, he follows Kierkegaard's famous thought on repetition and connects it with the cancellation of the law, which postulates that even God cannot undo what has happened. But he also repeats the eisegetic move made by Kierkegaard when he interpreted Abraham sacrificing Isaac: as Abraham should have believed that God would give him a new Isaac, so should Job have requested that God return precisely what had been taken from him, annihilating all that happened in-between. So, the belief that everything, i.e. anything, is possible with God becomes an utterly distinctive faith, and the wish for the impossible turns out to be a wish for something impossible which man wishes for himself, yet is at the same time beyond his power. The question remains, however, whether this wish is also the wish of God or, ultimately, the wish of one's own will.



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ŠESTOVOV IN LÉVINASOV STRAH

Naslov našega kolokvija – »breztalnosti« ali »breztemeljnosti« – s pomembno Šestovovo besedo gotovo ne meri le na njegovo zgodovinsko samorazumevanje, ampak kaže na bližino njegovega mišljenja pomembni značilnosti postmodernosti, namreč takšni artikulaciji diskurzov (tako v filozofiji in literaturi kot v religiji), ki izgublja svoje jasno prepoznavne meje in med seboj razpira diskurze, ker jim njihova najgloblja identiteta v radikalni samorefleksiji postaja vprašljiva.

To bližino je očitno prepoznal Emmanuel Lévinas, eden najpomembnejših postmodernih mislecev. Francoski filozof se je v kratkem zapisu o Šestovovi knjigi *Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle (Vox clamantis in deserto)*¹ – knjiga je bila v francoščini objavljena leta 1936, recenzija pa v *Revue des études juives*, zv. 2, julij-december 1937, št. 3, str. 139–141² – s svojo običajno lucidnostjo dotaknil nekaterih osnovnih vprašanj Šestovove, pa

tudi svoje (in s tem nasploh postmoderne) misli. Namen mojega kratkega prispevka je dosežen že z opozorilom na to kratko recenzijo, ki bi si zaslužila temeljitejšo obravnavo od pričujoče.³

Kairós srečanja med Šestovom in Lévinasom je izjemno pomenljiv. Gre za čas pred drugo svetovno vojno, čas »priprav« na holokavst. Judovski mislec v tem času bere knjigo drugega judovskega misleca. Kritik temeljne pretenzije filozofije, pretenzije zaobjeti totaliteto, bere misleca, ki je v intenzivnem, kongenialnem, strastnem branju Kierkegaarda na novo ubesedil svojo »eksistencialno« kritiko stremljenj filozofije.

Lévinas na začetku recenzije sam nakaže povezavo med kritiko racionalnosti in vojno: »Moralna kriza, ki jo je odprla vojna leta 1914, je dala ljudem izostren občutek neučinkovitosti razuma [*raison*], temeljnega neskladja med racionalistično civilizacijo in zahtevami duše, zgubljene v anonimnosti splošnega« (87). Takoj pristavlja, da gre pri danskem mislecu za nekaj bistveno bolj subtilnega. Kierkegaardova filozofija, ki jo je po Lévinasu »težko povzeti«, se izmika tako naivnemu iracionalizmu kot »naukom nasilja« – za to sintagmo že slutimo nacizem, ki ga je tako proclljivo kritiziral v spisu *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l'hitlerisme* (1934) –, ki sta oba preprosti reakciji na to krizo. Lévinas Kierkegaardovo misel oriše predvsem kot nujnost postavljanja eksistencialnih vprašanj, ne glede na to, kakšne odgovore dajemo nanje (»Je moja spekulacija legitimno abstrahirana od *condition humaine*, od njegove usode, njegove smrti?«), in pritrjujoč ugotavlja: »Spoštovati moramo notranji pomen [*signification interne*] dogodkov, ki konstituirajo našo eksistenco, preden jih interpretiram v skladu z univerzalnim redom, ki ga konstruira razum« (88). Nato Lévinas označi sámo Šestovovo branje Kierkegaarda kot »boj, ki ga bojuje duša, prepuščena brezupu v svetu, ki mu vladata [*est commandé*] razum in etika – se pravi Nujnost, posledica izvirnega greha –, boj za njegovo svobodo, ki je ne bi mogla več omejiti niti logika niti morala« (89).

Vendar recenzija ob vseh pohvalah (»G. Šestov zelo dobro označuje peripetije tega boja, Kierkegaardove oscilacije med Abrahamom in Sokratom« [89]; »ta razlaga gotovo dojema enega bistvenih vidikov Kierkegaardove misli« [*ibid.*]; »Nikakor ne moremo dovolj priporočiti Šestovove knjige tistim, ki hočejo znova premisliti in oživiti svoje judovstvo kot religijo« [90]; »v Šestovovi eksistencialni obliki religiozna filozofija znova ovrednoti vprašanja odrešenja – se pravi samo oznanilo judovstva« [90]) ni enoznačna aprobacija. Lévinas hvali živost, poetičnost in simfonično enotnost knjige in vljudno zapiše, da »v njej občutimo – kar ni njena najmanjša privlačnost – ideje g. Šestova«, čeprav se kot »eden tistih, poznajo Šestovovo delo in njegov boj za Jeruzalem proti Atenam« (89), nad tem ne čudi,⁴ in vendar kritično pristavlja: »... med tema mislecema vlada neovrgljiva [*incotestable*] podobnost, ki je vzrok nekaterih zmešnjav [*confusions*].«

Ob koncu njegovega zapisa zaslutimo strah filozofa pred religioznim človekom, strah »heleniziranega« Juda pred divjostjo Šestovovih paradoksov, ne nazadnje tudi strah Juda pred judovskim mislecem, ki je – prav v svoji odprtosti za radikalni paradoks – odprt za krščanstvo (»Gospod Šestov, judovski filozof, gotovo ni filozof judovstva. V dediščini Jeruzalema ne ločuje Stare zaveze od Nove« [90]). To je toliko bolj usodno, ker Lévinas sam vidi, da Šestovovo delo postavlja »vprašanja, ki imajo temeljni značaj za vsako religiozno filozofijo: ta vprašanja določajo raven, kjer se postavlja samo dejstvo religije [*le fait religieux lui-meme*]« (90).

Z morda predrzno ekstrapolacijo bi lahko ozadje Lévinasovega ugovora Šestovu povzeli v tezi, da se *filozofija ne more izročiti v divjo Božjo nepredvidljivost absolutne moči, ne da bi se odpovedala logosu, ki je njena podstat* (v tem seveda slutimo program Lévinasove lastne združitve grštva in hebrejstva): »... nismo na primer prepričani, da je spoznanje [*connaissance*] za Kierkegaard-

da povsem in docela istovetno z zlom in da ni raje nepogrešljiv in srečen element njegove dialektike« (89).

Z Lévinasovim ugovorom Šestovu – ugovoru, ki ne leti samo na *interpretacijo*, ampak na *temeljno strukturo filozofije* – se lahko bolj ali manj strinjamo, lahko mu seveda tudi ugovarjamo. Vendar je prava težava verjetno drugače. Ko prebiramo Lévinasovo kritiko Šestovove pozicije, kritiko njegove poti na razpotju, ki ga postavi francoski mislec, se postavlja vprašanje, *koliko takšna alternativa* – logos na eni strani, nadlogični, absolutni Bog razodetja na drugi, Sokrat na eni strani, Abraham na drugi, Atene na eni strani, Jeruzalem na drugi strani – *sploh pravilno razume in povzema Šestovovo mišljenje*.

* * *

Da bi lahko razumeli pravo podobo omenjenega temeljnega razpotja pri Šestovu, lahko potrkaemo na katera koli vrata. Z drugimi besedami: stari mojster se neutrudno ponavlja, in to z vso dolžno strastjo in neugnanostjo, ki je značilna za prave mislece.⁵ Eden izmed primernih vhodov v njegovo misel je gotovo spis *Vklenjeni Parmenid*, ena najpomembnejših Šestovovih tematizacij filozofije; objavljen je bil samostojno in kot prvo poglavje knjige *Atene in Jeruzalem*. Sam naslov besedila, ki očitno aludira na Ajshilovo dramo *Prometheús desmótes*, *Okovani Prometej*, že nakazuje problemsko obzorje, v katerem Šestov bere filozofijo. Na preplet literature in filozofije ne meri le naslov njegovega eseja, ampak že izpostavitev avtorja, ki je pesnik mislec in svoje misli zapisuje v heksametrih – pesnik mislec, ki ga šele poznejše dobe, neobčutljive za svojsko literarnost arhajske literature, razglašajo za filozofa, ki se je nespretno udejeval v literaturi. Povzetek razprave je preprost. S Šestovovimi besedami (iz uvoda v knjigo *Atene in Jeruzalem*): »*Vklenjeni Parmenid* hoče pokazati, kako so veliki filozofi v dirki za znanjem [znanie]

izgubili najdragocenejši Stvarnikov dar – svobodo. Parmenid ni bil svobodni, ampak vklenjeni Parmenid.«⁶

Videti je, kot da bi imel Lévinas prav. Vendar je to le videti. Če esej beremo nadrobno, se nam kot v nekakšni simbolni zgotitvi razkriva Šestovov način obravnave filozofskih besedil. Ruski filozof v tem spisu skorajda ne govori o Parmenidu. Bolj ali manj z Aristotelovimi očali – delo uvaja citat iz Stagirita »nujnost ne posluša prepričevanj« – ignorira mistično dimenzijo predfilozofskega, modrostnega uzrtja in na Parmenida projicira novoveško problematiko, vendar samo zato, da bi *paradokсно* kritiziral aristotelsko razumevanje in izpostavil možnost povsem drugačnega *filozofskega* uvida, ki ga odkrije pri Platonu: »Aristotel bi blagoslovil naše védenje [znanie], toda Platon bi ga preklel« (340). Aristotelova kritika Parmenida – Parmenid naj bi bil prisiljen slediti fenomenom, tako kot druge predsokratske mislece naj bi ga v smer aristotelske ontologije prisiljevala resnica sama – je le razkritje tega, zaradi česar je treba kritizirati samega Aristotela, »vélikega svečenika vidne in nevidne cerkve vseh, ki mislijo« (29): »Zakaj ima resnica moč nad Parmenidom in Aleksandrom in zakaj Parmenid in Aleksander nimata moči nad resnico« (340)? Aristotel je bil človek, »ki je poznal grenkobo žalitve« – in najhujša vseh žalitev, ki jo je doživel, je v Šestovovem dramatičnem prikazu razpotij Akademije ravno *platonska* invencija transcendence. »Kako prisiliti Platona, da utihne? Kako ga prisiliti, da se nujnosti ne bi pokoril le v vidnem, empiričnem svetu, ampak da bi ji tudi v mislih izkazoval časti, do katerih ima po Aristotelovem prepričanju vse pravice? Nujnost je – nujnost ne za tiste, ki spijo, temveč za tiste, ki so budni. In budni, ki vidijo nujnost, doumevajo to, kar v resnici je [istinnoe suščee], Platon pa nas s svojimi predrznostmi in nesramnostjo pelje proč od tega, kar v resnici je, in nas usmerja na področje fantastičnega, himeričnega, iluzornega ter zato lažnega« (342).

Zgodba se potem preseli v novoveška filozofijo in je predolga, da bi jo tu obnavljal. Vendar je bilo odločilno že izrečeno. Šestovova kritika racionalnosti izhaja iz radikalno mišljene absolutnosti absolutnega, ki jo ruski mislec v večini tekstov sicer stilizira v drugost bibličnega Boga – v *Vklenjenem Parmenidu* pa to ne drži. V njem srečamo osvobojenost, ki svoj siceršnji avtoportret (mišljenje Boga v tradiciji avguštinizma in nominalizma) prestavi na samo korenino zahodnega *mišljenja*, *pred vsako dihotomijo mišljenja in razodetja*: »Aristotelu je, kot je očitno, bila najbolj neznosna in grozna misel, po kateri naše zemeljsko življenje ni poslednje, dokončno, resnično pravo življenje in je iz njega možno, četudi le v določeni meri, takšno prebujenje, kakršnega doživljamo, ko prehajamo iz spanja v stanje budnosti ... Platonov *oneirottousi* – ‚sanjajo‘ – pa *spodkopava same temelje človeškega mišljenja*« (346).

Šestov očitno na Platona prevali nekaj dediščine »očeta Parmenida« – brez inavguracije strogega pojma Bivajočega, ki svet razvrednoti v videz in budnost premakne v ekstazo edinega, pač ne bi bilo mogoče Šestovovo pojmovanje te dialektike spanja in budnosti. Vendar je Šestov nekaj tega vedel že sam. *Parmenídes desmótes* je hkrati *Parmenídes lyoménos*, čeprav Šestov sam trdi nasprotno. In ravno zaradi te zvižaje ostaja Lévinasova kritika Šestova prekratka.

Končnega vprašanja o odnosu misli in razodetja pri Šestovu torej ne smemo pustiti preprosti Lévinasovi postavitvi vprašanja, ki se seveda pri drugih zgodovinarjih ruske misli ponavlja še v dosti bolj preprosti obliki; ne smemo brez pozornega branja Šestovovih besedil izigravati misli proti razodetju ali *vice versa*, ampak se moramo vprašati, *koliko zanj sama misel, filozofska misel, v zadnji instanci spodkopava miselnost mišljenja*.

Tako Jeruzalem kot Atene se morda nahajata v Grčiji.

- 1 Delo sta iz ruščine prevedla T. Rageot in B. Schloezer, Paris: Vrin, 1936.
- 2 Knjigo navajam po natisu v izboru Lévinasovih spisov, ki ga je z naslovom *L'intrigue de l'infini* objavila Marie-Anne Lescourret, Paris: Flammarion, 1994, str. 87–90.
- 3 Na to kažejo zlasti plodna vzporedna branja Karla Bartha (misleca, ki je v času komentarja k *Pismu Rimljanom* kazal močno podobnost s Šestovom) in Lévinasa ter njegovega etničnega in miselnega sorodnika Jacquesa Derridaja. Prim. G. Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology*, Cambridge 1995, in J. F. Gould, *Levinas en Barth. Een godsdienstwijsgerige en etische vergelijking*, 1984 (nem. prevod *Emmanuel Levinas und Karl Barth*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1992).
- 4 Prim. podobno sodbo v izjemni, osebno napisani »kritiki« S. Bulgakova: *Nekotrie čerti religioznago mirovozrenija L. I. Šestova*, v: S. N. Bulgakov, *Sočinenija v dvuh tomah*, 1. zv., Moskva 1993, str. 521. Bulgakov kaže podobno razumevanje Šestova kot Lévinasa (prim. str. 522 sl.).
- 5 Na to lepo opozarja že S. N. Bulgakov, *op. cit.*, str. 522.
- 6 *Afini i Ierusalim, Predslovie*, v: L. Šestov, *Sočinenija v dvuh tomah*, 1. zv, Moskva 1993, str. 332.

Gorazd Kocijančič
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SHESTOV'S AND LEVINAS' FEAR

The important Shestov's word "groundlessness," which was so aptly chosen for the title of this symposium, does not aim at its historical self-understanding but reveals how close to some important features of post-modernity Shestov's thought is: in particular to those articulations of discourses (in philosophy, literature and religion) where clear and distinguishable limits are getting blurred and lost and where discourses can merge one into the other because their own most profound identity becomes questionable, or even unclear.

This closeness was clearly recognised by Emanuel Levinas, one of the most important post-modern thinkers. In 1937 this French philosopher opened some of the crucial questions concerning this issue in his short review of Shestov's book on Kierkegaard¹ with the title *Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle (Vox clamantis in deserto)*.² Approaching those questions with his usual insightfulness Levinas reveals some of the basic tenets of his own philosophy – and contemporary thought in general. I would have fulfilled my task already if I succeed in drawing your attention to this short review which would undoubtedly deserve a more thorough analysis than the one I am trying to present here, in particular if you bear in mind the fruitful parallels that could be drawn between Levinas' thought and the work of Karl Barth (a thinker who especially in his commentary to the *Epistle to the Romans* resembles closely to Shestov) and between Karl Barth and Shestov's ethnical and spiritual kinsmen, Jacques Derrida.³

Kairos of the meeting between Shestov and Levinas is of the utmost significance. This is the time just before the Second World War, the time of “preparations” for holocaust. This is the time when one Jewish thinker reads the book of another Jewish thinker. The thinker who is criticising the pretensions of philosophy accusing it of having claims to encompass the totality reads the thinker who has in his intensive, congenial, passionate reading of Kierkegaard also striven to express his “existential” criticism of the pretensions of philosophy.

At the beginning of his review Levinas hints at the connections between the critique of rationality and the war: “The moral crisis which was caused by the war of 1914 gave to people a very clear sense of inefficiency of reason [*raison*], of the fundamental incongruity between rationalistic civilisation and the demands of the soul lost in the anonymity of the general” (87). He then adds that he is aware that the Danish thinker aims at something essentially more subtle. Kierkegaard’s philosophy, which is according to Levinas hard to summarise, evades the naivety of rationalism and doctrines of violence – this phrase already suggests Nazism, which was the subject of his intelligent critique in his work *Quelques réflexions sur la philosophie de l’hitlerisme* published in 1934 – as well as the naivety and doctrines that are simplistic reactions to that crisis. Levinas presents Kierkegaard’s thought primarily as a necessity of raising existential questions, regardless of our answers to them: “Is my speculation legitimately separated from condition humaine, from human destiny and its death?” In his answer he argues against this supposition and adds : “We should respect the internal significance of events which constitute our existence, before we interpret them according to [*en fonction de*] the universal order constructed by reason” (88). Levinas then defines Shestov’s reading of Kierkegaard as a “struggle fought by soul, abandoned in despair in the world governed by reason and ethics – i.e. governed by

Necessity, this consequence of the original sin, as a struggle for the freedom of the soul which should not have been limited by logic or morals.”

However, Levinas’ review is not an univocal approbation, despite his numerous praises (“Mr. Shestov is particularly good at defining the peripeteias of that struggle, Kierkegaard’s oscillations between Abraham and Socrates” [89]; “this explanations surely understand one of the essential aspects of Kierkegaard’s thought” [*ibid.*]; “I highly recommend this book to all readers who would like to rethink and revive their Judaism as a religion” [90]; “in Shestov’s existential thought the religious philosophy re-evaluates the questions of salvation, i.e. of the very message of Judaism” [90]. Levinas praises the book’s vivacity, poeticism and the symphonic unity and writes politely that “in it we feel – which is not its least attraction – the ideas of M. Shestov,” although he is not astonished by that because he is “one of those who do know Shestov’s work and his fight for Jerusalem and against Athens” (89).⁴ He critically adds, however: “... between those thinkers – namely Shestov and Kierkegaard – there exists an irrefutable similarity which often causes certain confusions.”

At the end of his text we sense the philosopher’s fear of a religious man, the “helenised” Jew’s fear of the uncivilised wildness of Shestov’s paradoxes, and last but not least, one might also detect the Jew’s fear of a Jewish thinker who in his openness to the radical paradox remains open for Christianity. (“Mr. Shestov, a Jewish philosopher, is certainly not a philosopher of Judaism. In the heritage of Jerusalem he does not distinguish the Old Testament from the New one” [90]. This fear is even more crucial because Levinas undoubtedly realises that Shestov’s work raises “the questions which are fundamentally important for every religious philosophy; these questions define the level where the fact of religion itself [*le fait religieux lui-meme*], is posited” (90).

The grounding of Levinas' objection to Shestov's thought could perhaps be summarized by a bit too daring extrapolation and it could be argued that in his opinion *philosophy could not be abandoned to the wild unpredictability of God, of His absolute power, without its abdication to the logos which is its substance* (one could see here the programme of Levinas' proper synthesis of Hellenism and Judaism): "... for example, we are not utterly convinced that knowledge for Kierkegaard is simply identified with evil and that it is not rather indispensable and fortunate element of his dialectics" (86).

We can more or less agree with Levinas' fear and his objection to Shestov, an objection which, of course, does not focus *on the interpretation* of Kierkegaard only but also *on the fundamental structure of philosophy itself*. Yet we can also disagree. However the main problem lies elsewhere. When we read Levinas' critique of Shestov's argument, the critique of his path at the cross-road as defined by Levinas, the question arises whether such an alternative – logos on one side, and a super-logical, absolute God of revelation on the other, Socrates on one, Abraham on the other, Athens on one side, Jerusalem on the other – *whether such an alternative properly understands and summarises Shestov's thought at all*.

* * *

In order to understand the real character of Shestov's fundamental alternative one could knock on every door. With other words: the old master is relentlessly repeating himself, and he is doing this with all the passion and intensity characteristic of all genuine thinkers. One of the proper entrances is surely the text *Parmenides in chains* – one of the most important Shestov's thematisations of philosophy. It was published as a separate book and it also represents the first chapter of his important work *Athens and Jerusalem*. The title of the work openly alludes to

Aechylus' drama *Prometeus desmotes*, *Prometheus in chains*, and with its conflation of metaphors hints at the horizon in which Shestov reads philosophy. This texture of literature and philosophy is not only alluded in the title of Shestov's essay but also in the fact that the title emphasizes the poet-thinker who has written his thoughts in hexameters – a poet-thinker who has been proclaimed for a mere philosopher and a poete manqué by a more recent generations which were insensitive to the specific literariness of archaic literature. The summary of this essay is simple. With words of Shestov himself taken from the introduction to his *Athens and Jerusalem*: “*Parmenides in chains* endeavours to show that great philosophers have lost in their race for knowledge the Creator's most precious gift – freedom.”⁵

It appears that Levinas was right. However, this is only an appearance. If the essay is read more closely, Shestov's treatment of philosophical texts reveals itself in a kind of symbolic condensation. In this text the Russian philosopher almost does not speak about Parmenides. Using more or less Aristotelian glasses (the work is also introduced by a quotation from Aristotle “necessity does not obey persuasions”), Shestov ignores mystical dimension of pre-philosophical, sapiential insight and projects to Parmenides the issues of modernity, but only *to paradoxically criticise the Aristotelian understanding* and to emphasize the possibility of utterly other philosophical insight found *in Plato*: “Aristotle would bless our knowledge and Plato would curse it” (340). Aristotle's criticism of Parmenides – as if Parmenides is forced to follow the phenomena and as if he was forced similarly to other pre-Socratic thinkers into the direction of Aristotelian ontology by the truth itself – this Aristotelian criticism is only a disclosure of that which Aristotle himself, “this high priest of visible and invisible church of all who think” (29) should have been criticising. Shestov asks us: “Why does the truth have power over Parmenides and Alexander and why do not Parme-

nides and Alexander have power over the truth” (340)? Aristotle was the man “who knew the bitterness of the insult” and the worst insult he experienced is described in Shestov’s dramatic account of Academy’s disputes as *Plato’s* invention of transcendence. With Shestov’s words: “How to force Plato to stop talking? How to force him to submit himself to necessity not only in the visible, empirical world but also in thoughts where he should give to necessity all the honours it is entitled to? Necessity is not a necessity to those who sleep but to those who are awake. And those who are awake, those who see necessity understand what necessity really is (*istinnoe suščee*), while Plato with his impudence and effrontery leads us away from everything that really exists to the realm of fantastic, chimerical, illusionary and therefore fake” (342).

The story is then transported to modern philosophy and is too long to be summarised here. But the crucial thing has already been said. Shestov’s critique of rationality stems from the radically envisaged absoluteness of the transcendence which is in the majority of Shestov’s texts stylized into the otherness of the Biblical God. In *Parmenides in chains* this is not the case. The work reveals the radical deliverance of thought which transposes Shestov’s usual self-portrait, i.e. thinking of God in the tradition of Augustinianism and nominalism, to the very root of Western *thought, before every dichotomy of thought and revelation*: “It is obvious that the most unbearable and horrible thought for Aristotle was the thought that our terrestrial life is not the ultimate, final, real life and that it is possible, to a certain extent, to wake up from it as we wake up from the sleep into the state of awakening... Plato’s thought about ‘dreamers’ *undermines the very basis of human thought*” (346).

Shestov obviously relegates to Plato some of the legacies of “the father Parmenides” – without inauguration of the Being which devaluates the world into appearance and transforms the

state of being awoken to the ecstasy of the only One otherwise his understanding of that dialectics of the sleep and awakening would not be possible. And to be honest, Shestov appears to be aware of some of those issues. *Parmenides desmótes* is – at least as the father of Platonism – at the same time *Parmenides lyómenos* (= Parmenides set free, Parmenides without chains) despite the fact that Shestov claimed the opposite. And this very trick makes Levinas' critique of Shestov too short.

Thus the question of the relationship between thought and revelation in the work of Shestov should not be left to Levinas' formulation of the question – which is, of course, expressed in even more simple form by some other historians of the Russian thought.

Without close reading of Shestov's texts thought should not be exploited against revelations or the opposite; on the contrary, the question should be asked to *what extent, according to Shestov, the thought, philosophical thought alone, is able to undermine "the very basis" of the thought itself.*

Jerusalem and Athens could perhaps both be found in Greece. And perhaps Levinas should have been even more afraid.

Translated by the author and Nike K. Pokorn

- 1 The book was translated by T. Rageot and B. Schloezer, Paris: Vrin 1936.
- 2 Levinas' review, which was first published in *Revue des études juives*, II, July-December 1937, n. 3, pp. 139-141, is quoted from the anthology of Levinas' texts, which was published under the title *L'intrigue de l'infini* by Marie-Anne Lescourret, Paris: Flammarion 1994, pp. 87-90.
- 3 I am referring to J. F. Gould, *Levinas en Barth. Een godsdienstwijzgerige en etische vergelijking*, 1984; German translation: *Emmanuel Levinas und Karl Barth*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag 1992, and G. Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology*, Cambridge 1995.
- 4 Cf. similar judgment by S. N. Bulgakov, in: *Nekotorie čerti religioznago mirovoznenija L. I. Šestova*, published in S. N. Bulgakov, *Sočinenija v dvuh tomah*, t. 1, Moskva 1993, p. 521.
- 5 *Afini i Ierusalim, Predslovie*, v: L. Šestov, *Sočinenija v dvuh tomah*, t. 1, Moskva 1993, p. 332.

Gorazd Kocijančič

SUMMARY

The article attempts to analyse the text by Emanuel Levinas focussing on Shestov's book *Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle (Vox clamantis in deserto)* published in 1937 in *Revue des études juives*, II, July-December 1937, no. 3, pp. 139-141. It is argued that this text by Levinas reveals some basic tenets of Shestov's and his own thought – and therefore also post-modern thought in general. It is further claimed that the grounding of Levinas' objection to Shestov's thought – his "fear" – could be summarized in the thesis that in his opinion philosophy could not be abandoned to the wild unpredictability of God, of His absolute power, without its abdication to the logos which is its substance (one could also see here the programme of Levinas' proper synthesis of Hellenism and Judaism). This argument proves fallible when reading some fundamental passages in *Parmenides in Chains* by Shestov. According to Kocijančič, Shestov's critique of rationality stems from the radically envisaged absoluteness of the transcendence", although it is true that in the majority of Shestov's texts this absoluteness is stylized into the otherness of the Biblical God; in *Parmenides in Chains*, however, this is not the case. *Parmenides in Chains*, contrary to other texts by Shestov, reveals the deliverance of the radical thought which transposes itself to the very root of Western thought, before every dichotomy of thought and revelation.



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HUSSERL, CHESTOV ET LE PROBLÈME DE LA RELIGION

Le type de rapport que Léon Chestov entretient avec le fondateur de la phénoménologie, Edmund Husserl, trouve une illustration particulièrement significative dans les questions de la signification et de la vérité des religions. Certes, d'un point de vue historique, on sait que Chestov est, en France, le premier des intellectuels en provenance de l'Europe de l'Est à faire paraître, dans une revue française, une étude explicitement consacrée à Husserl, étude qui ne passa pas inaperçue aux yeux des lecteurs français, et plus particulièrement d'un élève de Husserl à Göttingen, Jean Hering¹.

Le titre de l'article de Chestov est déjà significatif – « *Memento mori* (À propos de la théorie de la connaissance d'Edmond Husserl) »² – et présente les lignes principales d'une interprétation existentielle de la phénoménologie. En revanche, d'un point de vue philosophique, on sait peut-être moins – et c'est là notre

hypothèse de travail – combien Chestov, en thématissant, à sa manière, le problème des sources de la vérité et du fondement même de la réalité, interroge la phénoménologie de manière radicale, pour la mettre devant ses intentions les plus fondamentales. C'est à ce titre que Chestov tient une place à part entière dans la première réception de Husserl en France. Or, parmi les interrogations que Chestov adresse à Husserl, il est remarquable que le problème de la religion occupe une place centrale. Il s'agira donc moins ici d'examiner la vérité ou la pertinence, d'un point de vue strictement husserlien³, de la lecture que propose Chestov de Husserl que de comprendre, particulièrement en ce qui concerne le thème de la religion, en quoi son œuvre rejoint certaines préoccupations majeures de la phénoménologie⁴.

Si Husserl a pu dire de Chestov qu'il était son « Antipode »⁵, c'est sans doute parce qu'il lui adressait, sur plusieurs points importants de sa pensée, certaines objections fondamentales. Parmi celles-ci, il faut au moins en retenir quatre qui forment, en fait, les thèmes principaux de son programme de lecture de la phénoménologie. Premièrement, Chestov conteste la manière dont Husserl réfute les approches psychologues de la signification et s'appuie, pour cela, sur les états de conscience modifiés, comme le rêve. Deuxièmement, Chestov insiste sur l'implication métaphysique de la démarche anti-psychologiste de Husserl. Troisièmement, il pointe l'incapacité de la phénoménologie à considérer le problème de la signification des religions (et donc à poser la question de la vérité d'une religion). Enfin, l'interprétation de Chestov critique l'impossibilité, pour Husserl, d'accorder une place philosophique à l'affectivité et de rendre compte de ce que le philosophe russe nomme l'existence, parfois assimilée à la notion de « vie ».

Il n'est pas possible, dans le cadre de cet article, de développer de manière détaillée l'ensemble de ces critiques. L'analyse suivante propose plutôt un parcours en deux moments. Dans un

premier temps, il importera de comprendre le présupposé qui est au principe de la perspective herméneutique dans laquelle Chestov envisage Husserl et qui réside dans le clivage entre vérité logique et vérité subjective. Nous serons ici confronté à un problème philosophique central, celui de la capacité d'une philosophie – donc aussi d'une phénoménologie – à envisager les différentes modalités de l'existence et, en particulier, le caractère irréductible de sa dimension affective. Dans un second temps, il conviendra de montrer que la manière dont Chestov aborde le problème de la religion dans la phénoménologie découle directement de ce clivage : la question de la vérité devient celle de la vérité des religions. En ce sens, Chestov applique la conception idéaliste de la vérité au problème de la signification des religions et dénonce les apories auxquelles conduit une notion exclusivement logique de la vérité.

Vérité logique et vérité subjective

Le but de cette première partie est donc d'indiquer que Chestov envisage la pensée de Husserl selon une distinction fondamentale entre vérité logique et vérité subjective. Pour le montrer, il faut d'abord observer qu'il appuie constamment son interprétation de l'ensemble de la phénoménologie sur deux textes : d'abord l'article que Husserl publie en 1911 sur *La philosophie comme science rigoureuse* dans lequel il lutte contre l'historicisme – en insistant sur le caractère anhistorique des vérités logiques – et fixe l'idéal grec de sa pensée qui assigne à la philosophie la tâche d'une science universelle et absolument fondée, portant sur le sens de la totalité de ce qui est, du monde et de la place de l'homme dans le monde. Ensuite, c'est en fonction de cet idéal que Chestov aborde le premier tome des *Recherches logiques*, les *Prolégomènes à la logique pure* (1900), où Husserl se propose d'ouvrir la voie à une nouvelle façon de concevoir la logique en engageant, au préalable, une réfutation de sa con-

ception psychologue. Pour Husserl, en assimilant les principes qui président à toute connaissance à des lois naturelles de la pensée, le psychologisme confond deux ordres de problèmes, à savoir le réel et l'idéal. Chestov voit bien que l'idéal, au sens de Husserl, n'est pas un fait psychique élevé au rang d'une hypothèse métaphysique et n'est pas non plus l'abstraction d'un fait psychique. Il faut comprendre l'idéal à partir de la distinction entre les actes subjectifs et l'unité objective de la signification, entre le jugement comme acte subjectif et son contenu objectif. Husserl ne s'occupe donc pas de la ressemblance entre les actes psychiques de plusieurs individus particuliers et ne multiplie pas la signification par le nombre d'individus. La signification n'est donc pas comprise comme contenu d'un acte psychique réel, mais comme un objet idéal qui peut être identifié, par des individus différents et à des époques différentes, comme étant le même. Les nombres et les vérités constituent, dans leur objectivité idéale, un domaine d'objets – non pas de choses ou de réalités empiriques – mais néanmoins d'objets. Cette objectivité idéale vaut en elle-même, indépendamment du sujet qui la pense et des opinions particulières que l'on peut prendre sur elle.

Selon Husserl, confondre ces deux ordres conduit à ruiner l'idée même de vérité. Autrement dit, il n'y a pas de sens à parler d'une vérité relative qui ne serait vraie que pour tel ou tel individu. Car, dans ce cas, la vérité ne serait rien d'autre que le résultat d'un acte de jugement. Or Chestov retient surtout des *Prolégomènes* l'affirmation du caractère « en soi » de la vérité, ce qui signifie qu'elle est ce qu'elle est, indifféremment au fait qu'elle soit pensée ou jugée. Il y a en effet, pour Husserl, des vérités idéales qui ne se rapportent pas au monde factuel. Indépendamment qu'il y ait un monde ou pas et indépendamment que ce monde demeure ce qu'il est ou n'est pas, la vérité $2+2=4$ vaut en elle-même comme une vérité idéale. Ces vérités, Husserl les considère comme des vérités *a priori* dans la mesure où elles

sont indépendantes des données de l'expérience empirique et applicables à toute chose rencontrée comme réalité factuelle, dans l'espace et dans le temps.

A ce propos, on pourra considérer l'exemple que Chestov présente comme un des lieux les plus importants de la critique existentielle de la phénoménologie. Il s'agit du principe de non-contradiction qui ne peut être dépendant d'une réalité particulière et contingente, mais qui jouit, conformément à ce que dit Husserl, d'une validité *a priori* justifiée dans une évidence. Husserl n'admet pas qu'un principe logique puisse n'être contraignant qu'à une époque donnée ou pour une culture donnée. Un jugement est donc dit vrai dans la mesure où il affirme être ce qui est ou que ce qui est ne peut être, en même temps, lui-même et son contraire. On parle ici d'une vérité logique dont les caractères sont la nécessité et l'intemporalité : la nécessité, car le jugement vrai logiquement ne peut être autre et l'intemporalité, puisqu'il revient à dire que deux propositions contradictoires ne peuvent être vraies, en même temps, et que ce qui a été ne peut pas ne pas avoir été. S'il est vrai que « Socrate a été empoisonné en -399 », cette proposition est vraie nécessairement et de manière intemporelle. Ce qui ne veut bien sûr pas dire que Socrate devait nécessairement être empoisonné en -399, mais ce qui veut simplement dire qu'il y a là une vérité qui ne peut plus être contredite et qui sera toujours vraie.

C'est donc sur la notion husserlienne d'évidence logique ou sur le thème de la qualité logique de la vérité en soi que Chestov fonde sa lecture de la phénoménologie. Or il est arrivé à Husserl, en particulier dans la préface rédigée pour la seconde édition des *Recherches logiques* de 1913, de reconnaître que sa conception de la vérité, telle qu'exposée dans ses *Prolégomènes*, souffrait d'une certaine « imperfection »⁶ ou d'une « insuffisance »⁷. Ainsi, Husserl admet, lui-même, mettre trop unilatéralement l'accent sur l'en soi de la vérité et son indépendance par rapport à tout sujet

qui la pense. A. de Wælhens a nettement pris la mesure de cette conception imparfaite de la « vérité en soi » lorsqu'il affirme que, dans les *Prolegomènes*, Husserl est « emporté par un sentiment logiciste » dont l'origine est à chercher dans « l'excès d'une tendance louable née chez Husserl de l'acharnement à combattre le psychologisme »⁸. Et, selon Chestov, c'est en raison de sa formation mathématique que Husserl est conduit à hypostasier la vérité en soi, en séparant la vérité du jugement et l'acte de jugement. Cette conception husserlienne des « idées » prend donc pour modèle privilégié l'objet mathématique et le considère, en somme, comme le paradigme à partir duquel toute réflexion sur les objets doit nécessairement se développer. C'est bien là, toujours pour Chestov, le postulat le plus constant du rationalisme de Husserl qui trouve confirmation dans le « pouvoir illimité de la raison »⁹ ou le principe de « l'absence de limites de la raison objective »¹⁰ du paragraphe 28 de la première *Recherche logique*.

Le sens de la position de Chestov tient donc en ceci qu'il critique la notion de vérité en soi et entend tirer les conséquences de cette conception imparfaite de la vérité. Si l'originalité de Husserl réside dans sa manière de rendre absolue la vérité et si la phénoménologie se définit par la vision de l'objectivité idéale dans une évidence, cela veut dire, pour Chestov, que, pour rendre la vérité universelle, la phénoménologie en fait l'objet exclusif de la raison. La conséquence de cette idéalisation de la raison en norme absolue et de cette dimension « extrême » du rationalisme revient à n'accorder qu'une valeur relative à la « vie » humaine. En définitive, cette interprétation du rationalisme de Husserl constitue déjà sa condamnation la plus profonde : il ne fait pas droit à ce qui résiste à une explicitation totale du monde et qui, pourtant, est la donnée première et irréductible pour l'homme, à savoir l'existence.

C'est ce que Chestov illustre à travers sa mise en question radicale de la vérité de nos jugements. Le texte est connu mais

mérite d'être cité à nouveau : « Or tout en admettant l'évidence et, par conséquent, la légalité logique des prétentions de la raison, nous sentons de tout notre être que l'évidence et la logique en certains cas ne garantissent pas le principal, “το τιμώτατον”, la *vérité de nos jugements*. De même qu'il arrive souvent que le dormeur proteste déjà en rêve contre cette unité de la conscience qui pénètre et organise toutes les perceptions si particulières de son rêve et, sans se rendre compte de ce qu'il fait, s'efforce, non plus de maintenir, mais de renverser cette conviction à lui imposée que l'unité de conscience garantit la vérité de la perception, de même le philosophe voit se dresser devant lui cette question : où chercher la vérité ? À qui, à quoi confier son destin ? Faut-il se soumettre aux exigences de la raison, ou bien, au risque de devenir la risée de tous et de paraître ridicule à ses propres yeux, faut-il refuser obéissance à la raison et la considérer non plus comme son maître légitime, mais comme une usurpatrice qui a excédé ses pouvoirs ? L'évidence soutenant la raison entre en lutte avec un sentiment obscur qui ne parvient pas à trouver sa justification. »¹¹

Chestov s'appuie ici sur un élément d'ordre affectif et envisage l'existence d'un « sentiment » qu'on ne peut justifier ni logiquement ni psychologiquement et qui porte préjudice aux prestations de la raison : l'existence se révèle dans un sentiment. Toutefois, le terme de « sentiment » recèle, en lui-même, une certaine ambiguïté. Plutôt que d'y entendre une faculté ou un mouvement affectif suscités par ce qui affecte – un objet particulier –, il faut voir qu'il se situe en deçà de toute détermination objective. L'existence se fait sentir et ce sentiment, n'ayant rien de commun avec l'évidence rationnelle, est particulièrement manifeste en ce qui concerne les questions ultimes de notre existence, telles la vie et la mort, la destinée, en un mot : l'historicité. On comprend mieux, désormais, le caractère énigmatique de la formule : « Memento mori » – « souviens-toi que tu es mortel ».

Ce n'est donc rien d'autre que l'histoire et le caractère fini de l'existence humaine qui mettent en doute la valeur absolue du savoir humain. Le philosophe se voit ainsi attribuer la mission de méditer au cœur de la finitude. De plus, c'est par le sentiment de sa propre finitude que l'être humain pourra se comprendre comme étant plus que ce qui est dit dans les principes de la pensée rationnelle.

Toutefois, il ne s'agit pas d'en conclure que l'homme s'étouffe dans ce sentiment fondamental de l'existence marquée par la finitude. L'existence consiste, pour l'homme, à réaliser sa propre volonté. Refusant l'identification de la vie et de la connaissance, ainsi que la prétention de la raison à posséder, exclusivement et exhaustivement, la vérité, l'homme s'enracine dans un désir de vivre. C'est là, non une vérité scientifique ou logique, mais une vérité métaphysique : l'homme veut vivre. C'est dire que la vérité, à ce niveau, n'a plus rien de nécessaire et d'obligatoire. Elle possède une signification personnelle et il y a, pour Chestov, une dimension possessive de la vérité qui devient conséquemment « ma » vérité. Il est aussi vrai, comme Philonenko l'a particulièrement bien montré, que la philosophie existentielle ne renonce pas à toute vérité, mais qu'elle lutte prioritairement contre l'interprétation idéaliste de la vérité qui la consacre en tant que vérité logique. L'approche de la vérité se situe désormais à un niveau existentiel et se rencontre dans l'épreuve même de l'existence. Le caractère personnel (ou la personnalité) de la vérité signifie qu'elle m'engage à vivre et à témoigner de ce désir fondamental du vivre. La vérité, à un niveau métaphysique, se présente au sujet comme une volonté de vivre et s'annonce dans ce qui entre en contradiction et en « lutte » avec ce que la raison reconnaît comme ses propres évidences¹².

En somme, le *memento* chestovien semble rejoindre la tradition de la définition de l'exercice spirituel de la mort qui reste, paradoxalement, le plus grand hommage que l'on puisse ren-

dre à la vie. Chestov veut mettre en évidence le caractère trop restrictif de la compréhension husserlienne de la rationalité, en montrant que si le projet de la phénoménologie de Husserl est bien celui d'une lutte contre les formes du naturalisme et, qu'à ce titre, elle se présente comme une porte de sortie du psychologisme ambiant de la fin du XIX^e siècle, elle se situe néanmoins en rupture par rapport à une conception de la philosophie comme sagesse. Ainsi, il est désormais manifeste que Chestov aborde le problème de la vérité chez Husserl à partir d'un clivage entre vérité logique et vérité subjective. D'où une conception particulière du sens de l'idéalisme de Husserl qui, selon Chestov, réside dans la prétention fondamentale de l'autonomie de la raison, avec sa validité et sa légalité propres, fondées sur ses propres vérités nécessaires et universelles, ainsi que dans la reconnaissance de l'idéal comme condition de possibilité de la connaissance objective en général. Toute réalité est donc pleinement déterminable par la raison ; toute réalité est susceptible de faire l'objet d'une détermination adéquate, en particulier d'un point de vue logique.

Le problème de la signification des religions

C'est à partir de cette distinction subtile entre le caractère logique et subjectif de la vérité que Chestov apprécie la place que Husserl accorde à la religion dans le cadre de la phénoménologie. Avec Chestov, le problème de la religion occupe une place centrale dans la première réception de Husserl en France, soit dès le milieu des années 20. En effet, un des caractères les plus marquants de l'attitude de Chestov face à Husserl est d'appliquer cette distinction entre vérité logique et vérité subjective au problème de la signification des religions. Les questions que pose Chestov à la phénoménologie deviennent alors les suivantes : comment une philosophie qui prétend atteindre le domaine

des vérités absolues et valables pour tous peut-elle considérer la signification des religions ? Si le mérite le plus important de Husserl est bien de ramener l'ensemble des problèmes philosophiques à celui de la signification du savoir, comment la phénoménologie se situe-t-elle vis-à-vis de la multiplicité des religions ? Ou encore : y-a-t-il une signification « en soi » de la religion ?

Le sens de ces interrogations doit sans doute se comprendre dans le cadre de la stratégie que Husserl développe dans la seconde partie de son article *La philosophie comme science rigoureuse*, dans laquelle il montre que les préjugés de type naturaliste ou psychologue ne sont pas les seuls à dissimuler le sens véritable du phénomène. Il est, en effet, des préjugés qui consistent à voir dans le phénomène le résultat d'une formation historique. Husserl refuse ainsi le titre de science rigoureuse à ce qu'il nomme ces « visions du monde » (« *Weltanschauung* ») qui, toutes, sont relatives à la multiplicité des époques de l'histoire. Chestov cite Husserl : « On voit aisément que l'historicisme, développé rigoureusement, conduit au subjectivisme sceptique. Les idées, les théories, les vérités, les sciences perdraient en ce cas, comme toutes les idées, leur signification absolue. Que l'idée possède une certaine signification, cela voudrait alors simplement dire qu'elle est une formation spirituelle, un fait, auquel on accorde un sens et qui, comme tel, détermine la pensée. En ce cas, il n'existe plus de signification comme telle, ou "en soi", qui est ce qu'elle est lors même que personne ne peut la réaliser et que nulle humanité historique ne la réalisa jamais. Et ceci se rapporte aussi bien au principe de contradiction et à toute la logique qui déjà sans cela est en pleine reconstruction. Et alors on est finalement obligé d'admettre que les principes logiques de non-contradiction, se transformeront en leur opposé. Alors, toutes les affirmations que nous émettons maintenant, toutes les possibilités que nous examinons et prenons en considéra-

tion, peuvent se trouver privées de toute signification. Et ainsi de suite. Nulle nécessité de continuer cette démonstration et de répéter ici ce qui a déjà été dit autre part. »¹³ C'est-à-dire, comme Husserl l'indique lui-même dans son article de 1911, dans les *Prolégomènes*.

Husserl poursuit sa réflexion en précisant que l'histoire, considérée comme la science empirique de l'esprit par excellence, n'est pas capable, par ses propres moyens, de décider dans un sens ou dans l'autre s'il y a lieu de distinguer la religion, comme forme particulière de la culture, de la religion comme idée, c'est-à-dire en tant qu'elle possède sa signification propre et vraie. La remarque précédemment citée laisse donc entendre à Chestov que Husserl étend sa conception de l'idéal à la question de la religion et que, dans cette ligne, la position de Husserl quant à l'objectivité des lois logiques demeure le modèle de toute réflexion sur les objets, y compris en ce qui concerne les questions de la signification absolue de la religion. Toute réflexion ne peut se développer qu'à partir du modèle logique de la pensée.

C'est dans cette perspective que Chestov applique le problème philosophique de la vérité à la question de la multiplicité des religions et c'est aussi la raison pour laquelle il estime que les phénoménologues cherchent absolument à attribuer une « signification en soi » à la religion. L'attitude contraire conduirait, en effet, à une forme de relativisme dont précisément la phénoménologie a pour but de se défaire. Les religions seraient alors le fruit de formations culturelles relatives à des moments de l'histoire humaine et à des lieux géographiquement situés. Une chose apparaît donc clairement à Chestov : en insistant si fortement sur l'importance de la théorie de la connaissance, comme discipline précédant la métaphysique, Husserl ne pourrait admettre un Dieu dont la raison ne puisse pas témoigner. Chestov avance même que, de ce point de vue, toutes les religions positives s'efforcent, elles aussi, d'atteindre une connaissance

scientifique de la vérité, c'est-à-dire une connaissance susceptible de s'imposer à tout homme raisonnable. Voilà pourquoi Chestov écrit : « L'idée de Husserl sur la "signification en soi" de la religion, n'a pas été certainement inventée par lui. Mais selon sa coutume, il exprime d'une manière franche, nette, presque brutale le but des aspirations des religions positives et même de celles qui s'imaginaient se maintenir dans les régions les plus élevées de la plus fantastique des mystiques. Car toutes, elles aspirent avant tout à ce que leurs vérités aient une valeur objective, persuadées qu'elles sont, que le "reste viendra". Et toutes cesseraient d'aimer et d'adorer leur dieu, dès qu'elles se verraient obligées de renoncer à la signification (c'est-à-dire admise par la raison) de la religion. »¹⁴

Plus de dix ans plus tard, dans son article de 1938 en hommage à Husserl, c'est encore à cette analyse que Chestov demeure fidèle : la religion est signifiante dans la mesure où elle est fondée sur l'évidence. Il écrit explicitement : « C'est à la raison de décider quelle religion est signifiante, quelle religion possède une signification en soi, si la religion en général a une signification quelconque, dans quelle religion se fait entendre la voix de Dieu, dans quelle religion la voix de l'homme se fait passer pour la voix de Dieu. »¹⁵

On le voit, le but de Chestov est de montrer que la conception husserlienne de la vérité n'est pas applicable à l'ensemble des domaines de l'existence et que, au moins sur la question des religions, elle conduit la phénoménologie à entrer en contradiction avec elle-même : alors qu'elle prétend s'ériger en science des vérités absolues, elle demeure dans l'incapacité de poser la question de la signification des religions. Chestov précise son argument de cette manière : « Husserl, à notre grand regret, n'a pas encore écrit sa "Phénoménologie de la religion" ; j'ose affirmer qu'il ne l'écrira jamais. Il faut croire qu'il ne se jugera pas en droit de poser à sa raison, en dehors de laquelle il n'y a et il

ne peut y avoir d'autre autorité, le problème de la "signification" des religions. Et il ne prendra pas sur lui de répondre, d'autant plus, à la question : laquelle des religions existantes possède une "signification en soi", où faut-il chercher la vérité suprême : dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, dans le Coran, dans les Védas ou bien dans *Also sprach Zarathustra* ? Et néanmoins, il prétend que seule sa phénoménologie est capable de résoudre nos doutes sur la vérité suprême. »¹⁶ Chestov pose donc le problème du relativisme et tire de cette situation une impossibilité : celle, pour la phénoménologie, de se prononcer sur la validité de la religion. En somme, il s'agit d'abandonner la conception d'une vérité universelle et purement objective, c'est-à-dire de ces vérités « que détruisent la rouille et les mites ».

Les développements précédents suffisent à mettre au jour un aspect essentiel de la démarche de Chestov : celui-ci attribue une fonction épistémologique au fait, pour le phénoménologue, de s'intéresser à la religion. En effet, s'interroger sur le problème de la vérité des religions revient à mettre radicalement en cause le mouvement d'objectivation que, à en croire Chestov, la phénoménologie attesterait dans son idéal épistémologique de savoir absolu. C'est du même coup la philosophie de la religion qui reçoit ici une sorte de recommandation : il ne lui est pas permis d'élaborer un système rationnel de la religion qui ne tiendrait pas compte de la question de la subjectivité, en tant qu'elle sent la réalité voulante de son existence vivante. On ne peut approcher Dieu sans rapport aux éléments subjectifs des individus, qui sont avant tout des êtres voulants.

De ce point de vue, il est particulièrement instructif de rapprocher, très brièvement, le travail de Chestov de celui que Jean Hering publie en 1926 sous le titre *Phénoménologie et philosophie religieuse. Études sur la théorie de la connaissance religieuse*¹⁷. Souvent considéré comme le premier livre, en langue française, exclusivement consacré à la phénoménologie, cet ouvrage a

non seulement pour ambition d'introduire le public français aux concepts fondamentaux de la phénoménologie, tant celle de Husserl que celle de ses disciples rassemblés autour du *Jahrbuch*. Mais il s'agit également de renouveler, précisément grâce à la méthode de la phénoménologie, le problème de la philosophie de la religion. Or, contrairement à Chestov, Hering vise à instaurer un réalisme phénoménologique et imprime à la phénoménologie une tendance descriptive. En disciple de Husserl, mais à l'époque de Göttingen, il considère la phénoménologie comme la discipline capable de penser ce que « voir » signifie ainsi que, dans un même mouvement, la diversité de ce que la phénoménologie « donne » à voir. Selon lui, c'est par l'intentionnalité que la phénoménologie ouvre le registre de l'essence et qu'elle demeure fidèle à son mot d'ordre de « retour aux choses mêmes ».

En effet, en saisissant les choses en tant qu'elles apparaissent à l'immanence de la conscience et en les considérant telles qu'elles se constituent dans les actes par lesquels elles sont visées, la phénoménologie ne peut plus voir les choses comme de simples faits naturels. Elle est en mesure d'approcher l'objectivité dans son essence : les actes par lesquels nous visons un objet visent aussi une essence, capable de lui donner ce que Husserl appelle son « sens », inaccessible dans l'attitude naturelle. Animée d'un idéal de connaissance objectivement valable, la phénoménologie est d'abord, pour Hering, une science eidétique et sa méthode réside avant tout dans l'intuition des essences. Cependant, l'essence n'est ni une forme ni une image, pas plus qu'elle n'a un caractère métaphysique. Elle n'appartient pas, non plus, à la sphère psychologique, mais elle relève d'un domaine d'idéalité. En définitive, Hering voit dans cette approche le biais par lequel il est permis de restituer une certaine primauté à l'expérience originaire : la phénoménologie considère les essences telles qu'elles sont intuitivement données.

C'est par cette orientation initialement réaliste de la phéno-

ménologie que Hering entend renouveler les connaissances objectives dans le domaine de la religion. En ce sens, à l'encontre des approches sociologiques recherchant la cause sociale des phénomènes ou des interprétations psychologues de la religion qui la reconduisent aux processus naturels de l'activité psychique, Hering projette de déterminer le phénomène religieux dans ce qu'il a de spécifique : il y a, dans la religion, des données que ni la psychologie, ni la sociologie, ni l'historicisme ou encore le pragmatisme ne sont en mesure d'expliquer. Cette analyse du sens intrinsèque du phénomène religieux, en tant qu'il ne relève pas uniquement des cadres du psychologisme, de l'historicisme ou de la sociologie, est donc à la source d'une nouvelle manière d'envisager la problématique même de la philosophie de la religion. Loin de conduire à un subjectivisme du sentiment réduisant la religion à un état d'âme, la position de Hering cherche à examiner la structure intentionnelle des actes et des objets que vise spécifiquement la conscience religieuse.

On le voit, le travail de Hering diffère sensiblement de celui de Chestov, mais une étude plus précise de leur rapport pourrait apporter des éléments philosophiques importants pour comprendre la pensée de Chestov et sa place dans l'introduction de Husserl en France. De la même manière, et contrairement à Chestov, Hering s'appuie sur l'intentionnalité pour insister sur l'objet religieux et il ne fait pas de doute que Chestov ne puisse accepter une approche essentiellement réaliste de la religion, sous peine de faire dépendre Dieu d'un horizon mondain et de le réduire à l'objet d'une intention : Dieu ne peut être vu, il doit être cherché au niveau de la vie subjective, dans sa dimension affective, c'est-à-dire au niveau de ce qu'il nomme « existence ». Toutefois, il faudrait également montrer que Hering et Chestov se rapprochent au moins sur deux points. Premièrement, les deux philosophes refusent de plaider en faveur d'une idée rationnelle de la religion, ce que Hering argumente en évoquant

le principe d'intuition donatrice originaire. Deuxièmement, ils insistent conjointement sur la nécessité de faire appel aux éléments proprement « subjectifs » de la religion, ce qui signifie que la religion ne peut être considérée comme un élément extérieur à l'homme.

Conclusion

Parce qu'elle interroge le sens d'une interprétation exclusivement idéaliste de la vie, ainsi que le sens de la vérité et du *telos* de toute démarche de la raison autonome, la philosophie existentielle de Chestov s'inscrit dans une dynamique de contestation des formes les plus radicales du rationalisme. On le comprend mieux, désormais : la phénoménologie de Husserl demeure, pour Chestov, un rationalisme. Il convient, dès lors, de lutter avec détermination contre le principe qui la motive de part en part : la théorie husserlienne de l'existence idéale de la vérité une et objective. Par là, Chestov refuse de considérer l'interprétation rationaliste du savoir comme étant la seule capable de fournir une vérité définitive sur ce qui est et ce qui n'est pas, ce qui est possible et ce qui ne l'est pas. Sa conception de la phénoménologie est donc finalement assez claire : il s'agit d'un idéalisme visant à établir l'autonomie fondamentale de la raison (logique) et à reconnaître dans l'idéal la condition de possibilité de toute connaissance objective en général. Face à un tel idéalisme, fondé sur la vision de l'objectivité idéale dans une évidence, Chestov dénonce l'extension de ses principes explicatifs à l'ensemble des régions de l'existence. Il montre que si la phénoménologie peut bien trouver une certaine justification en ce qui concerne la théorie de la connaissance de l'objet et de sa présence – dont le paradigme est logique –, elle se situe néanmoins en rupture par rapport à une conception de la philosophie comme sagesse. Selon Chestov, c'est au moment où les prétentions de la phénoménologie s'affichent avec le plus d'étendue – en particulier

dans la seconde partie de l'article de 1911 – et au moment où la phénoménologie tente de développer un système de vérités absolues et universelles, qu'elle conduit à une forme de relativisme portant sur les questions ultimes de l'existence.

Or notre étude a voulu montrer que, face à la priorité absolue du caractère logique de la vérité que Chestov n'a cessé de déceler chez Husserl, le problème de la religion revêt un enjeu majeur. Il découle directement de la manière dont Chestov envisage la question de la vérité qui, dans ce cas, devient celle de la vérité des religions. De ce point de vue, il convenait de montrer que Chestov attribue une fonction épistémologique au fait, pour le phénoménologue, de s'intéresser à la religion. Par conséquent, s'interroger sur le problème de la vérité des religions conduit à mettre radicalement en cause le mouvement d'objectivation qui, selon Chestov, définit l'idéal épistémologique de savoir absolu de la phénoménologie.

Ce faisant, Chestov propose de développer une philosophie de la religion se situant en deçà de tout système rationnel de la religion qui ne tiendrait pas compte de la question de la subjectivité, en tant qu'elle sent la réalité voulante de son existence vivante. On ne peut approcher Dieu sans rapport aux éléments subjectifs des individus qui sont, avant tout, des êtres voulants. Dans cette perspective, le rapprochement que nous avons opéré entre Chestov et Hering a permis d'indiquer que Chestov ne peut accepter une approche réaliste et essentielle de la religion, sous peine de faire dépendre Dieu d'un horizon mondain. Chestov l'a donc bien pressenti : la question de la religion n'est pas pour la phénoménologie une simple thématique parmi d'autres, mais elle conduit, bel et bien, à s'interroger sur l'intention fondamentale du projet phénoménologique en tant que tel, ainsi qu'à une mise à l'épreuve de ses capacités d'analyse.

- 1 Voir J. Hering, « *Sub specie aeterni*. Réponse à une critique de la philosophie de Husserl », *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, t. 7, 1927, pp. 351-364.
- 2 L. Chestov, « *Memento mori* (À propos de la théorie de la connaissance d'Edmond Husserl) », *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, t. 51, janvier-février 1926, pp. 5-62. Désormais *Memento mori*.
- 3 Voir sur ce point notre ouvrage *Les usages de l'intentionnalité. Recherches sur la première réception de Husserl en France*, Louvain : Peeters (coll. « Bibliothèque Philosophique de Louvain » n° 67), 2005.
- 4 Les relations entre Chestov et Husserl ont déjà fait l'objet de certaines études thématiques. Nous renvoyons, par exemple, à F. Déchet, « Sestov critico di Husserl », *Giornale di metafisica*, n° 2-3, 1975, pp. 209-243 ; A. Philonenko, *La philosophie du malheur*, t. 1 : *Chestov et les problèmes de la philosophie existentielle*, Paris : Vrin, 1998 ; et, plus récemment, R. Fotiade, « Évidence et conscience. Léon Chestov et la critique existentielle de la théorie de l'évidence chez Husserl », dans : N. Struve (dir.), *Léon Chestov. Un philosophe pas comme les autres ?*, *Cahiers de l'émigration russe* 3, Paris : Institut d'études slaves, 1996, pp. 111-125, ainsi que R. Fotiade, *Conceptions of the Absurd : from Surrealism to the Existential thought of Chestov and Fondane*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 5 « Husserl an Schestow, 3.VII.1929 », dans : *Husserliana Dokumente. Band 3. Briefwechsel VI*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Nijhoff, La Haye, 1994, p. 371.
- 6 E. Husserl, « Préface à la seconde édition », *Recherches logiques*, t. 2, trad. par H. Elie, A.L.Kelkel et R. Schérer, Paris : PUF, 1962, p. XVII. Rien n'indique, à notre connaissance, que Chestov a lu cette seconde édition.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. XV.
- 8 A. de Waelhens, *Phénoménologie et vérité. Essai sur l'évolution de l'idée de vérité chez Husserl et Heidegger*, Paris : PUF, 1953, p. 15. À certains moments, on peut avoir l'impression que de Waelhens s'adresse directement à Chestov, en particulier lorsqu'il écrit (p. 9) : « Cela signifie qu'il [Husserl] n'a jamais songé non plus, si confus et incertains que soient encore à ce stade de son histoire bien des points de la doctrine, à séparer le réel et l'idée, à professer une forme quelconque de platonisme. Les vérités en soi ont beau être éternelles et définir un système, elles ne sont pas en dehors du réel et le réel ne leur est pas aberrant et c'est pourquoi, pour peu que nos actes soient au contact du réel qu'ils prétendent viser, ces actes doivent retrouver ces vérités en lui. »
- 9 *Memento mori*, p. 53.
- 10 E. Husserl, *Recherches logiques*, t. 2, p. 105. Husserl ajoute : « Tout ce qui est, est connaissable "en soi" et son être est un être déterminé quant à son contenu, un être qui s'appuie sur telles et telles "vérité en soi". »

- 11 *Memento mori*, p. 45.
- 12 Comment ne pas penser ici à la manière dont l'œuvre de Benjamin Fondane, sans doute le seul « disciple » – pour parler ainsi – de Chestov, reprend ce thème du « droit de vivre », du « droit de l'homme qui veut vivre » compris comme objection irréfutable au règne de la logique. Voir, par exemple, B. Fondane, « Kafka et la rationalité absolue », dans : *Deucalion. Cahiers de Philosophie*, Paris, 1947, pp. 125-140 ; repris dans *Baudelaire et l'expérience du gouffre*, Paris : Édition complexe, 1994, pp. 347-362. Sur l'interprétation que propose Fondane de Husserl, en particulier à partir de *La Conscience malheureuse* de 1936, on lira notre article « Conscience malheureuse et conscience intentionnelle : Fondane, lecteur de Husserl et de Levinas », dans : *Cahiers Benjamin Fondane*, n° 8, 2005, p. 115-125.
- 13 *Memento mori*, p. 52. Cette traduction du texte de Husserl est due au traducteur de l'article de Chestov, Boris de Schoelzer.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 L. Chestov, « À la mémoire d'un grand philosophe : Edmund Husserl », *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, t. 129, janvier-juin 1940, p. 20.
- 16 *Memento mori*, p. 54.
- 17 J. Hering, *Phénoménologie et philosophie religieuse. Études sur la théorie de la connaissance religieuse*, Paris : Alcan, 1926.

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article examine la place que Chestov accorde à la question de la religion dans son interprétation existentielle de la phénoménologie de Husserl et procède, pour ce faire, en deux étapes. Premièrement, il s'agit de comprendre le présupposé qui est au principe de la perspective herméneutique dans laquelle Chestov envisage Husserl et qui correspond à la distinction radicale de la qualité logique de la vérité et de sa qualité subjective. L'enjeu est de comprendre, avec Chestov, les limites de la théorie husserlienne de l'existence idéale de la vérité et d'insister sur les différentes modalités de l'existence, en particulier en ce qui relève du caractère irréductible de sa dimension affective. Deuxièmement, il convient de montrer que la manière dont Chestov aborde le problème de la religion, chez Husserl, découle directement de sa conception de la vérité : la question de la vérité devient celle de la vérité des religions. En ce sens, Chestov applique la conception idéaliste de la vérité au problème de la signification des religions et tente de montrer en quoi ce problème n'est pas, pour la phénoménologie, une simple thématique parmi d'autres, puisqu'elle conduit à interroger le sens total du projet phénoménologique, en tant que tel.

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POVZETEK

Članek govori o mestu, ki ga je Šestov v svoji eksistencialni interpretaciji Husserlove fenomenologije namenil vprašanju religije. Obravnava poteka v dveh korakih. Prvič, gre za doumetje predpostavke, ki vzpostavlja hermenevtično perspektivo, v kateri Šestov motri Husserla in ki ustreza korenitemu razločku med logično in subjektivno kvaliteto resnice. Gre torej za to, da skupaj s Šestovom doumemo meje Husserlove teorije idealnega obstoja resnice in vztrajamo pri različnih načinih njenega obstoja, predvsem kar zadeva ireduktibilni značaj njene afektivne dimenzije. Drugič, članek skuša pokazati, da to, kako se Šestov loti problema religije pri Husserlu, izhaja neposredno iz njegovega razumevanja resnice: vprašanje resnice postane vprašanje resnice religij. V tem smislu Šestov naobrbe idealistično razumevanje resnice na problem pomena religij in si prizadeva pokazati, da ta problem za fenomenologijo ni le eno izmed tematskih področij, saj njegova obravnava pelje v prevpraševanje smisla fenomenološkega projekta kot takega.



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IL RAPPORTO MARITAIN – CHESTOV: TRACCE BIOGRAFICHE E POSSIBILI AFFINITÀ INTELLETTUALI

Volendo rintracciare un collegamento storico tra il filosofo personalista francese e l'intellettuale russo in lotta contro tutti i sistemi fondati sulla ragione, tale collegamento passa senza dubbio per la figura del poeta Benjamin Fondane. Lev Chestov e Jacques Maritain avevano anche altre amicizie in comune¹, ma Fondane, per la particolare sintonia umana che ebbe con entrambi i pensatori, riveste a tal proposito un'importanza fondamentale².

Fu durante una lunga traversata atlantica, di ritorno dall'Argentina (ottobre 1936), che Fondane ebbe la prima occasione di presentare a Maritain, conosciuto da poco, il pensiero del suo maestro Chestov. Solo pochi mesi più tardi, a Meudon, sarà sempre Fondane ad introdurre Chestov in persona a casa Maritain (6 marzo 1937). Durante il breve colloquio, Maritain,

conoscendo la passione dell'ospite per l'Induismo, gli disse: «Spero proprio che Lei scriva un libro a riguardo». «Forse, ma nell'altro mondo!», fu la risposta sarcastica di Chestov. Già da questo scambio di battute pare proprio che alla simpatia umana dell'uno non corrispondesse da parte dell'altro altrettanta disponibilità (almeno quanta Fondane si sarebbe augurato). Questa asimmetria emergerà anche in successive valutazioni di carattere teoretico.

Quel che conta è registrare tuttavia il costante impegno di Fondane a promuovere un rapporto tra i due. Infatti, nello stesso periodo (luglio 1937) Fondane consegna alla ³, l'articolo "A propos du livre de Léon Chestov: *Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle*" ⁴. Contemporaneamente, Maritain fa un rapido cenno a Chestov nell'articolo "L'impossible antisémitisme"⁵, dipingendolo come un testimone incomparabile della fede ebraica: «D'une telle notion de la foi, et si profondément juive, la philosophie de Chestov est un témoin incomparable»⁶. Maritain presterà il testo a Fondane e questo lo mostrerà a Chestov, che avrà modo di esclamare: «Testimone incomparabile?! È evidente che Maritain non ha mai letto un mio libro!». Di rimando Fondane riferisce il contenuto di questa critica a Maritain (che, come vedremo, sembra poi recepirla): «En ce qui concerne Chestov, vous faites erreur. Sa conception n'est pas *spécifique au juif*, mais à la *pensée juive*»⁷.

Sarà ancora Fondane a segnalare a Maritain l'uscita del libro di Chestov *Athènes et Jérusalem*⁸, sarà sempre lui a comunicarne la morte⁹. Fin qui le annotazioni storiche di un incontro che ulteriormente ci invita ad un confronto di carattere teoretico.

Nel 1940 Jacques Maritain tiene una conferenza in inglese dal titolo "Contemporary Renewals in Religious Thought". Qualche anno più tardi, il testo della conferenza appare sotto forma di articolo in francese, con una piccola ma significativa aggiunta di poche righe dedicata a Chestov: «Chestov ha eroicamente

filosofato contro la filosofia», in una forma contraddittoria «ma singolarmente profonda e potente del *pensiero religioso ebraico* [in questa sottolineatura sembra recepita la precisazione suggerita in precedenza da Fondane] e dell'eterna protesta d'Israele»¹⁰. Nell'economia del testo, Maritain pone Chestov nella scia di Kierkegaard, Barth, Berdjaev e Léon Bloy. Proprio questa collocazione ci autorizza, in qualche modo, ad “integrare” i brevi cenni dedicati esplicitamente all'autore – in nome di una certa qual vicinanza – con le considerazioni che Maritain fa degli altri esistenzialisti, nel tentativo di ricavarne un'opinione più articolata. Ecco che allora che la vicenda di Chestov, associata soprattutto alla figura di Kierkegaard¹¹, appare come una esperienza intellettuale travagliata, un destino pieno di angoscia e istinto profetico. Con la sua intelligenza solitaria e sfaccettata, Chestov non può esser considerato in senso stretto né un filosofo né un teologo. In lui, problemi come quello della libertà sono postulati in termini tragici, sono caratterizzati da una continua lacerazione interiore. Questa condizione lo porta a condannare come un idolo della sicurezza umana tutto ciò che è solidamente stabilito, assicurato, fondato, specialmente riguardo al divino. Chestov giunge a “sfidare” l'Onnipotente, chiedendogli addirittura di modificare il passato. Ma in questo stato di lacerazione interiore, Chestov si ritrova a dover fronteggiare un'antinomia: perché “filosofare contro la filosofia” significa pur sempre accettare di rimanere all'interno della razionalità. Come scrisse a tal proposito Berdjaev: «La pensée de L. Chestov, dirigée contre le contraignant, prenait involontairement elle-même la forme du contraignant»¹²; Chestov combatteva quindi contro la conoscenza, e lo faceva «sur le terrain même de la connaissance»¹³. Ma potrebbe essere proprio questo, agli occhi di Maritain, a renderlo prezioso e significativo per la nostra epoca. Questo intellettuale profetico, a suo agio con Nietzsche, Dostoevskij, Lutero, Pascal e con figure bibliche come Abramo, Giobbe e Isaia, è un prezioso

stimolo grazie ad un pensiero che nasce dal cuore. Infatti, in un testo successivo Maritain riconoscerà esplicitamente come «Kierkegaard e Chestov abbiano sperimentato più degli altri e fino in fondo all'anima, quella specie di scardinamento o di lacerazione che non lascia né riposo né quiete, e che certamente non si confonde con la fede nel Vangelo, che a volte persino, come in Chestov, non è se non un desiderio di questa fede, ma che viene dalla nostalgia infusa dal Vangelo e nelle vene dell'umanità»¹⁴.

Per converso, già prima del loro incontro, agli occhi di Chestov Maritain era solo un *professore* di filosofia, un vero filosofo non potrebbe trasmettere "verità". Berdijaev si chiedeva: «Le tout primarie et l'ultime sont-ils transmissibles ou bien seulement le secondaire et le transitorie?»¹⁵ È una domanda retorica per Chestov: la vera filosofia è una pratica di morte, essa tende a rendere la visione umana non più penetrante ma, al contrario, ancor meno. Quindi non può certo essere trasmessa e insegnata come pretenderebbe di fare Maritain.

In questa situazione di asimmetria, quindi, pare proprio che non ci sia spazio per una vera affinità intellettuale tra i due pensatori. Eppure come si spiegano i tentativi di Fondane di mettere in collegamento i due? Se allora qualche punto di contatto è possibile e le due posizioni filosofiche non sono in assoluto incommensurabili, ciò dovrebbe passare per un'analisi della sensibilità di Fondane per entrambi i pensatori, analisi che non può certo trovare spazio in questo articolo. Fondane sembra indicarci una pista che qui è possibile solo accennare. Mi limiterò quindi a segnalare quelli che a mio avviso sono i punti di possibile contatto e confronto tra Maritain e Chestov, che meriterebbero senz'altro uno studio più esteso ed approfondito.

La grandezza di Chestov, provando ad articolare l'opinione di Maritain, sta quindi nel valore che egli ripone nella soggettività, nella sua tensione all'assoluto, nell'affermazione dell'indispo-

nibilità concettuale del vivente in quanto singolo. Questi sono punti a cui il filosofo francese è molto sensibile, perché, come vedremo tra breve, si ritrovano in più punti della sua opera, tanto che si potrebbe parlare addirittura di una tonalità esistenzialistica del pensiero maritainiano. È invece incompatibile con il personalismo il misconoscimento delle possibilità della ragione e dell'intelligenza, che in Chestov risulta mortificata: ciò che proprio non gli si può proprio perdonare – agli occhi di Maritain – è «di avere identificato la ragione con il Serpente»¹⁶. Infatti, se il senso della trascendenza dell'assoluto è indubbiamente il principio vitale dell'atteggiamento impredicativo di Kierkegaard e Chestov, c'è in essi «una specie di grandioso smarrimento, fatale per la dottrina, e la loro colpa gravida di conseguenze è stata quella di credere che per glorificare la trascendenza occorresse spezzare la ragione, mentre bisogna umiliarla davanti al suo autore e con ciò stesso salvarla»¹⁷. È possibile, ci chiediamo, rintracciare in Maritain la stessa umiltà della ragione, pur senza metterne a repentaglio le potenzialità? È possibile forse parlare di “groundlessness” anche in Maritain? La risposta è senz'altro affermativa. Anche in Maritain infatti è salvaguardata una prospettiva di inconoscibilità: «La soggettività *in quanto soggettività* non è concettualizzabile, è un abisso inconoscibile per modo di nozione, di concetto o di rappresentazione, per modo di scienza, qualunque sia, introspezione, psicologia o filosofia»¹⁸. Per questo «non conosceremo mai a sufficienza ciò che c'è nel più piccolo filo d'erba o nel più piccolo fremito del ruscello»¹⁹. Ecco un primo importante aspetto che ci autorizza a parlare dell'*esistenzialismo di Maritain*. Esso deriva non da una depotenzializzazione degli strumenti conoscitivi, ma anzi dallo spingerli alla loro massima estensione. Si tratta quindi di una esigenza teoretica prima ancora che etica: «Il limite insormontabile contro il quale urta la filosofia, è dovuto al fatto che questa conosce senza dubbio i soggetti, ma li conosce come oggetti, risulta totalmente circo-

scritta entro la relazione intelligenza-oggetto, mentre la religione si iscrive nella relazione tra soggetto e soggetto»²⁰.

L'esistenzialismo di Maritain va quindi senz'altro ricondotto alla prospettiva teoretica di Tommaso d'Aquino, che non a caso supera di slancio la metafisica sostanzialista di Aristotele scorrendo la dimensione dell'esistenza, *actus essendi*.

Occorre sostare con attenzione, seppur brevemente, su questo aspetto talvolta sconosciuto: l'ipotesi teoretica che si profila nettamente in Tommaso consiste proprio nel rilevare che per quanto gli strumenti intellettuali possano essere sofisticati ed accuratamente calibrati rispetto alla realtà esistente, qualcosa di questa realtà sfuggirà loro sistematicamente. L'intelligenza fa presa, per così dire, sull'essenza: ma non solo l'essenza non svela il mistero dell'esistenza, più oltre ancora l'esistenza stessa non si lascia cogliere come un'essenza, non è disponibile al concetto. Altro dall'essenza, l'esistenza, *actus essendi*, non "si aggiunge" tuttavia all'essenza come un accidente – come era giunta a ritenere certa scolastica deteriore – ma perfeziona l'essenza in un ordine del tutto diverso; dal punto di vista teoretico, osserverà acutamente Etienne Gilson, «si tratta propriamente di oltrepassare il piano dell'essere sostanziale come tale. Non lo si può fare senza concepire la forma, che è atto, come essente a sua volta ultimamente atto nel suo ordine e tuttavia in potenza in un altro. In altri termini ci si chiede di concepire una potenzialità che non sia in alcun modo quella della materia perché è quella di un atto»²¹. «A dire il vero, – scriverà Maritain quasi a commento – è una tesi estremamente ardita, perché qui la potenza – l'essenza o struttura intelligibile, già compiuta nella propria linea di essenza – è perfezionata o attuata da un atto di un altro ordine, che non aggiunge assolutamente nulla all'essenza in quanto tale, struttura intelligibile o quiddità, ma che le aggiunge tutto in quanto la pone extra causas o extra nihil»²². Gilson e Maritain hanno rinvenuto, si potrebbe quasi dire, il fondamento teoretico che

impercettibilmente alimenta e sorregge le vibranti intuizioni dei pensatori esistenzialisti: hanno cioè individuato la sorgente che mette fuori gioco in maniera definitiva la pretesa della ragione di tutto dominare, di appropriarsi dell'essere e della vita in un unico e sovrano gesto comprensivo. Ciò non li ha condotti a nessun disprezzo della ragione, che anzi in quanto capacità dell'uomo chiede di essere dispiegata, ma piuttosto li ha guidati a rilevarne i limiti costitutivi e, quindi, ad interrogarsi sul senso etico-esistenziale di questi limiti. Il senso etico si svolge drammaticamente su una gran varietà di versanti: vi è l'avvertenza a non voler violare il mistero dell'essere ed a rifiutare ogni suggestione di tipo hegeliano, ma vi è anche la percezione acuta della fatica e della precarietà che contraddistinguono ogni percorso ed ogni conquista umana. Più ancora vi è la partecipazione intensa all'agonia di ogni essere umano che, irresistibilmente attratto dal divino, pure si scontra con l'impossibilità della fusione, misurando ad ogni passo la vicinanza e la distanza di Dio. Nel mistero dell'esistenza che a tutto è partecipata e che in nulla è esaurita o contenuta, secondo la splendida lezione dello pseudo Dionigi, Maritain e Gilson ritrovano il senso teoretico e poi etico della lotta di Giacobbe, destinato a proseguire il cammino portando il segno della lotta con l'angelo, segno del contatto reale con un Dio che non si lascia mai catturare né conoscere, ma che benedice il cammino e la ricerca.

Pertanto Maritain riconosce sì che «l'esistenzialismo di Kierkegaard, di Kafka, di Chestov, di Fondane è stato l'irrompere di una rivendicazione essenzialmente religiosa, un'agonia della fede, il grido della soggettività verso il suo Dio, e, nello stesso tempo, la rivelazione della persona, nella sua angoscia del nulla che è il non-essere *nell'esistente*, la "incrinatura *nell'esistente*"»²³; ma sarebbe un errore molto ingenuo credere «che la soggettività non abbia una struttura intelligibile, adducendo il pretesto che la sua profondità è inesauribile, e abolire in essa ogni natura

per ridurla ad un abisso assurdo di pura e informe libertà»²⁴. Infatti, «il delirio è permesso al profeta, è proibito al filosofo. Né Kierkegaard né Chestov hanno saputo rendere giustizia ai mistici, si sono ingannati in modo crudele e alquanto meschino. Ciò nondimeno, essi aspiravano senza saperlo all'esperienza e alle notti di questi. Se cerchiamo di collocarli al giusto posto nel regno dello spirito, bisogna volgere gli occhi non verso la filosofia, ma verso quella contemplazione apofatica in cui Dio è conosciuto come non conosciuto»²⁵. Apofaticità, per il filosofo, non significa silenzio assoluto, ma consapevolezza dell'inadeguatezza del proprio parlare.

Inoltre, anche per Maritain la condizione umana risulta paradossale: essa è «impossibile da vivere» a causa del contrasto tra individualità materiale e personalità spirituale; c'è conflitto anche tra persona e società, c'è lacerazione tra aspirazioni connaturali e quelle transnaturali. La condizione umana non può essere né rifiutata (filosofie orientali), né accettata (filosofie occidentali)²⁶. Commenta Piero Viotto: «Non si tratta di accettare il *male di vivere*, quasi che la condizione umana fosse disperata ed irrisolvibile, ma di consentire alla *pena di vivere* che è connaturale con la condizione umana nel suo stato esistenziale di natura decaduta, ma chiamata alla beatitudine eterna»²⁷.

Non il solo Fondane aveva per amico e maestro un intellettuale “difficile” da trattare; anche Maritain ne aveva uno: Léon Bloy²⁸. In questo senso è significativo che nell'ambito del contributo “Aspetti contemporanei del pensiero religioso” Chestov e Bloy siano accostati, quasi a riconoscere una loro “parentela” intellettuale e un'affinità nel loro contributo al rinnovamento del pensiero religioso. Entrambi, con l'energia di profeti in lotta contro la disperazione, spesero la loro vita sfoderando nelle occasioni opportune e in quelle inopportune una irrepreensibile libertà di pensiero. Per queste caratteristiche comuni, Chestov e Bloy non dovrebbero essere ignorati dal cristiano e dall'ebreo di

oggi. Entrambi i pensatori possono contribuire al rinnovamento del pensiero religioso. È questa un'altra pista di raccordo che mi limito solo a segnalare.

- 1 Ad esempio Victoria Ocampo: argentina, direttrice della rivista *Sur*, divulgatrice della filosofia di Chestov e allo stesso tempo amica dei Maritain (cfr. B. Fondane, J. Maritain, *Correspondance*, Parigi: Paris-Méditerranée, 1997, p. 10 e p. 14 nota 6).
- 2 Basti pensare che Chestov fu addirittura suo testimone di nozze. Per quanto riguarda il rapporto con Maritain, era lo stesso Fondane a stupirsi che, nonostante la grande distanza che li separava, il pensatore tomista ascoltasse con vivo interesse la sua filosofia esistenzialistica e addirittura ne promuovesse la conoscenza nel suo ambiente intellettuale; tra questi due esponenti di concezioni così diverse, un dialogo fu comunque possibile.
- 3 Rivista coordinata da Yves Simon, discepolo di Maritain.
- 4 In riferimento a questa pubblicazione, Fondane scrive a Maritain: “J’en suis heureux, plus pour Chestov que pour moi – car il ne tient pas tant à être suivi qu’à ce que ses idées soient entendues! [...] Voilà pourquoi je suis content que mon article ait pu susciter quelque intérêt dans les milieux thomistes » (lettera del 27/12/1937, in B. Fondane, J. Maritain, *Correspondance*, pp. 34-35).
- 5 L’articolo comparve nel volume collettivo *Les Juifs*, Parigi: Plon, 1937.
- 6 *Ivi*, p. 53.
- 7 Lettera del 28/02/1938, in B. Fondane, J. Maritain, *Correspondance*, pp. 37-9.
- 8 Cfr. lettera del 27/12/1937, in B. Fondane, J. Maritain, *Correspondance*, pp. 34-35.
- 9 “Vous ignorez donc la mort de notre ami Chestov, survenue hier matin” (lettera del 21/11/1938, in B. Fondane, J. Maritain, *Correspondance*, p. 40).
- 10 “Aspetti contemporanei del pensiero religioso”, in J. Maritain, *Da Bergson a Tommaso d’Aquino*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1980, pp. 107-108, corsivo mio.
- 11 Kierkegaard fu per Chestov una scoperta tarda, che avvenne grazie a Barth.
- 12 N. Berdjaev, “L’idéé fondamentale de la philosophie de Léon Chestov”, prefazione a L. Chestov, *Spéculation et révélation. L’Age d’homme*, 1982, p. 9 (il contributo fu scritto poco dopo la morte di Chestov e fu originariamente pubblicato nella rivista *Pout* [La Voie], n. 58, 1938-1939).
- 13 *Ivi*, p. 10.
- 14 J. Maritain, *Court traité de l’existence et de l’existant*, Parigi: Hartmann, 1947; tr. it.: *Breve trattato dell’esistenza e dell’esistente*, Brescia: Morcelliana, 1965, p. 101.
- 15 N. Berdjaev, “L’idéé fondamentale...”, in: *op. cit.*, p. 9.

- 16 J. Maritain, *Breve trattato...*, p. 101.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ivi*, p. 56.
- 19 *Ivi*, p. 54.
- 20 *Ivi*, p. 58.
- 21 E. Gilson, *L'Essere e l'essenza*, Milano: Massimo, 1988, p. 99 (a commento dell'osservazione di Tommaso: «Oportet igitur quod ipsum esse comparetur ad essentiam quae est aliud ab ipso, sicut actus ad potentiam», *Summa theologiae* p. I, q. 3, a. 4).
- 22 J. Maritain, *Breve trattato dell'esistenza e dell'esistente*, pp. 32-33.
- 23 *Ivi*, p. 96-97.
- 24 *Ivi*, p. 65.
- 25 *Ivi*, p. 101-102.
- 26 Cfr. J. Maritain, *La filosofia morale*, Brescia: Morcelliana, 1999, p. 529 ss.
- 27 P. Viotto, *Introduzione a Maritain*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2000, p. 122.
- 28 Léon Bloy ebbe un ruolo fondamentale nella conversione di Maritain al Cattolicesimo, divenendo poi padrino sia di Raïssa, sia di Jacques.

Federico Skodler

SUMMARY

This paper deals with the relation between Maritain and Shestov. Deep differences existed in the thinking of these two philosophers, who met in 1937 thanks to Benjamin Fondane. Maritain places Shestov in the wake of Kierkegaard, Barth, Berdjaev and Bloy. In his opinion, Shestov must face deep inside himself a substantial antinomy: he makes philosophy against philosophy, his thought a contradictory, yet deep and powerful form of Jewish thinking, of the eternal Jewish protest. Shestov is a precious stimulus for the renewal of religious thought thanks to his appreciation of the Absolute and the resistance of the individual to the concept. But his disregard for reason is unacceptable. Maritain's philosophy succeeds both in preserving the dignity of human reason and "groundlessness:" through the Thomist idea of *actus essendi*, existence can disclose being and resist the conceptualization.

Federico Skodler

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava razmerje med Jacquesom Maritainom in Levom Šestovom. Filozofa, ki sta se srečala leta 1937 po posredovanju Benjamina Fondana, sta si bila med seboj globoko različna. Maritain je postavljajal Šestova v isto vrsto s Kierkegaardom, Barthom, Berdjajevom in Bloyem. Po njegovem mnenju bi se moral Šestov soočiti s substancialno antinomijo globoko v sebi. Šestov filozofira proti filozofiji, zato je njegova misel protislovna, vendar globoka in močna oblika judovskega mišljenja, večnega judovskega protesta. Ker upošteva Absolutno in upiranje posamičnega pojmu, je dragocena spodbuda za prenovo religiozne misli. Vendar Šestovov prezir do razuma ni sprejemljiv. Po drugi strani pa Maritainovi filozofiji uspeva ohranjati tako dostojanstvo človeškega razuma kakor »breztalnost«: bivanje lahko prek tomistične ideje o *actus essendi* razkriva bit, s tem da se hkrati upira konceptualizaciji.



FRAGMENTS OF THE AFTERNOON DISCUSSION

Udeleženca simpozija Boris Šinigoj in Pavle Rak

FRAGMENTS OF THE AFTERNOON DISCUSSION

PAVLE RAK: I would like to draw attention to two questions which were touched upon this afternoon, i.e. to “What is faith?” and “What does the almighty God want from us?” It seems to me sometimes that Shestov, and maybe God with him, want too much from us and that this is something almost nobody can accomplish. It seems to me that if we demand this sort of absolute faith from ourselves we are in a helpless position.

MATJAŽ ČRNIVEC: In my opinion, Shestov is a very radical thinker who could be related to the New Testament in his understanding of faith. Let us remember the words of Jesus about moving the mountains with faith. We should take these words seriously. Obviously, there is the provocation hidden in this statement just as it is in those by Shestov. Jesus is provoking his disciples, saying: “If you have faith, everything is possible for you.” This creative provocation touches not only the faith... If, for example, we take the Sermon on the Mount, we find there other provocations, which are impossible to fulfil if we take them just like that. But I believe that there is something behind that tension or provocation – something that revelation demands from us. I mean that the fundamental demand of revelation is a demand to lose yourself. The faith starts when you lose yourself to the point of despair.

GORAZD KOCIJANČIČ: I agree with you, Mr. Črnivec. We have sayings as the one you’ve quoted from the New Testament, but this only brings back Pavle Rak’s question on another level. Namely, those sayings were a great problem for the exeges-

is from the very beginning, i.e. from the time of the Church fathers. And it is quite understandable, because they were in contradiction with the actual experience of the believers. We are faced here with an eminently practical problem. In the first centuries, Christians were often in horrible situations, they were confronted with death, persecutions, diseases, wars and internal struggles. They prayed, but nothing happened. And they knew Christ was saying: "You just pray to your Father, and it will be given to you." They believed Christ, they prayed – and nothing happened. What was the point of that "Shestovian" experience? Only losing yourself and waiting? Well, the more obvious solution of the problem would be that of "losing my religion." Christ is lying; the unfulfillment of prayers is a proof that the faith in Christ is false. But the solution of true believers took the other course. The Church fathers already interpreted the above mentioned passages insightfully, saying that they are not meant to be prayers or demands for material goods or practices. In a wider context of Christ's preaching it is obvious that he is talking, above all things, about spiritual realities. When you really pray for the impossible, when you enact the impossible, you are disclosed for spiritual reality. But if you expect material things to happen, you are already on the wrong way. It was a kind of Christian response to that paradox – which is, in my opinion, a justifiable move away from Shestov's radicalism...

MATJAZ ČRNIVEC: I don't agree, Mr. Kocijančič. The radical provocation that we find in the New Testament is more than just exegetical accommodation of those very hard sayings by Jesus. I think that the good thing in Shestov is that he has brought the very impossibility, the unexplained, unsoftened meaning of these hard words back to the front. I think that he challenges us, that he puts us again in a position in which we are naked before God.



VID SNOJ: In my opinion, there is another problem in Shestov's understanding of faith. It is not my intention to deal with the New Testament understanding of faith discussed by my colleagues, as far as it is, or is not, a faith in the impossible. I think that the problem is elsewhere. The wish for the impossible, which is in the heart of Shestov's faith, becomes a problem, when it is a wish for something determined. Let us remember the situation of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, as Kierkegaard explained it. This is a situation in which Abraham's faith did not consist of the belief that anything could happen, but that he would get his son back.



As far as the wish for the impossible in its Shestovian turn is concerned, not anything that is impossible should become real, but, possibly without regard to God's wish, only what is good for man. I think that here the problem poses itself.

FEDERICO SKODLER: Besides, there is a contradiction in Shestov according to Jacques Maritain. He criticizes Shestov's concept of revelation and his demand of faith as a kind of revelation of necessity of slavery...

PAVEL KUZNECOV: Well, the passage in Maritain you have just mentioned is very short. I think we should look at other Maritain's texts on revelation and freedom, not just at that passage, which, in addition, is not related to Shestov as much as it is to Maritain's own conceptualisations that should not be taken as pure gold.

VID SNOJ: Just a brief comment in connection to Shestov's concept of freedom. It seems to me that, in considering the truth as postulated by reason, Shestov agreed with Nietzsche. According to Shestov, another horizon opens only beyond reason and its necessities, and this is a horizon of a different kind of truth or, which amounts to the same thing, of absolute freedom. If we looked in his magnum opus, *Athens and Jerusalem*, we would certainly find a formulation that, before eating from the tree of knowledge, man lived in the state of absolute freedom.

PAVEL KUZNECOV: Absolute freedom? The point is a degree of freedom...

NIKOLAI IVANOV: I would like to open here the question of Jewishness of Shestov's thought. We should take into consideration the contemporary Jewish philosophy, its styles of thought. One could find an interesting similarity in the approaches to philosophy, in the basic attachment to the text. In Derrida and, in a lesser degree, in Levinas one can find a secular transposition of the rabbinic way of thinking, a kind of expressing yourself in expressing the truth that you realize through the texts of others – just like in Shestov.

GORAZD KOCIJANČIČ: I agree, Mr. Ivanov, we should not forget that Jewish dimension. But we should not understand it as a kind of pseudo-exegetical, eis-egetical ornament of Shestov's

texts. You can find in Shestov many positive insights in the texts that he is commenting upon. And – I would like to emphasize that – not only insights concerning his themes, i.e. faith and reason etc., but also intuitions which are almost separated from the text. I admire Shestov mostly as a master of detail, of miniatures, which are somehow hidden and are not mentioned at all in the broad overviews of his thought. I mean his often very dispersed, even contradictory intuitions which are expressed in brilliant aphorisms and are not linked to the main stream of the argument. This is, in my opinion, his personal transposition of the Jewish way of thinking – a thought which is not united in the logical argument in a systematic or hierarchic way. Shestov is an ideal author for anthologies. Perhaps some important problems of interpretation – and, above all, of interpretation concerning his understanding of faith – arise from the fact that we are still reading Shestov as a writer of a great philosophical narrative, of a Discourse with one central thesis. And this is understandable, because he often expressed himself in that way. But I think that Shestov is nevertheless essentially a writer of aphorisms. His reasoning, his long thread of argumentation, is only a frame that brings together these small, profound maxims.

PAVEL KUZNECOV: I cannot agree. Of course, Shestov has some important “small” insights, but his famous claims are repeated time and again in each and every of his books, in each and every of his articles. If he writes about Abraham or about Luther or whomsoever, he presents his general idea. And this idea comes from the Old Testament. That is his distinctive Jewishness.

GORAZD KOCIJANČIČ: Is this really so clear? The aim of my short paper was precisely that we should question our knowledge of Shestov’s “general idea” and of its distinctive Old Testament hue. I don’t think it is clear at all what is the meaning of the fa-



mous basic dichotomy in Shestov. I suggest that the proper philosophical exegesis of his work should deal with the basic question of our reconstruction of his thought: what is the meaning of Shestov's "obvious" dichotomies and "claims"? Is this really what he is saying to us, his self-styling, or is it perhaps something else? Well, we all know: to put that kind of questions is a proper task of interpretation. An author is presenting himself as this or that – but is this the truth or a kind of self-presentation, which does hide something behind itself? I believe that it is very important for us not to understand Shestov any longer in a way he presents himself, and to ask what lies behind his text.



PAVEL KUZNECOV: In the morning when we were discussing Shestov's relationship to Husserl, we have already started to do this. I mean when Marko Uršič said that the debate on irrationalism is something passé and that it has nothing to do with the contemporary philosophy, and thereby triggered a hot debate... My conviction is that if we move behind Shestov's text, we hit upon the basic problems of today's ontology. And our reluctance to dare this move is significant. During his lifetime, people used to tell Shestov: "Shestov, you are repeating yourself!" And he answered: "Yes, I am repeating myself, but you should ask yourself why do I get on your nerves by doing that? All men are



repeating themselves, but they do not get on the nerves of other men. I get on your nerves, because I repeat something that you do not want to hear. If someone says, two plus two makes four, or something like that, well, people say then that he is repeating it all the time, but it is all right. If, however, I say, two plus two may be five, and I repeat it time and again, they say: ‘That is crazy, he is repeating himself.’”

GORAZD KOCIJANČIČ: Mr. Kuznecov, do you agree – to put it very briefly – that Shestov has discovered a neuralgic point of Western philosophy? I personally think that it was really a

great discovery. Shestov wrote in the tradition of great Christian thinkers who somehow combined radical scepticism and absolute faith, thinkers like Augustine, Ockham, Pascal, Kierkegaard... But he was, in a way, discovering something which is totally strange, very new and completely odd: the radical fragility of the very idea of logical thought. Of course, we can pursue philosophy, we can develop beautiful systems – but doing this, do we have any guarantee, any warrant, any reason that there is a kind of reality behind and above thought itself, an utterly unconcievable reality which puts all our dreams and systems, all our wishful thinking into nothing? Shestov shows us that philosophy is a very human work. He is not writing simply against logic or philosophy; he just shows that perhaps it has nothing to do with reality. Thought itself cannot have one single reason that guarantees its contact, its touch with reality. Perhaps reality is totally different, it could be the wholly other... And that is not all. Well before his time, Shestov also developed a sense of absence of author's identity which is, of course, not unconnected with the above mentioned insight. His authorial identity is somehow elusive. Once he said: "People are criticizing me for my ideas, but I don't know if I will have the same ideas a year after, I don't know if my ideas will be the same next year." Thus, he does not pretend that, by writing something, he will remain an always present subject of writing encoded in the text...

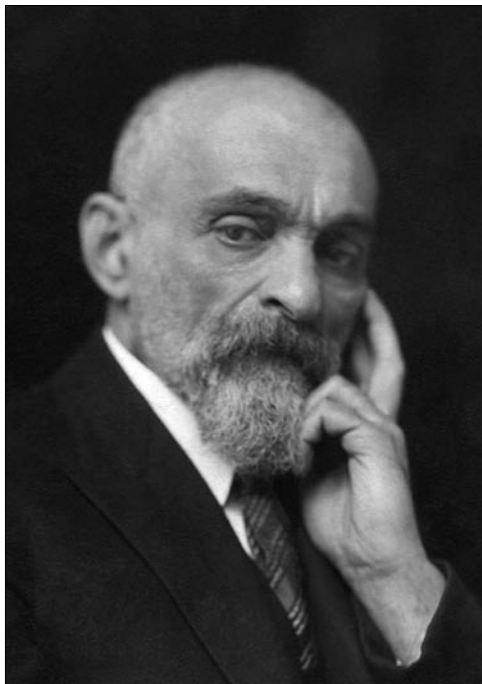
PAVEL KUZNECOV: Yes, I agree. And before we finish our discussion about Shestov I would like to say that I hope we shall meet again soon at some other symposium, having the same will to enrich one another with wealth of ideas, as we had today. I have the impression that this symposium was fascinating and thought provoking. Thank you very much.

Transcribed by Milica Kač, edited by Gorazd Kocijančič



Anton Ocvirk, slika iz pariškega obdobja (1931–1933)

INTERVJU ANTONA OCVIRKA
Z LEVOM ŠESTOVOM
(1923)



Slika, ki jo je Šestov podaril Antonu Ocvirku za portret v knjigi Razgovori

LEON ŠESTOV

„Vsi iščemo resnico in vsi smo prepričani, da vemo, kaj iščemo, ko iščemo resnico.“

L. Šestov, *Potestas clavium*.

„Najvišje Dobro ni Bog. Iskati moramo tisto, kar je višje od Dobrega. Iskati moramo Boga.“

L. Šestov, *Potestas clavium*.

Leon Šestov, „najvišji, najizvirnejši predstavnik ruske filozofske misli“, kakor ga označuje francoski mislec Jules de Gaultier v uvodu k njegovi knjigi „*Pojem dobrega pri Tolstem in Nietzscheju*“, je brez dvoma svojevrsten pojav v razvoju evropske filozofije, najprodornejši in najenovitejši sodobni metafizik. Njegovi spisi razodevajo globokega opazovalca sveta in življenja, tenkočutnega prisluškovalca tajnim močem nedoumnega, slutnega in „podtalnega, samoniklega tvorca novih „vrednot“, vodnika k novim ciljem in novim razodetjem. Obenem pa pričajo o neizprosнем rušilcu vseh znanstvenih dogem, filozofskih resnic, vseh samorazvidnih sodb in izvenčasovnih načel, na katerih so zgrajeni naši življenjski, religiozni in svetovni nazori, o odločnem odklonjevalcu vsega zgolj umskega, logičnega, spoznanega in dokazanega. – Danes, ko se lomijo v osrčju človeka vsi idejni, etični, filozofski in življenjski temelji, ko se odpirajo pred nami brezupni prepadi in brezna, ko nas bičajo viharji, prevrati in krize, ko se za našimi telesnimi obrazi razgaljajo naše do krvi razbičane duše in ko razpadajo pred nami v nič vsa premnoga

obolevanja, češčenja in malikovanja, danes lahko vse globlje, vse pristneje dojamemo izpovedi, pričevanja in razodetja tega samotnega bogoiskatelja, v temo notranjih razkolov poglobljenega mistika, vsa umsko dognana načela zanikajočega metafizika. Saj se morda pray danes prebujamo iz stoterih zablod, iz vere v napredek človeštva, iz oboževanja znanstvenih odkritij in mehanistično civilizatoričnih dobrin, iz racionalističnih tolmačenj sveta, človeka in večnosti, iz prepričanja, da bomo zgolj z umom odgonetili uganko našega bitja, da bomo z njim dojeli prvi in poslednji smisel življenja ter doumeli Boga. Prav danes se morda znova povračamo – kot ukleti v čarobni krog – k svojim izhodiščem, k prvim pravprašanjem: čemu um, čemu napredek, čemu nujnost, čemu svet, čemu človek: odkod, zakaj in kam?

Metafizika Leona Šestova pomeni v bistvu „razvrednotenje vseh vrednot“, ako se izrazimo z Nietzschejevim izrazom, odklon od oboževanja vsega filozofsko apriornega, umsko razvidnega, zunanje resničnega; ona razglašča iskanje resnice, ki je višja od znanstvenih dognanj, od „splošnih“ sodb, od abstraktnih pojmov in idej, od etičnih zakonov in moralnih obveznosti, umetnih tvorb našega izkustva. Filozofija Leona Šestova vodi iz prve dimenzije predmetne resničnosti v „drugo dimenzijo“ iracionalne resničnosti, iz kozmosa v kaos, iz znanosti in znanja v mit in razodetje, iz racionalnega v nedoumno, iz statike v novo dinamiko duha. To je modrost teme, nepoznanega, nedokazljivega, slučajnega, slutenega, intuicije, vizije, zavzetja, umetniške inspiracije, breztalnosti, filozofija tragedije, groze, samote in predsmrtnih agonij, neutešeno iskanje večne resnice, ki jo moremo dojeti le z „drugimi“, notranjimi očmi, iskanje samotnega, zapuščenega, zatajenega in iz človeške družbe izobčenega Boga.

Osrednja filozofska usmerjenost Leona Šestova je neprestano izpraševanje o osnovah in „prvih načelih“ življenja, neumorno zastavljanje metafizičnih vprašanj, na katera um že po svojem

bistvu ne more odgovoriti. Notranji smisel tega izpraševanja pa je žgoče hrepenenje po dojetju nadsnovne, iracionalne resnice. Šestov je spoznal, da so vse naše, po umu spoznane „resnice“ mrzle, okamenele, negibne, da ovirajo, zaničujejo in zanikujejo živo, iz nešteti skrivnosti vzniklo življenje. Doumel je vso ozko pristranost pojmov, idej in principov, ki jih je znanstvena filozofija povzdignila v kraljestvo najvišjih, nadčasovnih in nadprostornih resnic, nad vse hipno, izpremenljivo in gibljivo. Doživel je njih mrko absolutnost, njih brezčutnost za vroče, iz dna duševnih brezen se porajajoče človekove klice, obupe in zdvajanja. Izpričal je, da je življenje samo neizmerno višje in globlje od „večnih resnic“, od splošnih, za vse obveznih in veljavnih sodb in sklepov, od vsega, „quod semper ubiquae et ab omnibus creditum est“, da se prav za prav skriva prava, večno živa resnica v „podzemlju“, v breztalnosti, v nedokazljivem, v nenadnem, v nepreračunljivem, v ekstazi, v viziji in v duševnih grozah. „Resnica“, piše Šestov v eni svojih najznačilnejših knjig, v „*Potestas clavium*“, „ni sestavljena iz tiste snovi, iz katere tvorimo ideje. Ona je živa, ima svoje zahteve, svoja nagnjenja in se prav posebno boji na primer tega, kar imenujemo v naši govorici utelešenje (inkarnacija). Boji se razen tega, kakor se boje vse žive stvari, smrti. Zato dojame lahko resnico samo tisti, ki jo išče sam zase, ne pa za druge, tisti, ki se je slovesno zaobljubil, da ne bo pretvarjal svojih vizij v splošne, za vse obvezne sodbe, in da resnice ne bo storil prijemljive. Tisti pa, ki se hoče resnice polastiti, ki jo hoče prijeti s svojimi grobimi telesnimi rokami, ki jo hoče utelesiti, da bi jo nato lahko povsod in vsakomur pokazal, tisti je obsojen na neprestana razočaranja in celo na to, da bo živel od samih prevar, kajti vse utelešene resnice niso nikoli bile nič drugega nego utelešene prevare.“

Resnica nima nič skupnega z apriornimi sodbami, z abstraktnimi pojmi, s Spinozovo geometrično metodo, s Kantovimi imperativi, s Husserlovo fenomenologijo, z znanstveno

in celó religiozno dogmatiko. Resnica pa tudi ni za vse ljudi, ker ni niti razvidna niti dokazljiva, ker je že po svoji naravi v opreki z vsem, kar je koristno in uporabljivo. — Prav za prav pa človeku niti ni potrebna taka resnica, ker mu je v napoto, ker ga ovira pri njegovem stremljenju in udejstvovanju. „Človek potrebuje“, piše znova v „*Potestas clavium*“, „nekaj pozitivnega, to se pravi nekaj, kar je pripravno za takojšnjo uporabo. Resnice ne potrebuje na noben način! Prevara in iluzija koristita človeku prav tako dobro kakor resnica.“ Resnica je vendar nekaj neotipljivega, nekaj, česar ne moremo uvrstiti v zgodovino, česar ne moremo ne opredeliti ne urediti v sistem. „Vsi smo prepričani,“ piše Šestov v zbirki aforizmov „*Exercitia spiritualia*“, „da je zgodovina neizmerno bolj važna, kakor pa resnica. Odtod naslednja nova definicija resnice: Resnica je to, kar se dogaja ob zgodovini, in to, česar zgodovina ne zapazi.“ Resnica je tedaj v nasprotju z vsakim urejenim filozofskim sistemom, z vsakim logično izvedenim znanstvenim organizmom, ona mu je celó škodljiva in usodna.

V bistvu resnice pa je, da ne prenese nikakega razmišljanja, ker živi in se giblje izven umskega sveta, ki je osnova in podlaga vse filozofije. Um stremi namreč po abstrakciji, po ugotavljanju splošno veljavnih sodb, idej in sklepov, po spoznanjih, kjer se nehajo vsi prepiri, kjer so vsi ljudje istega mišljenja; um stremi po prozorni, matematični resnici. Zato je silila filozofija že od vsega početka v magični krog matematike in dobila s Spinozovo znanstveno metodo svoje opravičilo in potrdilo. Toda prav um se je polastil vseh pravic za dognanje resnice, proglasil se je za edinega vodnika, za edino pot k njej, za edinega sodnika nad vsakim spoznanjem in razodetjem. Vsa zgodovina filozofije nas uverja o tem, ves njen razvoj od Sokrata, Aristotela, preko sholastike in Descartesa, Spinoze, Kanta, Hegela do Husserla priča, kako so misleci stremeli po vzpostavitvi „znanstvenih resnic“: pojma, ideje, sodb in sklepov a priori, po vsem, kar je

izven časa, prostora in človeka. Spoznanje je postalo važnejše od razodetja, dokaz in razvidnost sta nadvladala vsako svobodno, neprizadeto in nevezano doživetje resnice. Zato je Spinozova resnica znanstvena resnica, „modo geometrico demonstrata“, ujeta v vezi uma, v oklepe neizpodbitnih dokazov. V nasprotju z umskim razsojanjem in ugotavljanjem resnice poudarja Šestov svobodno doživetje resnice, ki je skrita v slučajnem, v naključju, v nedoumnem. „Psihološko je mogoče,“ piše v znameniti knjigi „*Na Jobovi tehtnici*“, „kar je logično nesmiselno. Resnica se v življenju uveljavi, ne da bi mogla zato predložiti kakršnokoli si bodi dokazljivo opravičbo.“

Umska spoznanja pa so segla preko znanstvenih resnic do razreševanja vprašanj o bitnosti Boga in o razsojanju o njegovi naravi. „Ali je sploh kateri filozof pripoznal Boga“, se izprašuje Šestov v uvodu k „*Potestas clavium*“? Nihče ni prav za prav v resnici pripoznal Boga, pravega, resničnega Boga, kakor se nam je razodel, vsi so ga tajili. Filozofija si je ustvarila svojega Boga, izmislila si ga je, podredila ga umskim zakonitostim, kakor si je podredila vse življenje, usužnila ga je svojim evidencam in aksiomom. Zato je Bog znanstvene filozofije — „Najvišje Bitje“, „deus = natura“ = substantia“, „deus sive natura“, „Najvišje dobro“, „Vsevedni“, „Vsemogočni“ in kolikor ima imen — nesvoboden, v človekove znanstvene verige uklenjen, matematičen, kamenit, negiben Bog kakor Aristotelov „*primum movens immobile*“, Bog po milosti uma. „In zato pogrēša ta Bog popolnoma naravno ‚pridevek‘ življenja, kajti um, četudi bi hotel, ne bi mogel ustvariti nič živega, ker to ni njegova stvar. Razen tega pa um že po svoji naravi sovraži življenje nad vse na svetu, ker v njem instinktivno sluti svojega nespravljivega sovražnika“, poudarja Šestov znova v „*Potestas clavium*“. Tudi katolicizem, ta zmes „grštva in židovstva“, si je prevzel tega znanstvenega Boga, skušal združiti in sprijazniti um z razodetjem, helensko filozofijo s Svetim pismom, hoteč

dokazati božjo bitnost (Dei existentiam naturali ratione posse probari ...) za vse čase in za vse ljudi. Katolicizem, ki smatra Aristotela za predhodnika Kristovega, se je proglasil za edino zveličavno religijo, ki hrani večno, neminljivo resnico, resnico, katero si lahko umsko raztolmačimo.

Toda Šestov ostro opredeli svoje doživetje Boga: „Božji um in božja volja se popolnoma ločita od našega uma in naše volje: skupna so zgolj imena.“ Če pa bi bilo to vseeno, če bi bilo ozvezdje pes isto kakor lajajoči pes, „tedaj bi lahko vsaki stvari, kateri bi hoteli, nadeli ime Bog. Tedaj bi bila tudi materija materijalistov Bog. Ali z drugimi besedami“: zaključuje v „*Potestas clavium*“, „Bog je stvar zase in človek je stvar zase.“ – Neizmerni so prepadi med Bogom in človekom, toliko skrivnosti je med nami in Njim, da jih ne more dojeti noben človeški um, nobena znanstvena filozofska zasnova, nikak matematični dokaz. „Bog ni vedno pričujoč“, razmišlja Šestov na drugem mestu. „Tudi on se prikaže in izgine. O Bogu ne moremo niti trditi, da bi bil pogosto pričujoč. Nasprotno, običajno ga večinoma ni med nami. – Razumljivo je tedaj, da ne more biti predmet znanstvenega spoznanja.“ V knjigi „*Na Jobovi tehtnici*“ pa piše: „Boga ni mogoče dokazati, ne moremo ga iskati v ‚zgodovini‘. Bog je vtelesena ‚samovoljnost‘, ki zavrača vsa jamstva. On stoji izven zgodovine prav tako, kakor vse to, kar so judje smatrali za *τιμιώτατον*“. Skrivnost Stvarnika je globoka, nedoumna, ne dá se je spoznati, zato so vsi človeški napor, zarisati meje božjemu bitju, nebogljene, so prazno, ničevno delo. Z vso prodornostjo svojega duha pa se je Šestov posvetil popolnemu razvrednotenju znanosti, njenega bistva, osnov in ciljev. Iz dna svojega neumirljivega iskanja Boga in resnice je spoznal, da si je znanstvena filozofija po krivici nadela ime „kraljice vseh ved“, da ni nikaka edina nezmotljiva vodnica k večni resnici. Do podrobnosti je izpovedal svoje ugovore proti filozofskim znanstvenim sistemom posebno v dveh obširnih spisih: v „*Memento mori*“ in

„Kaj je resnica“, kjer ostro zavrača fenomenologijo E. Husserla in njegov spis „Filozofija kot stroga znanost“. Kakor Nietzsche se Šestov ognjevitó bori zoper vsako filozofsko učenost, ki je plod umskega rokodelstva, brezplodnega logičnega računanja, sklepanja in ugotavljanja. Saj to težaško delo ne more do velikih spoznanj in doživetij, ampak celó odmika človeka od pravrelcev, od intuitivnih, kreativnih vzponov tvornega duha. Toda Šestov seže preko Nietzscheja v središče problema: prava, resnična filozofija ni znanost, ona ne more biti znanost, saj že njeno bistvo izključuje vse strogo umske prvine. Znanstvena filozofija vodi sicer do univerzalij, do neposredno razvidnih načel, do neizpremenljive, negibne resnice, po kateri stremi um, kakor dobro označi sv. Anzelm: „Video hac ratione probari veritatem immobilem esse“, toda vsi njeni napori jo ne približajo niti resnici niti Bogu. Um in z njim znanstvena filozofija tudi ne priznavata neposredne, živo prelivajoče se resničnosti, za obe je stvarno življenje z vsemi razkoli, razmahi in vzponi popoln nesmisel, saj ga ne moremo urediti, ne moremo ga spraviti v sistem, v negibnost. Znanost namreč stremi za stalnostjo, za redom, za neko dognano zakonitostjo gibanja, zato žrtvuje tej težnji hip, slučaj, trenutek, izjemo, tedaj vse prvine živega življenja. Zato je znanstvena filozofija brezбриžna prav tako, kakor matematika za vse podtalnosti življenja, ona jih ne vidi, ne more jih dojeti, zato ne sliši razdvojenih klicev po notranjih razkolin razbičnega človeka, kajti ona se ne zanima za „tega“ človeka, ampak za človeka „sploh“, ona ne pripozna „njegove“ groze, „njegove“ resnice, ne pripozna slučajnega Boga, ampak življenje „sploh“, resnico „za vse“, Boga, ki je več en Um, prvo Načelo, prvi Vzrok, mrtev kakor egipčanske piramide. „V konkretni resničnosti“, piše Šestov v „Memento mori“, „je neizmerno več“ večnostnih prvin kakor pa v vseh idejah, ki jih je odkrila in jih odkriva fenomenologija.“ – „Dokler bo vladala logika,“ piše v istem spisu, „bo pot k metafiziki zaprta.“ Husserl pa je prepričan in z njim

vsa znanstvena filozofija, da bomo z umom razrešili poslednjo življenjsko uganko, doumeli bistvo sveta in človeštva, da bomo z racionalnim abstrahiranjem vsega gibljivega in živega v prazne nadčasovne sence in fantome prišli do najvišjih spoznanj. „Toda človeško življenje je tako zamotano, da se ne sklada z nobeno izmed idej, ki smo si jih izmislili.“ („Potestas clavium.“) Kako naj vendar s spoznavno teorijo razrešimo skrivnosti, ki so pod zemljo in nad nebom?

Najglobljo misel pa je izrekel Šestov z izjavo, da znanost ni svobodno iskanje resnice, ker je vklenjena v meje uma, v dogmatiko njegovih sklepov. V obsežni razpravi „*Uklenjeni Parmenid*“, kjer razmišlja o virih metafizičnih resnic, je do dna pokazal, kako nas znanost podreja svojemu osnovnemu načelu – nujnosti. Vsakdo, kdor pripozna um in njegove evidence, je nesvoboden, priklenjen je nanj. „Od nas se ne zahteva samo, da se uklonimo nujnosti, ampak da se ji tudi priklonimo: v tem je vedno obstajala naloga filozofije in obstaja še danes.“ – „In mi smo prepričani,“ nadaljuje, „da prične komaj tam filozofija, kjer se odpre ‚kraljestvo‘ stroge nujnosti. Naše mišljenje ni v poslednjem namenu nič drugega nego iskanje take ‚strove nujnosti‘.“ Šele s premaganjem umskih principov, z odvratom od znanosti doživimo pravo, brezmejno, neodvisno svobodo. Dobro in zlo, pravilno in napačno, resnica in laž, princip kontradikcije in identitete, to so prav za prav proizvodi znanosti, dvigniti pa se moramo nad to pojme k višjemu in globljemu doživljanju sveta in dojemanju bistev stvari, k popolni svobodi.

Od znanosti se obrača Šestov h kaotičnim pravilom življenja, k njegovim razkolom, bolečinam, veličastnostim in lepotam, obrača se k „drugi“ resničnosti: neposredni, gibljivi, polni protislovij in nelogičnosti. Toda to resničnost doživimo le v samoti, v popolni notranji svobodi, doživimo jo v ekstazah, v brezupih, v predsmrtnih bojih, ko nam angel smrti prinese dvoje „drugih“ oči, s katerimi vidimo nato vse na nov način, drugače, kakor

vidijo vsi, ko gledamo skrajno osebno, zase, ko doživimo svojo resnico. „Takrat začne namreč človek“, piše Šestov v globoki knjigi *„Razodetja smrti“*, kjer se potaplja v globine umetniških vizij Dostojevskega in v poslednje izpovedi Tolstega, „nenadoma gledati razen tega, kar vsi vidijo in kar vidi tudi sam s svojimi starimi očmi, nekaj novega. In to novo vidi na poseben način, ne kakor ljudje, ampak kakor vidijo bitja ‚drugih svetov‘, tako namreč, da ni nič ‚nujno‘, ampak ‚svobodno‘, to pomeni, da se lahko pojavi, kadar izgine, in izgine, kadar se pojavi.“ Šestov je dojel, da so imeli take ‚druge‘ oči nekateri veliki umetniki, ki so izpovedovali v svojih vizijah skrivnosti človeške usode, bridkosti duše, ki si išče izhoda iz okov racionalne resničnosti v svobodo iracionalne resnice. Poglobil se je v umotvore Sofokleja, Euridipa, Shakespeareja (*„Etični problem pri Shakespeareju“*), v demonične mrakove Gogoljevega sveta, v Dostojevskega, Tolstega, Turgenjeva, Čehova... Izrazit podtalnež, človek z „drugim obrazom“, z „drugimi očmi“, ki mu jih je zapustil angel smrti, ko so ga peljali na šafot, pa je bil Dostojevskij, ta razboleli prebivalec „podzemlja“, uporni „premagovalec samorazvidnosti“, v globine, mrakove in nedoumnosti obrnjeni jasnovidec, neprestani zanikovalec umskega, matematičnega boga. Z novimi očmi je videl Dostojevskij „tam, kjer so ‚vsi‘ videli realnost, zgolj senco in strahove, tam pa, kjer ni bilo za ‚vse druge‘ ničesar, je videl – edino pravo resničnost.“ Odtod pri Dostojevskem neprestane izpovedi, odtod halucinacije, blaznenja, vizije, zamaknjenja, slutnje, odtod na videz nepričakovane dogodivščine njegovih junakov, odtod trpljenje, neprestano razbolevanje, zdvajanje, odtod opevanje slučajnega, nenadnega, neutemeljenega, odtod mrak, groza, grdota, razdejanje, nemir, stud, kaos. Človek iz „podzemlja“ je spoznal, da ni več nikakih izvenčasovnih, nadprostornih resnic, da ni nikakih osnovnih načel, da se resnica skriva v slučaju, v trenutku, v nepredvidenem.

In Tolstoj, modrec iz Sinjih Poljan, ali se ni pričel ob zatonu

svojega življenja nenadoma odmikati od vsega, kar je oboževal v svoji mladosti, ali ne odkrivamo v njegovih poslednjih spisih – v „Zapiskih blazneža“, v „Jutru po plesu“, v „Smrti Ivana Iliča“, v „Gospodarju in hlapcu“ – novih razodetij, novih izpovedi? Ali ne vidimo Tolstega, kako se utaplja v brezglasno samoto, v tegobe predsmrtnih slutenj, kako stoji ves izpremenjen pred „vesoljno sodbo“? Pred njegovimi očmi je pričenjala izginjati doslej tako oboževana resničnost z vsemi splošnimi resnicami, idejami, etičnimi principi, ki so se začele maličiti v pošastne strahove in fantome ter ga preganjati. Nova, doslej zaničevana resničnost se mu je začela odpirati pred očmi, občutje smrti pa je pretrgalo vse vezi z zunanjim, logičnim redom stvari in ga vrglo v popolno samoto, „ki je ni niti na dnu morja niti pod zemljo“. – V knjigi „Začetki in konci“ pa govori Šestov o Čehovu, „pesniku obupa“, kako se je pretežno nagibal v reševanje nerazrešljivih vprašanj, kako se je neprestano bavil z bodočnostjo, s smrtjo. Junaki Čehova so abnormalni, boje se luči in dneva, to so samotneži obupanci, ljudje „odveč“, postavljeni so v nadnaravno nujnost, da se ukvarjajo z vprašanji, na katere ne vedo nikakega odgovora.

Šestov ognjevitost izpoveduje povratak od spoznanja k razodetju, od filozofske učenosti k modrosti Svetega pisma, k izpovedim prorokov, k pravrelcem resnice in praosnovam bitja – k Bogu. Iskati pa ga moramo „Na mejah življenja“, v slučajnem, v breztalnosti, tam, kamor ne morejo seči Spinozovi geometrični obrazci, kjer obmolkne Kantov teoretični razum, Hegelova filozofija zgodovine in vsa znanstvena dogmatika. V Plotinovih ekstazah, o katerih govori v spisu „Besni govori“, je Šestov odkril prvine te božje filozofije; v Plotinovem spoznanju, da duša počiva v globokem spanju, dokler živi v telesu, in da jo more prebuditi le smrt. Duša počiva v globokem spanju, odkar je segel človek po sadežu na drevesu spoznanja dobrega in zlega, odkar se je zatekel k umu in ga proglasil za edino pot k resnici, k Bo-

gu. „Jezusova borba s smrtjo bo trajala do konca sveta“, vzklika Šestov za Pascalom, velikim zametovalcem znanstvenih resnic, ki ga je opel v spisu „*Noč na vrtu Getsemani*“. „Zato med tem časom ne smemo spati!“ Prebuditi se moramo, odvreči moramo od sebe vsa prepričanja, ki smo se jih navzeli, prebuditi se moramo v novo, višjo resničnost, v resničnost slutenega, neizrazljivega, neprijemljivega, v resničnost skrivnosti in smrti. Ob Plotinu in Pascalu pa je Šestov odkril še druge vodnike iz sna, omam in prevar uma in znanosti v novo, resnično življenje: Luthra, neizprosne odklonjevalca vsake nujnosti in neizogibnosti, ki jo proglašča znanost, Nietzscheja, ki je postavil pravo filozofijo „onstran dobrega in zlega“, Kierkegaardja, filozofa strahu in katastrofe, Shakespeareja, Dostojevskega, Tolstega, velike ustvarjalce, izpovedovalce notranjih razkolov, zdvajanj in iskanj. Leon Šestov pa je med njimi najodločnejši in najneizprosnejši zanikovalec znanosti in vsega umskega, glasnik filozofije tragičnosti, breztalnosti, slučajnega, smrti, svobode, vodnik v novo življenje k resnici, k Bogu.

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Obraz Leona Šestova je obraz asketa, obraz samotneža, obraz mistika, ki mu pomeni življenje neprestano bedenje na vrtu Getsemani, neprestano pričakovanje poslednjega razodetja. Njegovi spisi pripovedujejo o neutešenem prisluškovanju podtalnim snovanjem duha, o dolgih nočnih meditacijah, o hrepenenjih in vizijah, o pogovorih s samim seboj in z nevidnimi skrivnostmi, o grozah in zapuščenosti sredi vidnega, otipljivo dokazanega sveta. V ostro razritem čelu, v gubah nad očmi, v zarezah okoli ust, v suhih, upadlih licih, v močno izbočenih ličnih kosteh, v motno žarečih, z vekami napol zastrtih očeh, ki gledajo kakor od onstran telesa, je vtisnjen mrak teh nočnih bedenj, trpka grenkoba vednega domotožja po resnici, po Bogu, neka otožna, nedoumljiva tegoba.

Tako se mi je vtisnil v spomin njegov obraz v dolgih večernih pogovorih na njegovem stanovanju v ulici Alfred Laurant v Boulogne sur Seine, kjer živi v krogu svojih domačih in v bližini svojega prijatelja Alekseja Remizova že dolgo vrsto let. – V njegovi delovni sobi je tišina, ki jo le včasih zmoti napol pridušen korak v sosednji sobi ali pa nenaden ropot na ulici. Ob vsej desni strani pri vhodu v sobo je obsežna knjižnica: zbirke zbranih del antičnih, srednjeveških in modernih filozofov v izvirnikih in prevodih: od Platona, Aristotela mimo Plotina, sholastov, Descartesa, Luthra, Pascala, Spinoze, Kanta, Hegela do Nietzscheja, Solovjova, Kierkegaardja, Berdjajeva, Husserla, Heideggerja in premnogih drugih. Nato se vrste spisi Puškina, Gogolja, Dostojevskega, Tolstega, Čehova, Turgenjeva, Merežkovskega, Remizova; ob njih različne druge filozofske knjige, zbirke razprav, priročniki, brošure in revije. Na najvišjem predalu pa so razne izdaje spisov Leona Šestova: v ruščini, v nemščini, v angleščini, celotna zbirka njegovih del v francoščini in še različni prevodi v drugih jezikih. – Na stenah nekaj slik, stara stenska ura, ob steni pri vhodu zofa s stoli, ob nasprotni steni pisalna miza, pred njo velik naslanjač, kjer običajno sedi Šestov, ob oknu nekaj stojal z rožami; vzdušje enostavnosti, preprostosti, miru, samote...

Šestov sedi zelo rad pri pisalni mizi: pred njim leže popisani listi, napol priprta knjiga, ki jo je najbrže pravkar prebiral, najnovejše filozofske revije, škatla za cigarete, v katero seže večkrat v večeru, slika v preprostem okviru, manjše drobnarije, ki izpopolnjujejo vtisk nekega vase zaključenega sveta. Šestov govori počasi, premišljeno, seže včasih nenadoma z desno roko nekam predse v zrak, kakor da bi iz njega utrgal besedo ali podobo, nato pa se pomiri, nasloni glavo na roko, ki počasi in zamišljeno brodi po bradi, jo upogiba, gladi in češe. Njegov glas je moško zrel, topel, prisrčen, harmonično uglašen, dasi se zdi, da je poln nekih zvokovnih prelomov.

„Na univerzi sem se bavil s sociološkimi problemi. Moja di-

sertacija *„Zahteve delavskega razreda v Rusiji“* je bila leta 1890. zaplenjena. Za filozofijo sem se začel resno zanimati prav za prav šele šest let kasneje, dotlej sploh nisem prebiral nikakih filozofskih spisov. Prva moja knjiga je *„Shakespeare in njegov kritik Brandes“*, ki je izšla leta 1898. V njej sem skušal pobiti Brandesovo neupravičeno omalovaževanje in neumevanje tega velikega tvorca. Bil sem namreč že od nekdaj velik oboževalec Shakespearea, zato me je takrat se zelo razburila Brandesova enostranska sodba, posebno to, da ni mogel doživeti osrednje Shakespearejeve tragike, ki je izražena v kriku: ‚Čas je iz tečajev!‘ – Takrat sem študiral istočasno tudi Kanta in Shakespearea in Shakespeare je premagal Kanta. Nato sem bral Nietzscheja, Schopenhauerja in velike ruske pisatelje. Za grško filozofijo sem se pa pričel zanimati šele kasneje.

„Kritika prve knjige je bila druga moja knjiga: *„Pojem dobrega pri Tolstem in Nietzscheju“*, ki je izšla leta 1900. V knjigi o Shakespeareju in Brandesu sem bil že prepričan, da moramo čas znova postaviti v tečaje. Toda nekaj let kasneje ob pisanju novega sestavka o Tolstem sem se zavedal, da je sicer čas iz tečajev, da pa ne bomo ganili niti z mezincem, da bi ga zopet postavili v red, naj se razleti v kosce. V tej zavesti namreč, da je čas iz tečajev, je začetek vsake tragedije, tedaj se nam odpre popolnoma nov svet, svet nove vzročnosti in novih vprašanj. Shakespeare je čutil, da se ne smemo ustaviti le pri splošno objektivnem svetu, le pri vidni realnosti, ampak da moramo prodirati vedno globlje, v temo notranjih razkolov. Iz takih tragičnih spoznanj, o katerih nam govore Shakespearejeve tragedije, izvirajo vendar vsa velika religiozna spoznanja. Literarni zgodovinarji in esteti mislijo, da dojamejo bistvo tragedije, kadar govore o tragični veličini, o tragični lepoti, toda s temi oznakami se samo izognejo osnovnim vprašanjem, ki so skrita v tragediji. Ali ne bi morali vendar govoriti prej o tragični grdoti, neznatnosti in grozi, kakor pa o tragičnem junaštvu in tragični veličini? Tragedija je namreč

nekaj notranjega, ki nima nikakega opravka s tragedijami na sceni, z odrskimi junaki; tragedijo je Shakespeare nosil v sebi, on se je neprestano boril z njo, v njem so se vendar porajala velika tragična doživetja in spoznanja. Ali pa ni najsilnejša tragedija biblična tragedija – tragedija izvirnega greha?“

– Drugi Vaši spisi ...?

„V tej dobi je izšla knjiga *‘Filozofija tragedije’* (1903), kjer govorim o Dostojevskem in Nietzscheju, nato *‘Na mejah življenja’*, kjer govorim o oboževanju breztalnosti in o etičnem problemu pri Shakespeareju. Iz te dobe so tudi *‘Začetki in konci’*, kjer pišem o Čehovu o ustvarjanju *‘ex nihilo’*, in *‘Veliki predvečeri’* (1910). Kesneje so nastali spisi *‘Na Jobovi tehtnici’*, *‘Noč na vrtu Getsemani’*, *‘Razodetja smrti’*, *‘Potestas clavium’* in drugi. Leta 1921. sem prišel v Paris in naslednjega leta je v *‘La Nouvelle Revue Française’* moj esej o Dostojevskem v prevodu Borisa de Schloezerja. Nato so začele polagoma izhajati moje knjige v francoščini in nemščini, pravkar je izšla tudi v angleščini knjiga *‘Na Jobovi tehtnici’*, izdali pa so jo tudi v Ameriki. Dokaj let sem že sotrudnik *‘Filozofske revije’* (*Revue philosophique*), kjer je izšel proti Husserlovi zasnovi filozofije moj spis *‘Memento mori’* in kjer pravkar izhaja daljša moja razprava o Nietzscheju in Kierkegaardju *‘Falariški bik’*. Poleg tega sodelujem še pri *‘La Nouvelle Revue Française’* in pri mnogih nemških revijah. Razen tega predavam skoro vsako leto na Sorbonni in večkrat sem povabljen na predavanje v Nemčijo, kjer imam mnogo znancev in prijateljev ...“

– Središčna misel ...?

„Problem resnice, kaj je resnica, je osrednje vprašanje vsega mojega dela. V knjigah *‘Na Jobovi tehtnici’* in v *‘Potestas clavium’* sem podrobno naznačil in izpovedal ta problem. Biblični Job pravi: Ako bi postavili na tehtnico vso mojo žalost in vse moje trpljenje, bilo bi težje kakor morski pesek. Kaj pa vendar pomeni tehtati? Job je verjel, da je nekje taka tehtnica, kjer lahko

tehtamo človeško trpljenje, in da so včasih strah, brezup, veselje, žalost, groza težji od morskega peska. Za znanstvenika je taka trditev nesmiselna, zanj ni take tehtnice, kjer bi bila človeška doživetja težja od fizičnih teles. Znanstvenik skuša priti do resnice z umom, zato ne more razumeti Jobovega prepričanja, njegovih razlogov. On proglašuje za edino resnico tisto, kar je stalno, nespremenljivo, kar se neprestano ponavlja, kar je splošnoveljavno, in zavrača vse, kar se ne sklada z umskimi načeli, kar jim nasprotuje. Ali ni tedaj Jobova resnica popolnoma nesprejemljiva? Ona je vendar nepripravna, neuporabljiva, brez koristi, in kar je najvažnejše, ona oporeka umskim samorazvidnostim, ki dajejo našemu mišljenju gotovost in uravnanost. Ali pa ne stremi prav moderni človek krčevito po dokazljivih dejstvih, po znanstvenih odkritjih, ki so mu ustvarili civilizacijo, tehniko, stroje, železnice, aeroplane in vso množico koristnih predmetov? Ali ni skoraj jasno tedaj, da vidi le v znanosti vso resnico?

„Resnica pa ne prenese vezi umskih razvidnosti, ne moremo jo vkleniti v znanstvena načela. Resnice ne moremo dokazati niti pokazati, resnica se nam razodene nenadoma, nepričakovano, le v trenutkih, v ekstazah, ona je prav tako skrivnostna kakor so čudeži, prav tako nerazumljiva. Luther piše nekje naslednje: Ko je Mojzes na gori Sinaju gledal Boga za trenutek iz obličja v obličje, ni vedel za svoje zakone, šele ko se je povrnil z gore Sinaja, jih je moral napraviti. Ali je bila tedaj Mojzesova vizija le iluzija, neresnica, in je bila edina resnica vsakdanjost, ker se je neprestano ponavljala? Ali ne doživimo resnice le v hipih? — Za Schopenhauerja je na primer ljubezen le kratka iluzija. Žena, ki jo gledamo v ljubavnem zavzetju, se nam zdi najlepša, edina vredna naše ljubezni. Ko pa mine erotično čuvstvo, zapazimo, da je enaka vsem drugim ženam, da ima celó polno napak, ki jih doslej nismo videli, a so jih videli vsi drugi. Schopenhauer sklepa, da človek v erotični ekstazi ne vidi prave realnosti, ker ne vidi tega, kar vidijo vsi, da je tedaj v zmoti. Toda ali ne

doživimo le v ekstazi prave realnosti, ali ne spoznamo morda prav takrat prave resnice, ki nam je sicer nedostopna, in ali ne postane morda naša sodba napačna prav tedaj, kadar se ujema s sodbami vseh?“

– Toda smisel popolnega zanikovanja uma ...?

„Povedal Vam bom zanimiv dogodek, ki se mi je pripetil v Parizu. Ko je izšla leta 1923. moja prva knjiga v francoščini *‘Noč na vrtu Getsemani’* mi je rekel francoski filozof Levy-Brühl:

„Čudovito pisana knjiga, bolje ni mogoče pisati. Toda, mislite li da ste me popolnoma prepričali? Slednjič, vidite, bi vendar rad imel vsaj malo svečko, da bi si posvetil v temi.

Jaz tudi, sem odvrnil.

Toda, kam vendar vodi vse to, kar Vi pripovedujete? Pokazal sem z roko proti nebu.“

– Kje pa je vendar izvor tega človekovega nagnjenja v zgolj umsko tolmačenje sveta in zadnjih vprašanj ...?

„Izhodišče človekovega zgolj umskega usmerjanja je v izvirnem grehu, v prvem spoznanju dobrega in zlega. Biblična ‚legenda‘ ima drugačen pomen, kakor pa ga ji pripisuje od filozofije odvisna teologija. Bog je Adamu prepovedal jesti od drevesa sredi raja, od drevesa spoznanja dobrega in zlega, teologija pa neprestano uči, naj človek je prav od tega drevesa in ne od drugih. Pred izvirnim grehom je bil Adam brez sramu, svoboden, po padcu pa je nenadoma spoznal, da je nag in grd. Iz spoznanja izvirajo vsa načela, vsi zakoni, vse ideje in vsi pojmi, izvira zlo, greh, razvoj, napredek in brez števila splošnoveljavnih sodb.

„Kierkegaard misli drugače. Dasi so me nekateri filozofi nazivali vzhodnega Kierkegaardja, vendar sem se z njegovimi spisi seznanil komaj pred nekaj leti – in sicer na zelo zanimiv način. Ko sem se po nekih predavanjih v Švici napolnil v Freiburg, kjer je Husserle profesor, me ta vpraša, kaj mislim o Kierkegaardju. Odgovoril sem mu, da poznam Kierkegaardja zgolj po imenu in da še nisem bral nobenega njegovega dela. Husserle je bil neko-

liko začuden in mi je rekel, da ga moram na vsak način brati.

– Sedaj, ko sem prebral vsega Kierkegaardja, vidim, da sva si v mnogih stvareh popolnoma nasprotna. Kierkegaard pripoznava nujnost, neizogibnost nekaterih načel, dasi je filozof katastrofe. Koliko je moral Bog trpeti, razmišlja nekje, ko je videl v mukah umirati svojega sina, pa mu ni mogel pomagati. Kierkegaard je bil tedaj prepričan, da Bog ne bi mogel izpremeniti usode svojega sina, ako bi tudi hotel, ker je bil vezan. V tolmačenju izvirnega greha pa se popolnoma razhajava. Ko je bil prvi človek se nedolžen, trdi Kierkegaard, je njegov um še spal, šele po spoznanju dobrega in zlega se je prebudil. Jaz pa sodim docela obratno: pred spoznanjem je bil človeški duh svež, zdrav in buden, po spoznanju dobrega in zlega pa je omahnil in zaspal in spi nepretrgoma do danes – to spanje pa se imenuje znanje. Tudi Plotin, ki je bil spočetka prepričan, da je edini kriterij spoznanja um, je kesneje trdil, da je duša toliko časa v globokem spanju, dokler živi v telesu.

Znanstvena filozofija je seveda prepričana o obratnem: ona ve, da je smrt spanje in življenje budnost.“

– V tem smislu je vsekakor globlje razumljiv Vaš odpor proti umu, proti znanstveni filozofiji.

„Prave, edine in najgloblje kritike čistega razuma ni napisal Kant niti ne znanost, ampak ona je zapisana v Svetem pismu v božjih besedah: ‚Od vsega drevja v vrtu jej; od drevesa spoznanja dobrega in zlega pa nikar ne jej, kajti tisti dan, ko boš od njega jedel, boš moral umreti!‘“

– Kako pa da ste se obrnili v svoji kritiki znanstvene filozofije predvsem proti Husserlu?

„Najlepše Vam bo razjasnil moje razmerje do Husserla naslednji dogodek. Ko sem bil pred leti v Frankfurtu, me je vprašal Max Scheller, zakaj sem tako viharno napadel Husserla. Odgovoril sem mu tako-le: Husserle je bil zame izredno velik, notranje pomemben dogodek v življenju. On me je odločno postavil

pred neodložljivo alternativo: odločiti se ali za znanost, ki jo je tako ognjevitno branil Husserle, ali za resnico izven znanosti. In odločil sem se za resnico. Zato sem se tako boril proti Husserlu, ker sem ga odkril v sebi, boril sem se tedaj proti samemu sebi, proti svojim nagnjenjem v umsko reševanje vseh prvih vprašanj, hotel sem namreč v sebi ubiti tega drugega človeka.

„V tem, vidite, tiči ves moj upor proti Husserlu, ki ga zelo cenim in ki ga smatram za najvidnejšega filozofa dvajsetega stoletja. On edini si je namreč upal jasno, brez oklevanja in brez izbegavanja izreči to, česar si drugi niso upali niti misliti, kajše sami sebe priznati – namreč: filozofija je znanost, filozofija mora biti znanost. V tern pogledu je Husserle moj učitelj, kajti on edini mi je pokazal vse lastnosti in možnosti znanstvene filozofije, v njegovem zagovoru znanosti sem odkril vso enostranost umskih principov, ob njem sem se namreč lahko povzpел do popolne dograditve svojega sveta. – Moj namen je bil, pokazati, da um nima take moči, kakor si mislimo, da nas prav za prav omejuje in ovira v pravem doživljanju resnice in Boga. Spinoza je odgovoril nekemu svojemu korespondentu, ki mu je očital, da smatra svojo filozofijo za najboljšo, tako-le: ‚Jaz ne mislim, da sem našel najboljšo filozofijo, ampak vem, da imam pravo filozofijo. Če me pa vprašaš, kako jaz to vem, tedaj ti odgovorim: prav tako vem, kakor ti da znaša vsota treh trikotnikovih kotov vsoto dveh pravih kotov; in da to zadostuje, ne bo nihče tajil, kdor ima zdrav človeški um.‘ Znanost stremi tedaj po, evidentnih dokazih, na razvidnih resnicah je zgrajena in ne prenese ničesar, kar bi oporekalo umsko dognanim principom. Husserle je hotel odstraniti iz filozofije modrost, trenutnost, nedokazljivost in osnovati filozofijo na popolnoma evidentnih dejstvih. Toda ali ni izven tega sistematično urejenega znanstvenega organizma stvari, ki so vse globlje problemske in ki naj bodo zamolčane in zapostavljene? Znanost je imela sicer velike zunanje uspehe, kar so že stoiki izpovedali z izrekom: Si vis tibi omnia subicere to su-

bice rationi. Toda ali je v tem že zapopadena resnica? Resnica ni stalna, kakor misli znanost, ampak trenutna, ni evidentna, ampak skrita, nevidna. Ako so znanstvene resnice res neizpodbitne, se jim vendar moramo pokoriti, kje pa je tedaj moja svoboda? Um pa že od vsega početka zanikuje Boga, njegovo bitnost. V hipu, ko se je človek vprašal, ali je Bog, je že zapadel v oklepe umskih kalkulacij, zapadel je v brezverje in zanikal rešitev tega vprašanja, ker ni mogel več do resnice.

„Sicer pa sva s Husserlom velika prijatelja. Ko sem ga pred leti obiskal v Freiburgu, me je takole predstavil krogu svojih prijateljev, ki so se zbrali zvečer pri njem: ‚Predstavljam Vam svojega prijatelja Šestova. Sprijateljila sva se ob najinem prvem polemičnem srečanju ...‘ Ko sva se nekoč pogovarjala o metafiziki in znanosti, mi je rekel: ‚Tudi to, kar Vi pišete in delate, imenujem jaz znanosti.‘ S tem je vsekakor potrdil važnost vprašanj, ki sem jih zastavil, dasi so v nasprotju z vso umsko koncepcijo filozofije.“

– Nietzsche ...?

„Nietzsche je bil zame veliko razodetje. Ko sem prvič bral knjigo ‚Genealogie der Moral‘, sem bil tako globoko presunjen, da nisem mogel spati vso noč. Tudi Nietzsche, vidite, je spoznal vse nakane znanosti, vso njeno navideznost, njeno trmo, negotovost, nemoč njenih sintetičnih sodb a priori, njenih načel, imperativov, tudi on je iskal gotovosti tam, kjer vidijo drugi breztalnost, in je videl breztalnost tam, kjer so se drugi čutili gotove. Nietzsche je spoznal, da ni več Boga, da so ga ljudje ubili in zaradi tega se ga je polastila taka groza, tak obup in taka blaznost, da se ni mogel nikoli več otresti tega brezupnega spoznanja. Veliko govore razni ideologi o Nietzscheju optimistu, toda v vseh njegovih spisih je skrito toliko groze in trpljenja, da bi morali prepovedati razširjanje njegovih spisov, ako bi ljudje doumeli vse to, kar je Nietzsche povedal med vrsticami.

„Na tvorbo Nietzschejeve miselnosti je imel Luther velik

vpliv, o tem danes ni več dvoma. V Nietzschejevi krvi je bila predvsem vsa biblija in po njej Luther, ki se pozna tudi v njegovem stilu. Morda bi zamenjali besedo vpliv s točnejšim izrazom – sorodnost. ‚Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert‘ in ‚Der Wille zur Macht‘, oba izreka sta tvorjena v Luthrovem duhu. Toda največja razlika med njima pa je v njunem odnosu do resnice, v njunem pojmovanju nujnosti.

Nietzsche je bil kljub vsej odpornosti in upornosti vendarle upogljiv in je sprejel nujnost spoznane resnice kot nekaj neizogibnega, dočim je bil Luther popolnoma neupogljiv. Luther se je zavedal, da nima pravice zavreči tudi takega spoznanja, ki bi bilo v opreki z vsemi umskimi načeli. ‚Zato moramo, piše, kadar stremimo za pravico, za življenjem, za večnim izveličanjem, popolnoma odstraniti izpred naših oči zakon, kakor da ni nikoli in da ne bo nikoli obstajal, kakor da ga sploh ni. Nietzsche je bil sicer precej blizu alternative: jaz ali ti, a se ni nikoli tako ostro opredelil nego Luther.“

– Toda Nietzschejeva bolezen ...?

„Danes je že skoro dognano, da je bil Nietzsche v resnici bolan, o tem pričajo najnovejša medicinska odkritja. Toda, ali pa medicina sploh more doumeti notranje jedro Nietzschejeve miselnosti, ali jo ona more razložiti? O tem ni dvoma, da spoznava bolnik vse globlje od zdravega človeka, da prodira v drugi svet resničnosti, ki je navadnemu človeku zaprt. Ali mislite, da bi mogel na primer Freud ozdraviti bolnega Nietzscheja, ali pa ni bolj verjetno, da bi mogel Nietzsche ozdraviti Freuda? Psihoanaliza je namreč prav tako problematična, kakor vsaka znanost, ki se hoče povzpeti do razreševanja velikih skrivnosti. Največja Freudova napaka je v tem, da hoče biti filozof. Znanstveni zaključki pač še ne dajo možnosti, da bi z njih pomočjo sklepali na poslednja filozofska vprašanja. Kako naj bi tedaj Freud zdravil Nietzscheja filozofa?“

Nekega večera sem našel Šestova zatopljenega v branje naj-

novejše Bergsonove knjige „Les Deux sources de la morale et de la religion“.

„Najnovejše Bergsonovo delo,“ mi pravi, „knjiga, ki jo je obljubljal že toliko časa. Dasi je dobro pisana, vendar me je izredno razočarala. Večkrat so me v Rusiji imenovali Bergsonovega učenca, toda njegove knjige sem dobro spoznal šele, ko sem prišel v inozemstvo. Bil sem takrat nad vse presenečen. Mislim sem, da bom v Bergsonu našel sotovariša, toda videl sem, da se je tudi on ujel v čarobni krog uma. Z Bergsonom se je dogodilo prav isto, kar se je pripetilo še nekaterim drugim, ki se jim je razodela velika resnica, a so jo zatajili. Bergson zanikuje važnost kaosa, on stremi v neke vrste red, dasi zanikuje vrednost uma. Zanj religije prav za prav ni; to, kar imenuje Bergson v najnovejši knjigi religijo, je religija uma.“

– Prav s tega stališča, kakor ste označili Bergsonovo pojmovanje religije, me zanima tudi Vaš odnos do religiozne filozofije Vladimira Solovjova.

„Solovjov je bil brez dvoma eden najzanimivejših Rusov ob koncu minulega stoletja. Bil je tudi izredno nadarjen, že v gimnaziji je prebral skoraj vse največje filozofe in razmišljal o najtežjih filozofskih vprašanjih. S štiri in dvajsetimi leti je bil že doktor, kar je bilo takrat v Rusiji izredno težko. Solovjov je bil že od vsega početka bolj nagnjen k spekulaciji, a ne toliko k razodetju. O osnovah njegove religiozne filozofije sem razmišljal v obsežni razpravi ‚*Spekulacija in razodetje*‘, ki je izšla pred leti tudi v nemški reviji ‚za oblikovanje nove stvarnosti‘, v ‚Die Tat‘. Na Solovjova je vplivala mimo grških mislecev in Spinoze posebno nemška filozofija, kakor na vse ruske filozofe, predvsem Kant, Hegel in Schelling. Solovjov je hotel že od vsega početka ustvariti religiozno filozofijo, toda v njegovem delu je nastala usodna dilema: združiti je hotel z razodetjem umske principe in tako napraviti nov znanstveno filozofski sistem. Tako je v spisu ‚*Pojem Boga*‘ celó branil Spinozo in njegovega geometričnega

Boga. Zanj pa je bila svoboda predvsem svoboda poslušnosti. Šele tik pred smrtjo, v zadnji knjigi ‚Trije govori‘ se je Solovjov povsem zavedel velike dileme, ki je med pravo religiozno filozofijo in religioznim spekulativnim mišljenjem. Prav zavoljo svojega nagnjenja v spekulacijo se je Solovjov tudi neprestano boril proti ruski literaturi, v kateri se je naše mišljenje na tako svojevrsten in globok način izrazilo. Nihče ni pri nas tako svobodno, tako svojsko in tako globoko mislil, kakor so mislili Puškin, Lermontov, Gogolj, Dostojevskij, Tolstoj in nekateri drugi.“

– Solovjov in Dostojevskij ...?

„Mnogi so bili prepričani in so tudi pisali, da sta bila Dostojevskij in Solovjov enako misleča. Toda to ni res. Saj je Solovjov, kadarkoli je pisal o Dostojevskem, vedno zamolčal prav tisto, za kar se je Dostojevskij vedno boril. Edino v ‚Dnevniku pisatelja‘ lahko zasledite vpliv Solovjova, toda le v bolj ali manj šolskem posnemanju njegovih idej. Njun medsebojni odnos je bil izredno zanimiv. Šestdesetletni, v filozofiji in v vedah skoraj neizobraženi Dostojevskij se je pustil v nekaterih stvareh popolnoma voditi od štiriindvajsetletnega Solovjova. Kljub nekemu navideznemu soglasju pa sta si bila oba notranje popolnoma tuja. Solovjov je iskal rešitve vseh velikih problemov v umski spekulaciji, dočim je bil Dostojevskij že po svoji naravi sovražen vsaki znanstveni razvidnosti, vsakemu razmišljanju. Prav tako so pa tudi Solovjova izredno odbijale Dostojevskega vizije, njegova podtalnost in miselnost. Zato je razumljivo, da ga je po njegovi smrti prav kmalu popolnoma pozabil in ga ni nič več omenjal.“

Nekega večera mi je Šestov pripovedoval svoje pojmovanje sodobnosti.

„Danes živimo v velikih duševnih, političnih, socialnih in življenjskih razkolih. Dosedanje politične vrednote so povsod v razsulu, nova gibanja – komunizem, fašizem, nemški nacionalizem – pa še niso ustvarila novih vrednot. Pozornost današnjega človeka se obrača od metafizičnih problemov povsem k

zunanji ureditvi življenja, k problemom medsebojnega sožitja, h gospodarski preosnovi sveta. Toda mnogo bolj kakor kedaj se čutijo na dnu vseh teh teženj novi eksistencialni problemi, iskanje nove življenjske ciljnosti, doumevanje sveta z metafizičnih vidikov in v tem oziru je nemška filozofija danes najbolj razgibana.

„Že od renesanse stremi Evropa k popolni racionalizaciji življenja. Znanstveni napor poslednjih stoletij so pokazali izredno velike praktične uspehe; sociologija, najmodernejša pozitivna veda, si je naredila celó nalogo, za vselej odpraviti s sveta bedo, trpljenje, nesrečo; toda v reševanju velikih iracionalnih vprašanj je ta doba zelo malo pomenila, dasi ima mnogo filozofov. Zanimivo je, da je izredno racionalistično devetnajsto stoletje vendar rodilo mnogo velikih metafizikov: Nietzscheja, Kierkegaardja, Tolstega, Dostojevskega, ki so stremeli v popolnoma drugo smer, kakor njih čas sam. Mislim, da se lahko zelo motimo, ako si hočemo razložiti pojav velikih mož s političnimi ali zgodovinskimi vzroki. Nemčija je bila v minulem stoletju mirna, mogočna, urejena, in prav tedaj se je pojavil tako razgiban in nemiren duh, kakor je bil Nietzsche. Vsa velika vprašanja vzniknejo spričo notranjih duševnih pretresov, ne pa spričo zunanje usmerjenosti dobe. Zato občutimo vpliv velikih duhov komaj v kesnejši dobi, saj so v sodobnosti pretežno neopaženi in neumljivi. Na primer: Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Dostojevskij. Razen tega pa so ljudje velike duhove vedno uporabljali za svoje namene. Kaj vsega niso pisali o Nietzschejevem imenu, govorili o Dostojevskega politični in celó znanstveni ideologiji ter ga skušali prikrojiti svojim težnjam ...“

– Sodobna filozofija ...?

„Nemčija ima danes brez dvoma najvidnejše filozofe – Husserla, Heideggerja, Jaspersa, protestantskega teologa Bartha in nekaj mladih izredno zanimivih mislecev. Za moje mladosti je bila vsa nemška filozofija usmerjena v pozitivizem, danes pa so

metafizična vprašanja najbolj v ospredju. Pri mnogih predavanjih in potovanjih po Nemčiji sem zapazil, kako veliko zanimanje vlada danes posebno med mladino za etične in metafizične probleme. Pred tridesetimi leti mi ne bi bilo mogoče govoriti o stvareh, ki so danes popolnoma umljive, ne mogel bi se izpovedati proti umskim principom, proti znanosti, proti dosedanji koncepciji filozofije, ker ne bi imel poslušalcev. Danes je vse izpremenjeno. Sedaj lahko razumete, zakaj ima hipno Kierkegaard tako močan vpliv na nemško filozofijo, posebno na Heideggerja in Jaspersa. Izmed modernih nemških filozofov je bil tudi zelo zanimiv Husserlov učenec Max Scheller. Spoznala sva se v opatiji Abbaye de Pontigny, kamor ga je bil pred leti povabil Paul Desjardins kakor mene, da prisostvujeva debatnim prireditvam. ‚Prvič vidim nekega Husserlovega pristaša, ki je katolik!‘ mu pravim. ‚Je že vse mimo, mi odgovori, sem že agnostik!‘ Kesneje me je Scheller tudi večkrat obiskal v Parizu.

„Francozi se pretežno bavijo z zgodovino filozofije, s pisanjem študij o posameznih filozofih, z ugotavljanjem njih miselnosti ali pa s prikazovanjem razvoja nekaterih filozofskih problemov; to imenujejo znanost. Francozi ne poznajo sistematične filozofije, ne bavijo se niti z etiko niti z metafiziko. Reševanje metafizičnih problemov smatrajo sploh za brezplodno delo, ki nima nikake stvarne koristi niti pomena. Kako si naiven, si mislijo, ako meniš, da boš ti rešil življenjsko uganko, ki je niso rešili niti Platon niti Plotin niti Pascal niti vsi drugi. Profesorji filozofije sicer govore o filozofiji, a ne razodenejo nikakega svojega nazora. Edina izjema je Bergson, ki pa je obljubljal svojo najnovejšo knjigo trideset let. Francozi tudi zelo malo prevajajo. Husserl je v Franciji skoro nepoznan in vse, kar je do danes o njem izšlo v francoskih revijah, so napisali pretežno tujci, največ Rusi. – Ako bi me vprašali, kje naj bi študirali filozofijo, bi Vam svetoval Nemčijo. Danes žive tam izredni pedagogi in globokoumni metafiziki.

„Že od nekdaj je imela nemška filozofija odločilen vpliv na rusko oficielno filozofijo, predvsem na univerzitetne filozofe. Med sodobnimi Španci je Ortega y Gasset učenec nemške marburške šole. Tudi na Unamuno, ki ga dobro poznam, je delno vplivala Nemčija. Unamuno je živel dolgo časa v Parizu in sem ga večkrat srečal v različnih filozofskih krogih. Takih prijetnih kozerjev, kakor je on, sem srečal le malo. Pripravljen je govoriti ure in ure ter zabavati vso okolico. Imel pa je v Parizu tudi nekaj posebnosti, ena izmed teh je bila ta, da se ni hotel nikoli voziti, ampak je povsod hodil peš. – Posebno je vplivala nemška filozofija tudi na Berdjajeva. Ob Kantu in Schellingu ga je najbolj privlačil mistik Böhme. Zadnje čase se Berdjajev nagiba v neke vrste krščanski komunizem. Posebna razlika med Berdjajevim in menoj je v najinem tolmačenju izvirnega greha. Berdjajev je Solovjovov učenec ter zelo nagnjen k sistematični filozofiji in v pripoznavanje nujnosti umskih postulatov, dasi je tudi blizu razodetju. Na dnu vsega njegovega mišljenja lebdi misel, kako združiti umska načela z religioznimi doživetji.“

– Berdjajev je bil odločen odklanjevalec sedanjega ruskega družabnega reda. Vaše ...?

„O sodobni Rusiji je izredno težko govoriti. Njena bodočnost se mi zdi temna in nerazveseljiva, v tem oziru sem pesimist. Mislim, da bo v Rusiji še mnogo huje, kakor je bilo doslej. Berdjajev pa je nasprotno bolj optimističen, on upa, da bo prišla iz Rusije nova beseda. Politični položaj je danes tam prav tako nevzdržen, ako ne mnogo bolj, kakor v minulem stoletju. Povsod je polno ovaduhov, detektivov, hujskačev in podrepnikov. Prej ste bili vsaj toliko svobodni, da ste lahko molčali, danes niti molčati ne smete več, kajti molk vas izdaja; danes se morate izraziti. Izpod enega despotizma je prišla Rusija pod drugega. Ruski kmet je danes osovražen in še bolj nesvoboden, kakor je bil, vzeli so mu skoraj vse. V zgodovini še ni bilo takega suženjstva, kakršno je sedaj. Tudi religiozno življenje je popolnoma uničeno, vsako

leto se bolj širi brezverstvo, posebno med mladino, ki ji je država vzela Boga, cerkev in etos. Kakšna svoboda je vendar to, ako niste niti etično niti religiozno svobodni? Razen tega pa je danes Rusija tudi gospodarsko skoraj popolnoma neuravnana. Oficielno se sicer pojejo slavospevi sedanjemu režimu, se hvali in razglašajo po časopisih, koliko je napravil in kako je preuredil Rusijo, v resnici pa je vse to le umetna krinka in prikrivanje.“

– Toda vloga Gorkega v sedanji Rusiji ...?

„Gorki je postal popoln pristaš sedanjih razmer v Rusiji in se obnaša tako, kakor se prej ne bi obnašal niti policist. Že pred vojno sem ga cenil neizmerno manj od Čehova. Gorki je izredno samoljuben in samosvoj. Prepričan je, da se lahko pride do velikih umetniških del brez kulture, zato zaničuje vse visoko izobražene pisatelje. Razen tega pa je o sebi uverjen, da je prorok nove dobe, ki prihaja, in da je on središče vsega dogajanja v svetu, prav za prav pa je le pohleven in ponižen klečeplazec diktatorja Stalina ...“

– Vaše ...?

Povedal Vam bom zelo značilen dogodek, ki se mi je pripetil pred odhodom v tujino in ki živo pojasnjuje sedanje razmere v Rusiji. Bil sem takrat profesor na univerzi v Kijevu, moj zaslužek pa je bil zelo majhen. Tudi moja žena, ki je zdravnica, ni zaslužila nič bolje, edino moja sestra je po naključju največ zaslužila. Živeli smo zelo slabo in v velikem pomanjkanju. Da bi si nekoliko izboljšal tako slab položaj in da bi nekoliko več zaslužil, sem vzel nekaj ur več na teden. Toda nekega dne se pojavi pri meni doma mlad človek, ki mi izjavi, da v Rusiji ni nikomur potrebno, prenapenjati se od dela, in da ni nujno, imeti toliko predavanj. – A kako naj vendar živim? ‚Ali imate kako knjigo pripravljeno?‘ me vpraša. ‚Prodajte nam jo, takoj jo bomo izdali.‘ – ‚Imam,‘ pravim in mu pokažem pravkar dokončani spis ‚*Potestas clavium*‘. Knjigo vzame, spravi in odide. Čez nekaj tednov se znova pojavi z njo pri meni. ‚Vi se borite proti

evropski filozofiji,‘ pravi, ‚mi pa proti kapitalizmu, zato lahko delamo skupaj. Knjigo tedaj kupimo. Samo nekaj. Pred tiskom še napišite na koncu knjige eno stran ali vsaj nekaj odstavkov o komunizmu, edino to malenkost napravite in knjiga bo takoj izšla.‘ – Jaz sem odklonil.“

Ruskega filozofa judovskega porekla LEVA ŠESTOVA (18-66–1938) je na začetku tridesetih letih 20. stoletja Slovencem prvi predstavil Anton Ocvirk, ki je malo potem vpeljal na Slovensko novo literarno vedo – primerjalno književnost. Za Šestovovo misel je značilno, da ni strogo filozofska, ampak se giblje skoz literaturo, religijo in filozofijo oziroma po njihovih mejnih področjih, pri tem pa sodobno mišljenje nagovarja še zlasti s konceptom »breztalnosti«. Zato ni naključje, da Oddelek za primerjalno književnost in literarno teorijo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani začenja svojo knjižno zbirko z zbornikom tekstov, prebranih na mednarodnem simpoziju *Breztalnosti: Lev Šestov med literaturo, religijo in filozofijo*, ki ga je skupaj s KUD Logos in Slovansko knjižnico ter v okviru Foruma Orient–Occident organiziral 12. maja 2005 v Ljubljani.