Alternative Language Theory Under Stalin: Philosophy and Religion at the Crossroads in the Nascent Soviet Union

DENNIS IOFFE
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

I. Aleksei Losev: his dissident theoretical works of the 1920s, and the philosophy of language (thing, name, Divine Name, energy)[1]

The primary goal of my discussion will be to delineate the main issues in the early Stalinist analysis of Russian religious philosophy that addressed the subject of language. This philosophy was an openly "idealist" system of thought, clearly relying on the Orthodox spiritual tradition as one of its inspirational sources. This paper suggests that the medieval Byzantine "hesychast" doctrine was overwhelmingly important for the theoretical interests of Aleksei Losev and Sergius Bulgakov (together with Fr. Pavel Florenskii), who devoted many pages of their works trying to elaborate on their philosophical attitudes toward language and its basic unit—the word. By doing so, they entered into the fierce polemics that arose in Russia during the first one and a half decades of the twentieth century. These polemics were centered upon the controversy of *imiaslavie*, a term that might be translated to the scholarly "lingua franca" as "onomatodoxy." Taking an active part on the side of the officially persecuted *imiaslavtsy*, Losev, Bulgakov, and Florenskii were striving to build up a firm conceptual foundation proving the overall validity of onomatodoxy, describing the elemental language units (i.e. words and names) in the light of this religious current. In the following pages I will deal with the most characteristic and fundamental intellectual products conceived by two Russian philosophers of Stalin's age: Losev and Bulgakov. The main sources, which occupy the principal analysis of my paper, are two specific books by these authors dating back from the early and middle twenties.[2] They share in common the same thematic agenda: to undertake a full-length philosophical query[3] about the nature of words and names. A brief preliminary summation with regard to the "heretical" nature of these texts from the standpoints of the reigning Stalinist "philosophy," or "science," of language can be found in the concluding lines of this paper.

Without a doubt, the famous theoretical treatise *Filosofiia imeni* [The Philosophy of the Name], published in 1927, occupies a central place in Losev's philosophy of language.[4] For Losev, this work must have been the only possible way to continue an open debate on the problematics of philosophical onomatodoxy in the oppressive conditions of the new, brutal, anti-Christian Stalinist regime, with its intolerance of religion as such. Losev's bold decision to publish such an explicitly non-Marxist work can be regarded—like perhaps any form of human social activity—as an act of political will and as a declaration of the corresponding conceptual position. This is exactly how it is seen by Russian critic Sergey Zemlianoi in his article from 9 October 2000, rather intricately titled "Klerikal'no-konservativnaia mifologicheskaia distopiia: Aleksei Losev" [Clerical-conservative mythological dystopia: Aleksei Losev].[5] Zemlianoi believed that the conventional view of Losev as moderate, or "liberal," was never really correct, since:

> … назван по имени наиглавнейший политический враг Лосева, исчадием, порождением которого является и коммунизм: либерализм, буржуазный дух Нового времени, капиталистический этос. Лосев не устает подвергать поруганию все, что хоть сколько-нибудь попахивает либерализмом; он прямо-таки зациклен на его изобличении. Не трудно понять почему: именно либерализм, недостаточную жесткость царского режима по отношению к интеллигентским смутьянам и разрушителям основ монархии и православия он числит среди важнейших причин революции. (Zemlianoi)[6]

Without dwelling upon the potentially provocative aspects of Losev's worldview (including his position on the Jewish Question), this article focuses on the significance of Losev's contribution to world philosophy. Still, some of Zemlianoi's claims seem to be quite accurate, as in the following passage:

> Философско-исторической доктрине Лосева присуща *резкая клерикально-политическая направленность*. Она заострена сразу против нескольких врагов. Ближайший из них, самый обрыдлый, но не самый главный, – это *атеистический коммунизм, Советская власть с ее гонениями на церковь, индустриальный пролетариат*..." (emphasis added)[7]

It is apparent that the "dialectics of name," mentioned so frequently and so ambiguously by Losev, constitutes the epicenter of his entire philosophy of language, as understood in the broadest possible sense. According to Losev, name is life, i.e., an *absolute imperative*: the complete modality of human existence. The name of a thing represents the very essence of the communication between man and material reality. Losev writes often and at length about the fundamental existential "mad loneliness" of the man who has no name. From Losev's perspective, the resulting deafness—the blind inability to distinguish between linguistic signs—is equivalent to losing an intrinsically human mental capacity or even to going completely out of one's mind. Making a concession to his contemporaries, the philosopher claims that he is "practically" the first, if not *the* first Russian author to seriously employ an analysis that is neither merely linguistic (probably referring to scholars such as Baudouin de Courteney and Leo Scherba), nor phenomenological (possibly referring to Gustav Shpet and the neo-Humboldtian school). Rather, he took what he referred to as a fully "dialectical" approach, the purpose of which was to describe word and name as an "instrument of social interaction" while revealing its "domain." As Losev himself puts it:

> Я почти первый в русской философии не лингвистически и не феноменологически, но диалектически обосновал слово и имя как орудие живого социального общения и вскрыл живую и трепещущую стихию слова, подчинивши ей другие более отвлеченные – и, в частности, логические и лежащие в основе науки – моменты. (*Filosofiia imeni* 38)[8]

In the Soviet *zeitgeist* (the spirit [*Geist*] of the time [*Zeit*]) of the second half of the 1920s, the thirty-three-year-old philosopher was able to find something attractive in the Soviet post-Hegelian dialectical method, and even composed a passionate hymn to "the dialectic," as he understood it at the time, in relation to the only possible "normal science":

> Наука, конечно, не есть жизнь, но *осознание* жизни, и, если вы строители науки и творцы в ней, вам волей-неволей придется запереться в своем кабинете, окружиться библиотекой и хотя бы временно закрыть глаза на окружающее. Жизнь не нуждается в науке и в диалектике. Жизнь сама

порождает из себя науку и диалектику. Нет жизни,
нет верного восприятия жизни, – не будет ничего
хорошего и от диалектики, и никакая диалектика
не спасет вас, если живые глаза ваши – до
диалектики – не увидят подлинной и
обязывающей вас действительности. Напрасны
упования на диалектику, если жизнь ваша
скверная, а опыт жизни у вас уродливый и
задушенный ... (*Filosofiia imeni* 38)[9]

This peculiar panegyric to dialectics exemplifies Losev's superlative "general statements," which in reality are nothing more than bows to the reigning methodology:

Диалектика есть просто *глаза,* которыми философ
может видеть жизнь. Однако это именно хорошие
глаза, и куда они проникли, там все освещается,
проявляется, делается разумным и зримым.
Абсолютный эмпиризм диалектики не означает
тупого и слепого эмпиризма, который
несознательно следует за неразберихой фактов и
во имя чистоты опыта жертвует ясностью и
строгостью мысли. Диалектика – абсолютная
ясность, строгость и стройность мысли. (41)[10]

It is worth noting here that Losev's rhetorical use of the terms "dialectic" and "dialectical" does not seem to have the prevailing Soviet-Marxist "official-philosophical connotation," since he can be considered a "dialectician" only from the perspective of his public declarations, while he remained a Platonist and a follower of Vladimir Solov'ev at heart. Nor is Losev's dialectic associated in any way with the emerging neo-Marxist Hegelianism of Abram Deborin (Ioffe), a notorious academic of the Stalinist era and the editor of the magazine *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* [Under the Banner of Marxism] until 1930, who, with his disciples, was engaged in binding Hegelian philosophy to the newly invented dialectical materialism that they were actively promoting.

It would be more plausible to conclude that Losev's frequent use of the terms "dialectic" and "dialectical" was intended as a polyvalent understatement, or, to be explicit, as a political nod, giving a somewhat more legitimate appearance to his ideas, which were overall too metaphysically complex for the young generation of Stalinist Marxists. This strategy, he believed, allowed him to express his

thoughts in a more politically neutral (and, therefore, more free) manner. It did not, however, save him from the *Belomorkanal* (The White Sea Canal). The only potential point of agreement between Losev's philosophy and the reigning ideology was its criticism of Western bourgeois individualism, which Losev zealously opposed. In his later works, Losev fervently criticized Western individualism as a whole, condemning the entire philosophical individualist culture of the post-Medieval period.

The late Jacques Derrida, had he been able to read Russian, would have certainly regarded Aleksei Losev and his works on the theory of the name as an example of classic (Western) logocentrism. Indeed, the infinite spirit of the word-as-name permeates Losev's works; the word is self-sufficient and meaningful in and of itself, and, naturally, no profound thinking, from Losev's perspective, can be possible without the use of words. According to Losev, *wordless thinking* is almost an oxymoron—a pitiful, impossible enterprise, dooming one to be deaf and blind, estranged from the outside world. To the disappointment of contemporary anthropologists, this question in no way concerns neurological operations with cognitive perception of the image-icon mechanics of sense creation. Losev, despite selflessly devoting nearly eighty years to the creation of multi-faceted and rather obscure contributions to many areas of the humanities, nevertheless left no coherent theory of "image," not even in his multi-volume speculations on the aesthetics of antiquity.[11]

Returning to the theme of Derrida (recently discussed by in depth by Belarusian researcher Elena Gurko in a book dedicated to a comprehensive comparative analysis of Russian onomatodoxy and Western post-modernism),[12] it is worth mentioning Losev's approach to sound (phoneme). While admitting that it is precisely sound that is exoteric to man at all times and that names are understood in combination with their phonic manifestation, Losev goes on to demonstrate that in its essence, name has nothing to do with sound. This is an obvious example of the traditional and familiar tendency towards the cultural, historical, and linguistic valorization of speech, placing it somewhat *above* writing, which Derrida—a fervent champion of writing—would not have been in favor of.

According to Losev, the name's sound form is only its outermost layer. That is, of course, the phoneme:[13] the phonic representation of a distinct, intentional, and recognizable unit of speech.[14] A phoneme might be grasped as just an empty form—a membrane con-

sisting only of an outer covering and nothing more. As Losev puts it: "Звук голоса человеческого: слово состоит из элементов, действующих на слух."[15] The phoneme of a name is a combination of spoken sounds grouped into concrete qualitative categories of meaning. But the phoneme, as Losev reiterates throughout, does not represent the *podlinnaia sushchnost' imeni* (actual essence of a name). It cloaks another concept—that of sememe. According to Losev, the full structure of the significance of a name is considerably more important than the phoneme. He finds it important to point out that a name is not a random combination of mechanical sounds, but something incomparably more crucial.

In this context, the role of a verbal etymon, which in Losev's writing represents a kind of primal, primordial seed of a word, stands out. The etymon constitutes the word's elemental phonetic substance, which acquires its initial sense in a process of crystallization that is not dependent upon phonic differentiation. The actual life of a name (word) begins when this "elemental" substance starts to gain new denotations, connotations, and other accretions. The etymon, according to Losev, is something formally shared "vo vsekh sud'bakh dannogo slova" (in all the destinies of a given word). The analysis of a word outside of the traditional linguistic connection with its phoneme represents the main goal of his philosophy of the name. Dictionaries, from Losev's perspective, give a list of the main sememe variants—concrete ways of understanding various meanings, all of which can be boiled down to a multi-faceted semantic foundation of the word, contained in the symbolon[16]: *i.e.*, in the symbolic sememe. The resulting eidos simultaneously represents an *external appearance, form, face,* or *logical appearance*. All of the above are, in a certain sense, rooted in the general meaning of the visual entity, springing from the verbal semantics of seeing, and assuming a special type of *myslitel'noi zritel'nosti* (cognitive vision) and inductive intuition. According to Losev, anything that can be regarded as a "general nucleus" for all of the various significations of a word should be considered its symbolic sememe.[17] At the same time, the pure *noema* of a word is nothing other than its additional cognitive weight. Losev's idea of *noema* is based on his reading of Husserl and his critical response to the German philosopher's understanding of the concept.[18]

Thus, the *noema* is "… znachenie slova, proiznesennogo i perezhitogo ili *hic et nunc*, ili voobshche proiznosimogo i perezhivaemogo" (*Filosofiia imeni* 61).[19] Furthermore, according to Losev,

the *noema* of a word depends neither on sounds, nor on the experience of some psychic perceptions, but instead flows directly from human thought: from the *capacity for understanding* (способности понимания). It is worth pointing out here that in the modernist lexicon—the radical language of *zaum'* and the creation of all sorts of poetic neologisms—Losev's system does not seem to apply at all, since the associative-phonetic response to Futurist or Dadaist "transreason" language of *zaum'* is only possible through careful attention to the glossolalic phoneme, uttered in a sensuous and artistic manner. This, in turn, correlates with and guides the recipient's mental process, powerfully giving shape to the resulting *noema.* Losev's reflections on the subject of *noema* seem to make sense in the context of the realist art he valued so highly, but pose certain problems for the interpretation of modernist and avant-garde literature, including that of his contemporaries.

Despite all objections to the contrary, Losev is interested in formulating a general foundation for interpreting various connotations of any given name. The stability of the semantic field and the constancy of its significance, as described in *Filosofiia imeni,* can be a key to grasping his basic linguistic concepts. In order to understand the milieu which prompted the creation of the above work, it is important to consider the question of "inner muteness," a tragic loneliness and primitive anti-religious ideology which creates a conscious need for a philosophy of the name. According to Losev, the *noema* of a word—its condensed message—should indicate that which can be easily derived from the word's core definition. In a certain sense, the existence of a valid and functional name implies a real communicational (or socio-practical) context for discernment, decipherment, and subsequent establishment of meaning. As Losev puts it: "Ноэма ... есть понимание *кем-то* "всякого" данного предмета" (emphasis added) (*Filosofiia imeni* 61).[20]

The idea of a name depends, according to Losev, on the one who uses the name: that is, whoever applies this mutual idea in practice. Losev identifies this moment as one of the causal nodes of the materialization of a word, which is a fundamentally functional element of human life. This structure of the incarnation of the essence of a name, with an external agent defining this essence, appears rather encoded and presents a model of semiotic behavior and semiosis in its simplest and most obvious form. Losev's overall view of positivism and structuralist semiotics was negative. It is, for example, widely

known that Losev's engaged in an active polemic against Lotman's ideas.[21]

Iurii Lotman's son Mikhail writes:

> Когда в 1964 г. вышли "Лекции по структуральной поэтике," заложившие основу тартуской школы, и последовавшие за ними выпуски *Трудов по знаковым системам*, то почти сразу выяснилось, что они враждебно воспринимаются не только чиновниками официозной филологии, но и многими серьезными авторами. Достаточно в этой связи назвать имена крупнейшего советского философа А. Ф. Лосева, крупнейшего советского филолога М. М. Бахтина и близких к ним авторов, настороженно – чтобы не сказать враждебно - отнесшихся к идеям тартуско-московской семиотической школы, чтобы стало совершенно очевидным, что дело здесь было далеко не только в политической конъюнктуре. (219)[22]

In his polemics with the Tartu school followers (and semioticians in general), Losev wrote, among other things, that "each sign can have an infinite number of meanings, that is, be a symbol" (*Znak* 243). This was written in the context of the fact that, from what he could tell, Charles Sanders Peirce had identified seventy-six types of signs. Losev responds to this claim with a question that, although asked with obvious irony, is still far from superfluous: "Would it not be better to talk about "studies in **symbolic** systems" instead of "studies in **sign** systems?" (emphasis added) (64).

In this regard, it is worth mentioning Losev's reflections on the correlation between a "thing" (an object perhaps) and its name (its semiotic denotation). To provide a logical foundation for a coherent philosophy of the name, Losev needs the so-called "meon theory." As he writes in a different passage: "Меон ... это основная интуиция, лежащая в глубине всех разумных определений в нашем понимании *разумных идей*, т.е. тех, которые приближаются к "идее" Имени" (*Filosofiia imeni* 67).[23] The conceptual substratum of meon helps Losev advance his establishment of the difference between the "actual" and the "other" or, as he writes:

> ... что значит для предмета *быть*, быть сущим, быть чем-то. Если предмет вообще есть нечто, то

это значит, что *предмет отличается от иного.* Если предмет ничем не отличается от иного, то нельзя сказать и того, что он есть нечто. Тогда он слит с другим, неразличим от всего иного и другого, и о нем ничего нельзя сказать как о нем. Но отличаться от иного и не сливаться с другим можно только тогда, когда есть *определенная граница,* очертание, форма. Предмет отличается от иного – это значит, что предмет имеет определенное очертание, и – обратно. Надо только хорошенько усвоить себе природу этого *иного.* (*Filosofiia imeni* 59)[24]

At the same time, the philosopher insists that a thing is not exactly what is denoted by a name, i.e., it is not identical to the name. Equating the "idea of a thing" and its *noema* with its name, Losev writes:

В чем же тогда разница между *ноэмой* и *идеей* слова? Какое отличие имени как ноэмы от имени как идеи? Тут мы, может быть, ближе, чем где-нибудь, подошли к уяснению изучаемой дистинкции. Ноэма предполагает инобытие предмета, и идея предполагает инобытие предмета. Но *идея предмета предполагает только одну чистую инаковость предмета как таковую* и больше ничего. *Идея предмета и есть самый предмет целиком, но только перенесенный в инобытие.* В предмете тут совершенно ничего не нарушено и не утрачена ни одна черта. Предмет целиком, со всеми своими мельчайшими особенностями, перенесен в инобытие. В идее, кроме того, что она есть сама по себе *иное* предмета, т. е. нечто отличное от предмета, ровно ничего не содержится. Тут полное и абсолютное не единство и сходство, но *тождество* со своим инобытием. (63)[25]

Thus, the idea of a thing is the very thing itself, but as though transferred into a metaphysical realm.

According to Losev, the name of a thing is a distinct, clearly understood, *recognized entity*, (распознанная вещь), "revealed in the mind," so to speak. Delving more deeply into the complex worlds of the so-called "*energems*," Losev continues to elaborate on the new pos-

tulates of his language philosophy. For example, he intriguingly describes the conception of a name in the consciousness of an individual. A word appears as an independent, separate element, a kind of "thing" within a "thing": a word-self distinct from the man-self. Elaborating upon the idea of "stimulus," Losev connects it with the initial potential of any thing (and with the name as its unique derivative), brought to life by the energy of thought.

As has already been noted above, Losev seems to treat the concept of the "name" as central to his philosophy of language. The term "idea" gives way to the term "*eidos*"—a parameter used to determine the modifications of any thing that has a name. The expression and representation of the *eidos* follows from the thing named. Always inseparable from the object (the thing it denotes), the name (in the metaphysical realm), according to this conception, can be compared to a projection of the physical thing. Nearly every stage in the life of a name is given its own designation in the form of a convenient Greek term (such as phoneme*,* sememe*, noema, eidos,* and the like) whose meaning serves to further clarify the nuance of the aspect being represented.

This progressive path inexorably leads Losev to the protagonist of the language philosophy he is constructing—the Logos.[26] It is possible that the purpose of the Logos theme is to indicate some dialectical synthesis, in which a number of independent and contradictory elements, denoted by the above Greek terms, are joined together to create a unity based on the old principle of the *edinstvo i bor'ba protivopolozhnostei* (unity and struggle of opposites). The entire work can be seen as being based on this principle, moving from the simplest forms to the more complex. As Losev puts it: "всякая последующая категория всегда является в диалектике отражением и воплощением предыдущих" (*Filosofiia imeni* 142).[27] The concept of Logos seems to be very appropriate and useful here. In Losev's logocentric worldview, sprinkled with dialectical terminology:

> … Весь мир, вселенная, суть имя и слово, или имена и слова. ... Все бытие есть то более мертвые, то более живые слова. Космос – лестница разной степени словесности. Человек – слово, животное – слово, неодушевленный предмет – слово. Ибо все это – есть смысл и его способы выражения. Мир есть совокупность разных степеней *жизненности* или з*атверделости*

слова. Все живет словом и свидетельствует о нем.
(emphasis added) (*Filosofiia imeni* 142)[28]

Looking back on that time period, we can see how distant such way of thinking was from the main ideological tenets of the science and culture that was hastily being built under the directives of Stalin's government at the time.   The seditious "subjective idealism" (inevitably used in combination with the epithet "bourgeois") would have been the mildest of the accusations Losev might have faced in that political context. Let us not forget the important fact that this great Russian scholar of antiquity and philosopher of language and myth spent the years between 1930-32 in the Soviet GULag. Losev's "official" relationship with the Stalinist regime[29] and its ideology appears to have been somewhat more complicated than it seems at first sight.[30] In his recent article, published in the popular Moscow magazine *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, German anthropologist and Slavic scholar Gasan Guseinov provides a very interesting insight into the matter:

> Гибель цивилизации, свидетелями которой в последние годы XIX и первое двадцатилетие XX века стали, если говорить о многосоставной референтной группе Лосева, русские символисты и православные философы, немецкие неокантианцы и экспрессионисты, – гибель цивилизации была для Лосева закономерным, неустранимым этапом в истории европейского человечества. Вся дальнейшая собственная биография – от ужасов Гражданской войны, Беломорканала и испытаний Отечественной войны – оказывается для него как бы прямым личным вызовом. (29-30)[31]

It is worth noting here that the NKVD quite justifiably accused him of radical right-wing monarchist tendencies, which may have been based on the nationalist and xenophobic views found in some of Losev's lesser known writings that constitute the addition to his important work of the late twenties: *The Dialectic of Myth* [Dialektika mifa].[32]

As has previously been mentioned, throughout *Filosofiia imeni* Losev repeatedly, and in different ways, asserts that a word, in his understanding, is unchangeably and absolutely the thing understood: i.e., a distinct substantive object, perceived by the mind through the deci-

pherment of its semiotic essence. Needless to say, some questions arise in connection with the very same modern literature, where, as we know, far from all given names equal words that equal symbols representing things are always automatically understood by the audience (or reader). Does the nature of the name (object and thing) change depending on whether, for example, the words *propeven'* and *vremir'* (coined by Velimir Khlebnikov)[33] cannot be unequivocally understood by the majority of readers? It is interesting to consider how Losev would have defended the main postulates of his philosophy of the name in the face of various works of modern and avant-garde art, especially those of his contemporaries.

It appears, however, that Losev was remarkably indifferent to what Roman Jakobson called "the newest Russian poetry," despite the broad array of writers that Jakobson includes in this category (e.g. Osip Mandel'shtam and Marina Tsvetaeva). In fact, from among the entire constellation of Russian modernists, only the refined "traditionalist-innovator" Viacheslav Ivanov interested Losev in any considerable way, while, for example, the radical prose of Andrei Belyi did not. On the other hand, of course, there are the various and many -faceted works of Vladimir Burliuk, Aleksei Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, Il'ia Zdanevich, Igor' Terent'ev, and dozens of other innovators and members of the radical avant-garde movements, whose entire activity was built primarily around suggestive word-making patterns and ideas. They placed, according to Losev, the Logos of the Word at the center of their aesthetic pursuits.

The actual wording can be somewhat expanded here, without deviating from the philosopher's general idea: to specify that "name" and "word" mean not so much "the thing understood," as "the thing that can be understood" (вещь, могущую быть понятой). This important minute correction seems to allow much more room for maneuver in the sphere of experimental aesthetics. This way, in the absence of strict, uniform criteria for unequivocal verity, a particular thing, denoted by a certain "name," can be "understood" (perceived, grasped, interpreted, etc.) in a different way each time it is encountered depending on the attitude and preferences of the observer. In this case, Losev's simple formula stating that A equals A and can never cease being A, needs some modification, at least when it comes to art. This is because any given work of art, including art made of words such as the futurist *zaum'*, is visibly endowed with a magical capacity for diffusion, mutagenesis, mythogeny, and all forms of trans-

formation, reminiscent of the melting clocks of Salvador Dali. Unfortunately, Losev does not address the most important question in this regard, namely, that of the semantic stability of meaning, subsequently quite thoroughly studied by dozens of linguists on the basis of diverse material from a concrete linguistic perspective, as opposed to an abstract, philosophical one.[34]

The author of *Filosofiia imeni* is remarkably persuaded that his phenomenological dialectic method effectively resolves the entire problem of the subjective and the objective in language theory. Disagreeing with Aleksandr Potebnia and Konstantin Aksakov, Losev does not accept that by reading "linguistic mentors, a peculiar 'truth' would be 'revealed,' that all is profoundly subjective in language and nothing has meaning all by itself, without a subject": "если почитать наши курсы языкознания, то окажется, что все насквозь в языке 'субъективно' и что нет в языке ничего такого, что имело бы значение само по себе, без субъекта" (*Filosofiia imeni* 165).

Losev's proof of the fallacy of this approach is based primarily on his discovery of the "meaning of the thing," originating intuitively from the etymology of the word—from its notional-figurative modifications, based on *eidos* and energy. According to this theory, the resulting meaning is no longer either subjective or objective but, rather, is actually distinct from its material nature and physical environment. By firmly regarding word as energy, Losev concludes that this energy cannot be contained entirely within the individual of within the thing "named by me." This mutual annihilation essentially eliminates the eternal antagonism between the subjective and the objective, and this process is further facilitated by the existence of synthetic energy. There is no doubt that Losev's understanding of the name as energy goes directly back to his onomatodox, integral worldview, which will be discussed somewhat further.

Nataliia Bonetskaia, a Moscow-based scholar of philosophical onomatodoxy, who was among the first to address Losev's and Bulgakov's works on the philosophy of language (name) in depth, has compared Losev—a consecrated "secular monk"—to a real Orthodox ascetic:

> [The scholar resembles] … православному подвижнику, пишущему об Иисусовой молитве – *прошении*, центром которого является имя Иисуса Христа. Оно звучит в полной формулировке "Господи Иисусе Христе, Сыне Божий, помилуй

мя грешного,” или в кратких *Господи Иисусе Христе,
помилуй мя*. Где монаху предписывается
непрестанное повторение этой краткой молитвы,
в пределе она соединяется с его дыханием.
Существует веками вырабатывавшаяся система
молитвенных упражнений, задача которой –
преобразование, освящение всего человеческого
существа подвижника. Наблюдая за собою во
время молитвы, подмечая свои состояния и
переживания, писатели-аскеты обобщали свой
духовный опыт, осмысляли его в рамках
христианской догматики, закрепляли
молитвенные приемы. Так рождалась, хранилась
и передавалась традиция монашеского «умного
делания», иногда расцениваемая как традиция
церковного эзотеризма. (117-18)[35]

As with any pioneering work, Bonetskaia's article is not without
certain minor inaccuracies,[36] but the author's overall description of
onomatodox philosophy and Florenskii's school is quite penetrating
and correct.

Losev wrote another, somewhat shorter treatise discussing his
philosophy of language, published under the title *Vesch' i imia* [Thing
and Name].[37] Although it provides somewhat fewer dialectical defini-
tions, it echoes the general metaphysical and linguistic problematics
addressed in *Filosofiia imeni*. According to Losev, the perception of a
thing (a substantive object) should be regarded as something that tran-
scends our thinking and understanding, independent of the subjective
human component. The name of a thing is one of the tools of se-
mantic interaction, one of the links in the associative chain within the
human mind. A name is a kind of universal "mind" of a thing, an
embodiment of communicational comprehension. The name calls the
thing into consciousness, endowing it with meaning, but does not give
it any additional form other than the one it had originally. All in all,
this treatise continues to build on Losev's historical-onomatodox un-
derstanding of the word-as-name as a particular form of *energy*, con-
tained in encoded linguistic forms. In light of everything said above,
it is clear that Losev's linguistic-philosophical work, influenced by his
devotion to onomatodoxy,[38] was not only a far cry from the nascent
Stalinist language science. In a broader sense, the philosopher's entire
worldview was alien to the new Soviet reality, which operated on

completely different principles and fostered entirely different systems
of thought.

II. Father Sergius Bulgakov and his theory of
the name-as-word [39]

The one-volume "onomatodox" treatise in question was written
by S.N. Bulgakov in post-revolutionary Yalta in 1919-20.[40] A person
with a different fate, perhaps better than that of Losev, who stayed
behind in the USSR, Father Sergius arrived at the subject of the phi-
losophy of the name in a manner similar to that of his young contem-
porary, Losev[41]—through his involvement in the onomatodoxy move-
ment, which was condemned as heresy by the hierarchy of the Russian
Orthodox Church. Bulgakov was deeply involved with the debates
surrounding onomatodoxy, as its official advocate and evangelist.[42]
We must admit, however, that the young Losev was also no stranger
to these ecclesiastical controversies,[43] which were the subject of cer-
tain definite, albeit indirect, references throughout his various works.
As Bonetskaia notes:

> Булгаковым создана онтологическая концепция
> речи и предложения, разработана онтология
> именования. Своей *Философией имени* Булгаков
> осмыслил и подытожил так называемые афонские
> споры о природе имени, начавшиеся в церковной
> среде и вызвавшие сильный резонанс в научных и
> общественных кругах. (117-18)[44]

At first sight, Bulgakov's work is much different from Losev's
in terms of both terminology and the arguments presented.[45] One can
say that Bulgakov's reasoning follows a more characteristically
"European" philosophical style, to use a broad aphoristic statement.
It also employs various impressionistic maxims, associated with the
progressive shift in the humanities happening at the time.

Father Sergius opens his book with a broad discussion on how,
from his perspective, one should conceptualize the idea of "word."
Bulgakov is concerned here not with genesis, but with substance—a
sort of foundation shared by all living language systems at nearly any
stage of their historical development. As he puts it: "ноты содержат
в себе музыку независимо от исполнения" (*Filosofiia imeni* 29).[46]
Bulgakov is interested in the "udel'no-zvukovaia massa" (sound per
unit), the intrinsic meaning of a word, and its essential denotations,
independent of the iconic grapheme or gesture. In this regard, the

philosopher is especially interested in the idea of the "word as object."
How can one talk about the conceptual substrate of a "word form"?
What is "glavnoe i neizmennoe" (essential and constant) here? Bulga-
kov approaches Losev's perspective (as has been noted before, we can
be quite certain that the two Russian authors have no familiarity with
each other's texts) by claiming that a verbal sign falls under the com-
munication principle and is in one way or another connected with the
imperative of understanding and "reading." Based on the communi-
cative, *dialogically-active* (echoing Bakhtin) nature of a word, it cannot be
examined and understood solely in the context of the discourse on
"sign." In other words, initially, the purely semiotic analysis of
Charles S. Peirce, Charles W. Morris, and Ferdinand de Saussure satis-
fies neither Losev nor Bulgakov, although Losev would turn to
Peirce's ideas on the nature of sign later. And since the word is not
simply a sign, it can be regarded as *sui generis* of *energy* (or a cluster of
energy like "energema"). In accordance with this principle, even a
word that has not yet been uttered and, therefore, has not yet been
understood—in other words, a word still "unheard" and
"unrecognized"—nevertheless retains its intrinsic energetics without
turning into a lifeless template of a sign, preserving its energetic
charge in a kinetic form, which cannot be depleted as long as the
communicational cosmos within it continues to exist.

     The full-fledged existence of a word is made up, according to
Bulgakov, of the "sound images of individual letters as such, outside
of the unity of form" (звуковых образов отдельных букв как
таковых, не входящих в единство формы) (*Filosofiia imeni* 29-30).
The conditions necessary for the life of a word require not as much
the letter form, but rather, the immanent meaning content, endowed
with universally accepted external characteristics. From this stand-
point, the word "water" is a valid word, while, say, "wtaer" is not, at
least not until this latter spelling for some reason gains conventional
semantic acceptance in some living language system.

     Father Sergius is ready to admit that one and the same word can
have dozens of different semasiological connotations (including liter-
ary-metaphorical and subjective ones), not always reflected in the for-
mal dictionary form. In this way, one and the same "thing" (a term
important not only for Immanuel Kant, but also for Losev) can have
dozens of different descriptive designations—each representing a dif-
ferent way of understanding this thing. Bulgakov very accurately
notes here that the process of word formation is a true art and accord-

ing to him: "слова рождаются а не изобретаются … именно из пучины иррациональности будут вытеснены наиболее живучие и нужные слова …" (*Filosofiia imeni* 29-30).[47] At the same time, Father Sergius denies the existence of a word consisting of the root alone (which does not clarify his position on the concept of "inner form"), as well as the existence of an absolutely isolated "dictionary" word, never used in everyday speech. Bulgakov talks about the sum of factors that lead to the original birth of a word, presenting and analyzing various specific theories.

One of the interesting questions we could ask the author here is: How can a *thought* be rendered without the use of *language*? Much like Losev, Bulgakov claims that thoughts cannot exist without words, just as words cannot exist without specific meanings. From the perspective of Bulgakov's system of thought, the obvious absurdity of trying to prove the opposite can be demonstrated with the well-known statements "God does not exist" or "God is dead." The very mentioning of the "God" concept—the introduction and the use of this term—already suggests an implicit, *a priori*, set of assumptions about Him, as well as about which qualities are *pertinent* to him and which are not. To make the statement possible, the formula in this modality should be expanded: "God is not God, and he does not exist," while the opposite is true: "If God exists *always*, He is eternal and ineffable." Into the same category falls the absurdity of the statement "the dead person has risen to life," since the dead cannot become alive. In order for the dead to become alive, the following should be true: "The dead person is not dead," and only then will the "dead" rise and walk.

In this context, Bulgakov's claim that "no word can exist without meaning" seems to be entirely justified, since the open, communicational nature of a word, directed not at the stillness of the cold, black universe, void of human life, but at the word's immediate creator, man, makes possible the active *comprehension* of any word. If a word is not actively "worked with," if it does not evoke any concrete concept, it becomes void and no longer exists as a word. According to Bulgakov, "there is no word which does not embody a thought" (35). Criticizing the positivist "psychologism-ists" of the Nineteenth century, Bulgakov repeatedly disagrees with the claim that "we invent words," proposing a more metaphysical explanation: the words "themselves resound within us" (сами в нас звучат) and "all words are testimony to the existence of things" (все слова суть

самосвидетельства вещей) (*Filosofiia imeni* 43-44). It is important to note here that from the perspective of the nascent Stalinist "materialist" idea of word formation and so-called "Marxist linguistics," such views would have undoubtedly been regarded as heretical.

On the background of the militant materialism of the Stalinist philosophers and linguists, Bulgakov's and Losev's contribution should be viewed as non-Marxist and non-positivist, distinct from what the Bolsheviks (as did earlier their "spiritual" mentors, the positivists) described as "idealism."[48] Bulgakov (much like Losev and Florenskii) teaches an ecstatic form of Orthodox metaphysics—an idealist view of the origin of language and word, rejecting on principle the dogma of the prevalence of matter over Spirit and the idea of purely causal, mechanical creation of words through the work of man. For Bulgakov the metaphysician, much as for Losev and Florenskii, the fact of the original conception of a word is mysterious, essentially obscure, and undeterminable. The discrepancy between the views of Father Sergius and straightforward Marxist materialism is obvious, and needs no further discussion. Bulgakov's interest in Marxism at the very dawn of his intellectual activity, much like that of Nikolai Berdiaev, has little relevance to Bulgakov's later, more mature views.[49]

In the context of his general philological metaphysics, Father Sergius links the nature of the word with universal symbolism. In his discussion of the role of the word within the philosophy of symbolism, the name represents a repository for universal energy—a type of multidimensional cosmic-divine Symbol. In connection with this, Bulgakov identifies the problem of metaphor, i.e., the infinite multiplication of the word, the merging of different denotations, and the word's nuclear fragmentation. Thus, Bulgakov, unlike Losev, in some way admits and accepts the word's polysemy, its potential fluidity, and the evolution of connotation depending on each individual usage.

The decisive factor in the manifestation of the word is the birth of phonic symbols of Meaning, that is, the process whereby a particular sound combination comes to be endowed with a specific significance. Bulgakov reiterates his belief that ideas or thoughts are not possible without words. In fact, nothing at all exists without them. If something *is*, there is a word for it. All speech inherently depends on the assumption of definite sense, inevitably involving mental activity—a capacity that animals do not fully possess. This leads directly to the problem of consciousness, another major anthropocentric concept, addressed by contemporary philosophers such as Merab Mamar-

dashvili and Aleksandr Piatigorskii.

Moreover, in lieu of his religious beliefs, Bulgakov leaves the mystery of the origin of new words intact, asserting that "the process of the conception of a word cannot be spied upon" (*Filosofiia imeni* 38-39). In other words, from the very beginning, every word essentially has a definite meaning for its user, derived from a prior source. According to Bulgakov, a word is

> … рождается сразу в единстве звука и смысла - или вовсе не рождается. Слова не придумыватся людьми, никто и никогда не думал о том, какой бы аккорд звуков подобрать к известному смыслу, тем более что и смысл не может быть известен, пока он не воплотился. Так же, заметим, и человеческие существа появляются на свет: разумеется, *без* участия человека, *без наличия* родителей *не могут* рождаться люди, так же как слова не могут (за)рождаться вне человека, но человек так же не замышляет и не придумывает слов, как и не замышляет и не придумывает ребенка, а принимает его, какой он есть, какой родился. (39)[50]

In accordance with this principle, each fresh neologism is nothing more than the original introduction of an object into the generally accepted vocabulary. The historical "survival ability" of a word is a measure of its authenticity—the adequacy of the name to the thing it denotes.   As Bulgakov puts it: "дети как духовные индивидуальности, воплощенные в теле, в известном смысле *сами родятся,* родители же только, как бы, предоставляют им для этого *себя*, свою плоть."[51] From this perspective, Khlebnikov, for example, did not really invent any new words, but merely served as a mediating organ of transmission, giving his neologisms a chance to take shape and step out of the metaphysical sphere (an important concept for Losev). In this context, Bulgakov writes: "слова рождают себя сами, и наша речь как и история языка, есть непрестанное словотворчество" (39).[52] In accordance with this logic, Bulgakov arrives at an understanding of the close interconnection between word and myth and their parallel nature: "Слова суть живые мифы... миф не создается и не измышляется, но дается и есть, и о нем, по поводу его возникает дальнейшее – понятия" (*Filosofiia imeni* 47).[53] In his philosophy of sign and word, Bulgakov makes a very important

shift in emphasis from a "concept" (Saussure) to the mental process of comprehending this concept. The fundamental indivisibility of the word—the impossibility of analyzing its elements separately as fragments—plays a significant role here. A real living and working word can only exist as a whole. Bulgakov uses the name "Ivan" as an example: If we break this name into individual components—sounds— what will they mean? If we isolate the individual sounds, we will have "I-V-A-N." Does the initial sound "i," for example, have any connection with "Ivan"? None whatsoever. The sound represented in the grapheme of the letter "i" has no individual significance. It is entirely nonsensical and useless for the life and function of the integral name "Ivan."[54] According to this reasoning, the word is, in a sense, visibly anthropocentric, non-fragmentable, and independent of the wishes of any individual. Instead, it is part of a higher universal plan.

Thus, myths, like words, cannot be created, so to speak, *ad libitum*—artificially or at will (of course, only *true myth* is at issue here). In a certain sense, myths are eternal. They are always born out of *other* myths similar to themselves and contribute in turn to the birth of future myths. Note that this way of thinking is in many ways parallel and complementary to Bulgakov's view of the nature of the word *per se*. The main idea behind his concept of name is exemplified by the following statement: "слова не сочиняются, но лишь *осуществляются*, реализуются средствами языка в человеке и через человека" (emphasis added) (49).[55] The overall coherence and integral completeness of this model is apparent, giving a clear idea of the main postulates of Bulgakov's theory of the name-as-word.

Bulgakov provides a brief summary of the questions surrounding the Russian Futurist movement flourishing at the time. Bulgakov describes the Futurist *zaum'* as a desire to "govorit' ne slovami, no bukvami" (speak in letters instead of words) (61), with the goal of abolishing meaning and descending into a kind of "misticheskii, pervobytnyi khaos" (savage and mysterious chaos) (61). The philosopher seems to regard this as a significant and important experience—as a glimpse of a kind of primordial foundation of the word, the most fundamental unit of its being, which logically connects Russian literary Futurism with anti-thematic abstract modernist painting. Bulgakov prefers to describe the transrational language of the Futurists as "prerational," which recalls Fr. Sergius's near contemporary Lucien Levi-Bruhl and his theory of "pre-logical" ancient cultures. Curiously, in light of some of his religious views, Bulgakov associates the origin of

many world languages with "mankind being in a state of conflict—the Pentecost fulfilled": "men became evil, oppressing each other. To punish them, God sent down upon them the multitude of different tongues so that they cannot understand each other" (состояние человечества … его нахождение в раздоре – свершившейся Пятидесятницей ... Ибо "... *и стали человеки плохи, и попрали права друг друга, Бог же наслал на них тьму языков различных дабы они друг друга не уразумляли никак – в качестве кары*") (emphasis added) (*Filosofiia imeni* 59). The corresponding Biblical passage reads as follows:

> Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words … The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The LORD said, ... "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

According to Bulgakov, the germinal word is definitely anti-grammatical, lacking the precision of an established part of speech. The word, therefore, "as the Symbol of the Universe, is not invented by man but manifests itself within him" (*Filosofiia imeni* 57). Curiously, the essence of the noun, for Bulgakov, is the pronoun. Fr. Sergius believes that the pronoun represents "the silent mystical gesture that is ever-present in a name: the original *A*" (именно тот молчаливый мистический жест, который всегда присутствует в имени: вот это есть *а*) (58). It is precisely the object's natural genus, with its variable phonic guise, which constitutes the main axis of word formation. Fr. Sergius offers a characteristic argument that "the name always represents a hidden proposition, an undeveloped sentence" (имя есть всегда скрытое суждение, – неразвитое предложение) (58). The philosopher suggests that a name always poses a question about itself, as a thing of substance, and answers it affirmatively. In Bulgakov's view, the name is intrinsically predicative—active in the same way that a verb is—and predication is prior to naming. Much like in quantum mechanics, an object signifies a kind of condensed inner essence of an action, where the nature of a phenomenon precedes its name. Just as

the "quality of being wooden" comes before "tree," "being a snake" precedes "snake" and "being human" precedes "human."

Bulgakov speaks often and with conviction about the impossibility of a phenomenological distinction between a proper noun and a common noun, since at root there is always the energy of the idea of the predicate's action—the concrete potential of the sign. As we can see, Bulgakov's vision approaches that of Losev here, with his discussion of the energy dynamics of the name. The philosopher offers an interesting explanation for the illusiveness of material existence when it is severed from man, its *namer*: "… именоваться вещь может только через человека, в человеке, о человеке ... в человеке сокрыты имена всех вещей, он есть микрокосм, то существо, из коего полагаются имена" (*Filosofiia imeni* 59).[56] According to Bulgakov, the existence of objects in the environment, in space, and in other worlds is not entirely real and, in some way, secondary, conditional, and dependent upon the existence of man. Unlike Losev, who generally tends to use the term "thing," Fr. Sergius prefers "object."

It is worth mentioning here that Bulgakov regards the noun as arguably the most fundamental form of language and speech. In this context, his thoughts on the initial nature of nouns—their formation and the validity of their definitions in relation to other parts of the sentence—are noteworthy. Bulgakov seriously criticizes Kant for neglecting linguistics and for failing to give proper attention to the concept of *langue*. From his point of view, this lack of language study in the *Critique of Pure Reason* represents a weak link, or a "systemic aporia," in the general worldview of the great German thinker. Fr. Sergius attempts to demonstrate that nearly all of Kant's achievements and "signature" discoveries, expressed in his categories, were, in fact, foreseen and pioneered by language itself, and that the entire structure of Kant's argument follows the basic grammatical structure of a language.

In summarizing Bulgakov's position, it should be noted that he is unable to fully transcend a strictly modal perception of the linguistic universe. For example, he offers the phrase "fried ice is hot," insisting that it can only nominally be considered a sentence, as a genuine sentence would require not only a bare form, but also definite, meaningful content. Not without some disappointment, we are compelled to observe the obvious fact that Bulgakov does not take into consideration the aesthetic dimension, in which the establishment of meaning takes place through unconventional and non-traditional grammar.

Much like Losev, Bulgakov, it seems, is not quite ready to include the artistic domain in his study. It appears that both philosophers' theories on the nature of the name of a thing are fully applicable only within the pragmatic, empirical, and strictly religious spheres. When it comes to poetics and metaphorical writing, their main postulates are of little use, and, what is more, not always entirely clear and logical. This is because the very *modus operandi* of the aesthetic universe is in many ways distinctly different than the empirical-phenomenological axioms that Bulgakov and Losev embrace as their worldview.

In reality, however, Bulgakov's understanding of the nature of the word, outside of a historical context, seems to lie in his conception of the "unfading light" that shines in the darkness and brings the essence of things out of the abyss of disorderly chaos through the sacred power of the Divine Word. Each essence is accompanied by the details of the words-as-name conferred upon it by the Supreme Will. The paradigmatics of the word/name, according to Bulgakov and Losev, consists of divine energy, which shapes the main elements of our reality, carves out human consciousness, and defines "the inner and outer aspects of existence" (внешность и внутренность бытия). Bulgakov believes that all language philosophers must begin with the Biblical invocation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and Word was God"—the first line from St. John's Gospel. In the original, it reads: "ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος " (*Filosofiia imeni* 61). The Latin version tells: "in principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum" (John, Chapter 1, Line 1). It is well known that this line was first translated into the Slavic vernacular by Saints Cyril and Methodius, and it was they who rendered the Greek concept of Logos (λόγος) with the rather broad, or, as we would say today, "suggestive", *Word*. Throughout the history of culture, logos has been associated with a general conception of the cosmic plan, *sapient development*, and sometimes even the infinite Absolute—a higher power governing the universal chain of objects and beings. It is important to keep in mind Bulgakov's theological teachings, in which he constantly reminded himself and his audience that the Holy Fathers had often used the notion of Logos to refer to the Son[57] (Christ, the Son of God), and that "through Logos-the-Word God saved and redeemed fallen mankind" (*Filosofiia imeni* 61).

From the perspective of Orthodox Christian doctrine it can be

said that the Gospel's logos, expressed in Russian as *slovo* (word), represents the general idea of mental processes as such—the cognitive efforts of the human mind, whose fruits take the form of intelligible speech. Saussure calls these fruits *parole* (speech) which in Russian is dialectically converted into a kind of "*parol*" (meaning "password" in Russian today) that opens the door to the world of meaningful symbols and the systems that shape them. According to Bulgakov, the basic capacity for understanding reality is condensed into the following formula: "Understanding is naming," i.e. "giving something its form—its formulation or definition" (Познание – есть именование … обличение в формы – формулирование, определение) (63). Bulgakov's unique religiously tolerant mindset allows him to speak openly of both a heathen and a Christian idea of a "spell"—the endowment of an *uttered word* with magical powers. This syncretism brought Bulgakov's position on this matter close to the "Orthodox-pagan" views of Florenskii, and led to aggressive attacks in ecclesiastical publications of the time. Bulgakov's subsequent thoughts on the interdependence of form and content in the problematics of the word are reminiscent of Potebnia, as well as of the contemporaneous (for his biographical lieu) Futurist[58] and Formalist search for a new Soviet-Russian "experimental" culture, inspired by the avant-garde movement.

There is also some thematic similarity between Bulgakov's conceptions of the word as having a certain "materiality" *sui generis* and the platform of the Stalinist linguistics, prevalent in the turbulent "Marrist" 1930s, which emphasized the material origin of all human culture. Fr. Sergius implies the materiality of words as such—that is, their genetic physical descent. He writes: "слова не исчезают бесследно после своего произношения, но живут собственной жизнью. … Зачем же полагать, что комната, нуждающаяся в проветривании после курения табака, якобы не нуждается в том же самом после произнесения в ней некоторых слов" (71).[59]

Bulgakov's philosophy of the word can be summarized in the following statement: "Всякое познание есть именование" (All understanding is naming). According to him, the act of giving something a proper name should involve taking the thing's distinctive character and unique individuality into account, regardless of common usage. Only "poor imagination and lack of inventiveness" (бедность воображения и бессилие изобретательности) (*Filosofiia imeni* 74) prevents every name from being absolutely original.

Fr. Sergius postulates that man, as "everyman," is potentially endowed with *all* names and can be called by any of them. This is tied to Bulgakov's understanding of *Adam Quadmon*, derived from the mysticism of the Kabbala: "Первозданный Адам в себе содержал имена не только низшего животного мира, но и всего человеческого рода, почему и осуществил эту силу частными актами именования – жены своей Евы и далее, детей своих" (77).[60]

Plato's teaching about Ideas is especially applicable to the Russian religious philosophers' teachings on name, including those of Sergius Bulgakov. The name as the Idea seeking out different carriers—its immediate user—is a concept in direct communication with the Platonic vision. Bulgakov believes that a name has a discernable impact and influence on its carrier. He gradually introduces his rather unorthodox (from the standpoint of religious doctrine) view of the name as prayer. Undoubtedly, it is here that his devotion to onomatodoxy manifests itself most clearly. He sees the name as having enormous meaning imparted to it by God, basing this conclusion directly on the Scriptures. Destiny, prophecies, and providence are directly linked to the idea of name as such.

Bulgakov considers language to be a special capacity, immanently inherent to man. Without language, words, and names the very realization of the project of "man" would not have been possible. Naming is an act of giving birth *sui generis*. It is as if Christ's closest disciples—Peter, Paul, Andrew, and others who had their own, "traditional" names—had been "born" again. This view is interesting in the context of Fr. Sergius's belief in the impossibility of capriciously changing given names at will. He writes: "переменить имя в действительности также невозможно, как переменить свой пол, расу, возраст, происхождение, цвет глаз … " (78-79).[61] Bulgakov describes the "proper name" as a kind of ontological manifestation of the human likeness to God.

The conclusion of Bulgakov's *Filosofiia imeni* is devoted to the very matter which prompted the creation of the book: the problem of onomatodoxy, not only within the framework of doctrine, but also in connection with the philosophy of language. The problem of the Divine Name brings together all of the general features of the nature of the name, along with the particular aspects of theophorism. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite was in some ways the instigator of this entire discussion. For example, according to Bulgakov, icon worship is directly connected with Name worship, raising the issue of the dual

purpose of the icon as an incarnation of the Holy Name through painting. Divine energy is present in the icon as much as in the Name—in fact, an icon is a form of the expanded Name, clothed with colors and forms and with the pictography of visual representation rather than with the sounds of words. The image in the icon, according to Bulgakov, is a kind of "hieroglyph of the Name" (иероглиф Имени) in which the explanation of the power and holiness of the iconic tier is indicated by an *inscription*:

> … По сути, икона – это как бы разросшееся Имя, облекаемое не в звуки слова, но в краско-формы, в пиктографию образности. Изображение в иконе, по Булгакову, это своего рода *иероглиф Имени*, где объяснение силы и святости иконического чина внешним образом делается в виде *надписи*. Именование устанавливает единство иконы с изображаемым (например, Богоматерью), призывает силу Его. Имя есть та сущность, энергия, коя изливается и на икону. … Вся икона состоит, в сущности, из именования, надписи – иероглифической (иконографической) и буквенной. (emphasis added) (*Filosofiia imeni* 79)[62]

Bulgakov considers the charge carried by the Divine Name to be the icon of God. In this regard, the entire debate on the legitimacy of onomatodoxy and hesychasm, inspired by the Athonian (mount Athos) dispute and its aftermath, is nothing other than the resurrection of the ancient controversy about iconoclasm, provoked by the Byzantine Emperor Leo III the Isaurian. For Bulgakov, the Divine Name is not merely a Symbol *of* the Deity. Rather, when speaking in terms of energy, it is the Deity Itself—i.e. its energetic presence. It is especially worth pointing out here that Bulgakov elaborates his thought regarding names in various other religious systems, not based on Revelation and the Book (such as uncountable pagan traditions). In accordance with the inner logic of his work and his central ideas on the nature of the name, Bulgakov, rather unexpectedly for a Christian Orthodox theologian, does not dismiss all of the names of pagan deities as unambiguous lies or illusions. Instead, much like his colleague Florenskii,[63] Fr. Sergius approaches this problem quite seriously, taking into account the outcome of the devotional, spell-casting effort of man as a justification for the creative act of appellation, even if this appellation is aimed at spiritual entities alien to Christianity. Bulgakov

holds that pagan gods should not be considered to be superficially fictitious or mythical, but instead viewed as real living adversaries, who must be respected and observed, understood and defied (if not veneered!). If it is forbidden to serve demons and idols made of clay, if the God of Israel clearly commanded to *not worship* the Golden Calf, it means that there were other, "non-revealed," *deities to be worshipped*, inhabiting certain spiritual spheres. Bulgakov even goes so far as to claim:

> Изначальное пребывание в язычестве, особенно при неведении христианского откровения, может быть естественным благочестием, и, более того, своего рода "естественным" откровением божественных сил, софийности космоса. <…> Имена богов суть реальныя силы откровения этих богов" (emphasis added). (*Filosofiia imeni* 81)[64]

It is now more evident why Fr. Sergius's sophiology[65] was so vehemently criticized[66] by the church hierarchy. Clearly, Bulgakov could be associated with the "justification" of paganism, not to say *pantheism*, which in the minds of the "righteous" Orthodox clergy was linked with Florenskii and his unique pagan philosophical vitality.

If one would intend to summarize the reasons why Losev's and Bulgakov's philosophical conceptions were not accepted by the nascent Soviet officialdom, the task would not seem to be too complicated. The primary reason for Stalinist persecution against "linguistic matters" described above (Losev, since Bulgakov fortunately escaped the borders of USSR in the early twenties), manifests itself in the core of Soviet "religion"—in its totalitarian and dogmatic ideology. I mean here the ruling thesis of "imperative materialism," advised to be "applied" everywhere in early Soviet scholarship (not only in the linguistic debate). Bulgakov's and Losev's systems of thought were openly and proudly proclaiming their method and outlook as traditionally "idealist" and, therefore, religiously oriented toward almost opposite modes of discourse.[67] Not accidentally, therefore, Losev (together with Florenskii) was so brutally attacked on the pages of various (ultra-Marxist) mainstream journals and newspapers published in the years preceding and following his arrest. The most characteristic accusation articulated against Losev in this respect was that he was a reactionary "*mrakobes*"—a writer who de facto champions the prohibited ideology of "*popovstvo*."[68] The militant "materialist" essence of "Stalinist language-science" was gaining its peak in the particular years

of Losev's book's publication (the end of twenties), culminating with the radical materialistic theorist of language—officially approved academician Nikolai Iakovlevich Marr.

We may keenly remark, with compassion and grief, that Losev's arrest and time in the GULag should have been anticipated—as part of the "natural," logical sequence of his publicly printed philosophy (he learned to hide this in the post-War years). Losev's arrest was, therefore, not surprising, serving only as an integral ingredient of some larger social pattern, ordered and powered by Stalin in his intent to gain control over all expression of the independent human mind. Such a "mind" as Losev's, accordingly, did not have any sound right to exist.

Notes

1. This work represents part of a larger research project, dedicated to the study of the Russian protean "philosophy of language," from religious onomatodoxy (Florenskii, Bulgakov, and Losev) to the secular phenomenology of Gustav Shpet, the post-Humboldtian follower of Husserl. The author is currently preparing the continuation of this article for scholarly publication.
2. Those two books (Losev's and Bulgakov's) have almost identical titles: *Filosofiia imeni* [The Philosophy of the Name].
3. They label this philosophical genre in the Cartesian fashion as "meditation," or "discourse."
4. As it was mentioned above, Losev's contemporary fellow Sergius Bulgakov (who will be discussed below) wrote a book with a similar title, although it was not published until after his death. When Bulgakov's book was later printed in Paris in the early 1950s, the preposition "on" in the title was omitted. Father Sergius wrote the rough draft of his *Philosophy* in 1920 in the White Army-controlled Crimea, seven years before Losev wrote his.
5. See the online version in the Moscow-based *Russkii Zhurnal* <http://old.russ.ru/politics/meta/20001009_zemljano.html>.
6. [… Liberalism, the bourgeois sprit of the New Age, the Capitalist ethos is identified as Losev's most important political enemy, whose spawn and offspring is Communism. Losev tirelessly condemns everything that has even slightest hint of liberalism; Losev's desire to expose it neared a fixation. It is not hard to understand why: It is precisely liberalism that he regards as one of the primary causes of the Revolution – the failure of the Tsarist regime to persecute those incendiaries among the intelligentsia who inspired the destruction of monarchy and Orthodoxy.]

7. [Losev's philosophical-historical doctrine can be characterized as *strongly clericalist in orientation.* It is aimed at several enemies at once. The closest and the most aggravating of them, although not the most important, was *atheist communism, the Soviet regime with its persecution of the Church, the industrial proletariat.*]

8. [I am practically the first in Russian philosophy to explain word and name as instruments of living social interaction from a perspective that is neither linguistic nor phenomenological, but dialectical, illuminating the living, breathing domain of the word and placing it above more abstract, and, in particular, logical philosophical conceptions.]

9. [Science, naturally, is not life itself but rather the *key to understanding* life, and if you are a contributor to science, you have no choice but to lock yourself up in your study, surround yourself with books, and at least temporarily shut out the rest of the world. Living requires neither science, nor dialectics. Life itself gives birth to both science and dialectics. If you have no life or understanding of life, if you are unable to see reality, plain and compelling, with your own eyes, no dialectic will help. Relying on dialectics is all for naught if your existence is miserable and your life experience is grim and suffocating.]

10. [The dialectic is simply the *eyes* through which a philosopher sees life. Yet they are very good eyes and wherever they look, everything is illuminated, everything becomes clear, meaningful, and apparent. The absolute empiricism of the dialectic is not an empiricism that is dumb and blind, which follows thoughtlessly the jumble of facts and sacrifices clear, rational thinking for the sake of the purity of the experiment. The dialectic is nothing other than absolute clarity, precision, and coherence of thought.]

11. The same is true for his "conformist" late-Soviet publications, including a popular Soviet book on the theory of symbols in so-called "realist art" and a bestselling volume on Renaissance art. It is especially unfortunate that, for some unknown reason, Losev barely touched on the important subject of icons, including Byzantine icon theology and image theory. This is particularly remarkable given his openly onomathodox fascination with hesychasm and a general worldview that was strongly influenced by Orthodox mysticism.

12. See Gurko. See also the author's recent review of it: Ioffe, "Iazyk, religia i sposobnost' intellektual'noi refleksii."

13. It should be noted that Losev's (and later Bulgakov's) onomatodox definitions were in some way parallel to the strictly scientific research in the area of language theory. In this way, according to prominent language philosopher Leonard Bloomfield, the phoneme is in some sense at the heart of all word formation. Bloomfield talks about "bundles" and "massive" lumps in the context of the idea of "phoneme." The full

quote can be found in his groundbreaking work *Language*, published in 1933:

> Distinctive features occur in lumps or bundles, each one of which we call a phoneme. The speaker has been trained to make sound-producing movements in such a way that the phoneme-features will be present in the sound-waves, and he has been trained to respond only to these features and to ignore the rest of the gross acoustic mass that reaches his ears. (Bloomfield cited Jakobson and Halle 34)

Regarding the context of scientific debate of that period of time with special respect to the issue of phoneme, see Twaddell: "It is the recognition of this sameness, this effective unity, which has found expression in the term "phoneme" as a unit of spoken language" (5).

14. Note that Roman Jakobson, in his *Lectures on Sound and Meaning*, which first saw light after his emigration to New York in 1942, defines "phoneme" similarly to Bloomfield. See the development of this idea in the joint article by Cherry, Halle, and Jakobson. The scholars were defining the problem of morpheme:

> In analyzing Russian or any other language, we must ascertain what and how many distinctive features are needed to differentiate the meaningful units of its code, i.e. the smallest meaningful units, termed morphemes, and their combinations into words. Words are the maximum units that are expected to be entirely provided by the code. We must determine the minimum set of such features that the listener needs in order to recognize and distinguish all except homonymic morphemes, without help from context or situation. Once this set is determined, all other phonetic differences among morphemes or words of the given language can be shown to be predictable and therefore redundant. (34)

15. [The sound of the human voice: a word consists of elements that stimulate the sense of hearing.]

16. Regarding "symbolon," see also the work by Florenskii, first published in Lotman's series of "Trudy…"

17. I will come back to this idea in my forthcoming discussion on Shpet's post-Humboldtian "vnutrennaia forma slova" (inner form of a word).

18. Losev seems to base his idea on the first book of Husserl's *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* and on the second edition of the *Logical Investigations*.

19. [*Noema* is a meaning of a word that has been pronounced and lived through: either *hic et nunc* (here and now) or in any other space or time.]

On the linguistic ideas standing behind Losev's expression see Katsenel'son. As Katsenel'son notes: "*Hic et hunc*, respectively, should

mean linguistic expressional immediacy in its purest form. "*Hie* 'here' and *nunc* 'now' are well characterizing this specifics and may be seen as 'the beginning' in the system of coordinates symbolizing the 'field of deixis' ("Zeigfeld"—a discursive process whereby words or expressions rely mainly on *context* –D.I.). … 'Here'—is a very narrow part of animated 'scene of life' where the actual speech-act is realized and set about. Whereas 'now'—is a time when this act is virtually happening. Some kinds of space-definitions are not well-enrolled into this (above) definition, being so to say 'not-here' (i.e. 'over there'), and are further divided in a certain languages into sub-categories as 'over there' which is more distant and 'over there' less distant (German 'da') etc..." (Katsenel'son 7). [… hie "здесь" и nunc "теперь" хорошо оттеняют ее специфику и могут рассматриваться как "начало" в системе координат, символизирующей "деиктическое поле" (Zeigfeld), т.е. семантическую сферу употребления указательных слов. … "Здесь" – это тот узкий *просцениум*, на котором непосредственно разыгрывается акт речи, "теперь" – время, когда совершается этот акт. Всякие пространственные определения, не укладывающиеся в данное определение, это "не-здесь" (т.е. "там"), которое в некоторых языках распадается на "там" – более близкое (ср. нем. *da*) и "там" далекое, находящееся на грани поля чувственного восприятия или за его пределами (нем. *dort*), или "там" видимое и "там" невидимое. Равным образом все временные определения, отличающиеся от времени речи, это "не-теперь," не настоящее, т.е. либо прошедшее, либо будущее время.]

20. [Noema … is *man's* idea of [any] given object.]

21. Losev disagreed with the persistent use of the term "structure" by the followers of the Tartu School (in the general spirit of the scholarly developments in France at the time in response to the work of Levi-Strauss). Losev provided his own detailed interpretation of the term in order to point out the contradictory usage of the Tartu School. Losev, most curiously, shared a general antagonism for Iuri Lotman's philology with another prominent thinker of his generation: Mikhail Bakhtin. The latter allegedly gave the following response to the question of whether or not he would participate in a debate in the role of Lotman's opponent: "But of course I will. I am no structuralist, after all." Another interesting fact is that a number of articles appeared in the circles of Bakhtin's Western followers under the titles such as *Who is Lotman and why Bakhtin speaks nastily about him*. See Reid, pp. 325-338.

22. [When the *Lectures on Structural Poetics*, which laid the foundation for the Tartu School, came out in 1964, followed by the regular issues of the *Studies in Sign Systems*, it became immediately clear that they had provoked a hostile response not only from the functionaries of officious philology, but also from many serious authors. It is enough to mention

in connection with this such names as Aleksey Losev, the prominent Soviet philosopher, Mikhail Bakhtin, the prominent Soviet philologist, and the like, who regarded the ideas of the Moscow-Tartu School of Semiotics with mistrust, not to say *hostility*, to make it completely clear that the reigning political climate was far from being the *only* problem here.]

23. [A meon … is a fundamental intuition underlying all rational definitions of what we understand as rational ideas, i.e., those that approach the [idea] of the Name.]

24. [… what it means for a thing to *exist,* to be real, to be something. If a thing is anything at all, it means that this *thing is different from the other.* If a thing is not different from the other in any way, then we cannot even say that it is something. In that case it is one with the other; indistinct from everything else, we cannot talk about it as something. But it is only possible to be different from the other and to not become one with it when there is a *certain boundary*, shape, form. When a thing is different from the other, it has a certain shape, and vice versa. One only needs to properly understand that nature of this *other*.]

25. [What is then the difference between the *noema* and the *idea* of a word? What is the difference between the name as noema and the name as idea? We now may have come closer than ever before to a clarification of this distinction. Noema implies the metaphysical existence of a thing, and the idea implies the metaphysical existence of a thing. But *the idea of a thing implies only the pure otherness of the thing as such* and nothing more. *The idea of a thing is the very thing itself, only transposed into the metaphysical realm.* The thing here is not altered in any way and none of its features are lost. The entire thing, down to its subtlest characteristics, is transposed into the metaphysical realm. The idea is nothing but the *other* of a thing, i.e. something different from a thing. This is not a case of complete and absolute oneness and resemblance, but of equality with its metaphysical manifestation.]

26. On the general context of this concept see Bonetskaia.

27. [Each subsequent category in dialectics is always a reflection and the fulfillment of the previous ones.]

28. [… the whole world, the universe – is actually the *name* and the *word,* or *names* and *words.* … All existence is words, either more or less alive. The cosmos is a ladder of different degrees of literacy. A man is a word, an animal is a word, an inanimate object is a word as well. All of these are meaning and ways to express it. The world is a mixture of various degrees of *vitality* or *stagnation* of a word. Everything comes to life through a word and points to it.]

29. To review the chronology of the events: in 1929 Losev secretly takes the habit (becoming a monk in the world) under the name Andronik. Two years prior to this he publishes *Filosofiia imeni*, risking his freedom and

slipping through the fingers of censors thanks to the rather strange liberal law in place at the time. In 1930, in the same way, he writes and publishes his famous book *The Dialectic of Myth*. One of the formal pretexts for his persecution and arrest were some changes Losev made without permission in the text of the above work, after it had already been finalized by the Soviet censors. Both books brought upon Losev immediate backlash and public criticism, ranging from articles on the subject in various Stalinist media to the Bolshevist condemnation by Lazar Kaganovich and Viacheslav Molotov from the pulpit of the Fifteenth All-Union Communist Party Summit. It is in no way surprising that in 1930, in accordance with existing repressive practices, the Losevs were arrested and condemned to the GULag (Losev got ten years, his wife five) in the so-called case against the "Ecclesiastical monarchist center," which appears in the text as the "One true Orthodox Church." Once in the GULag, Losev was assigned the position of a warden of the firewood storage shed, taking into consideration his bad health (tuberculosis and progressing blindness). In three years, already almost completely blind, Losev was released due to partial disability and the nationally celebrated completion of the *Belomorkanal*.

30. In this regard, it is probably worthwhile to mention Bakhtin—Losev's contemporary, whose destiny was in a way parallel to his own. On the surface, Bakhtin's and Losev's attitudes towards Marxist philosophy seem to have been somewhat ambivalent (remember the famous provocative work by Boris Groys on the hidden Stalinist subtext of the Medieval-Renaissance carnival, so much loved by Bakhtin, as well as Losev's persistent reference to dialectics). Their true feelings towards the (neo) Marxist dogma of Stalinist culture remains to be researched (the term "neo-Marxism" here comes from B. P. Vysheslavtsev's *The Philosophical Poverty of Marxism* [Filosofskaia nishcheta marksizma] which draws this temporal and conceptual line).

31. [The death of civilization, witnessed in the late Nineteenths century and the first two decades of the Twentieth century by Russian symbolists and Orthodox philosophers, German neo-Kantians, and expressionists – if we shall name Losev's diverse reference group – the death of civilization was for Losev a logical, inevitable phase in the history of European humanity. The rest of his personal biography – from the horrors of the Civil War, to the White Sea Canal, to the trials of World War II – he regarded as a direct personal challenge.] This article includes an interesting remark on what was literally called "a series of problems of the onomatodox heresy, whose most prominent (and, possibly, only) representatives were Florenskii and Losev" (Guseinov 29-31). Openly and clearly suggesting that Florenskii and Losev were the *only* devotees of onomatodoxy, Guseinov makes a reference to an interesting German article on Florenskii's "pagan-like" "magic of words" (see Kuße). The above

statement is rather surprising and the question that arises is: Was Sergius Bulgakov not at all prominent? Or, perhaps, Guseinov would suggest, he simply was not onomathodox? Why then he has not been mentioned by Guseinov? Moreover, it was truly strange to read that, according to Guseinov, Losev had avoided "Florenskii's anti-Semitic excesses" (без антисемитских эксцессов Флоренского, но зато с...) (31). An article written in 2005 should have paid more careful attention to the public NKVD-FSB archives. It seems to be entirely incorrect to pass over, without any critical attention, Losev's philosophical anti-Judaism, widely commented on in press (although it should not be granted undue historical-philosophical significance). It may have even been rash on the part of the author to do so, since it raises the question of his possible lack of scholarly familiarity with the subject. The first impression on the matter can be found in "Tak istiazuietsia istina…. ." See also Ivanova.

32. The CheKa-GPU-NKVD-FSB archives contain an item entitled "Spravka o roli professora Loseva A. F. v a/sov [antisovetskom] dvizhenii" [Note regarding the role of Professor Aleksei Losev in the anti-Soviet conspiracy-movement]. Although I have not seen this intriguing document, some information about it can be obtained via the online resources. It is known, for example, that this *Note* was prepared by the NKVD agents working in the Information Department of this not very popular organization (naturally, we are referring to OGPU) in June 1930. Up to the present day this document is marked as "classified." With regard to the understanding of the reasons which led to the arrest of this religious philosopher, this note states the following:

> В работах Лосева, особенно в его последних книгах *Диалектика мифа*, *Дополнения к диалектике мифа*, право-монархическое к.-р. [контрреволюционное] движение получает развернутое идейно-теоретическое обоснование. … В работе *Дополнения к диалектике мифа* Лосев создает философско-историческую концепцию, которая должна обосновать необходимость непримиримой борьбы с Соввластью. … Лосев пытался выступить перед широкими слоями населения с открытым антисоветским призывом, добиваясь в Главлите напечатания *Дополнений* и увеличения тиража *Диалектики мифа*, и когда *Дополнения* к печати разрешены не были, Лосев все же включил в *Диалектику мифа* ряд [проблематичных с точки зрения сталинской цензуры] фрагментов из этих *Дополнений*. … Лосев так характеризует причины, побудившие его написать *Дополнения…,* добиваться их напечатания и произвести незаконные вставки в *Диалектику мифа*: "Положения, характеризующие социализм и

Советскую власть, окончательно сформировались, под влиянием той агрессии, которую проявила Советская власть в своей церковной политике последнего времени, в своем курсе на индустриализацию и коллективизацию. Эти меры в своей крайней резкости заставили меня болезненно на них реагировать, резко ставя вопрос о тенденциях развития Советской власти и социализма – в сторону анархизма и гибели человечества.

[In Losev's works, especially in his latest books *The Dialectics of Myth* and *The Additions to the Dialectics of Myth* [Dopolnenia k dialektike mifa…], the right-wing monarchist counter-revolutionary movement receives an extensive ideological-theoretical justification … . In *The Additions* Losev provides a philosophical-historical theory aimed at the necessity of the implacable resistance to the Soviet Power … Losev attempted to address the masses with an openly anti-Soviet appeal, demanding that Glavlit publish *The Additions* and increase the number of copies of *The Dialectics of Myth* printed, while *The Additions* were banned from publication. Losev, nevertheless, included in *The Dialectics of Myth* a series of [problematic from the standpoint of the Stalinist censorship] passages from *The Additions*". This is how Losev characterizes the reasons which prompted him to write *The Additions* and to attempt to have them published, as well as to make illegitimate insertions into *The Dialectic of Myth*: "The position characterizing Socialism and Soviet Power has taken a definite shape under the influence of the aggression of its recent ecclesiastical policy, as part of its course towards industrialization and collectivism. These measures, in their utter excess, provoked my emotional response – addressing the question of the developmental tendencies of Soviet Power and Socialism, which would lead to anarchy and to the death of humanity… .]

See also <http://www.philos.msu.ru/libfiles/losev_2.txt>. Losev's antagonism towards Jewry as a spiritual "structure" (and "subject") of world history, connected with his anti-Soviet views, directly echoes his older colleague, not to say *mentor*, Fr. Pavel Florenskii. As is known today on the basis of present-day sources, Florenskii purportedly hid under the obscure Greek-letter pseudonym "Omega," which is clear from his letters to Vasilii Rozanov (see the modern edition of "Sacharna"). On this subject, see Hagemeister. This discussion continues in his "Antisemitismus und Verschwörungsdenken in Rußland."

33. For the word "vremir'" in Khlebnikov see Pertzova. The term "propeven'" was invented by the Avant-garde painter Pavel Filonov, under the personal influence of Khlebnikov. See both Filonov's poem, "Propeven'" (1915), and his longer tractate, "Propeven' o prorosli mirovoi."

34. On the various theories of stability of semantic meaning see Chierchia, Collin, Goddard, Larson, Segal and Stamenov.

35. [… an Orthodox ascetic, writing about the Jesus prayer – a *petition* focused on the name of Jesus Christ. The full version is "Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner," while the short version reads "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." A monk is supposed to repeat this short prayer over and over, until it is in rhythm with his breathing. There is a system of prayer exercises, perfected over the course of many centuries of practice, designed to reform and sanctify everything human within the ascetic. Observing themselves during prayer and taking note of their mental state and feelings, the ascetic writers enriched their spiritual experience, re-examined it in the context of Christian dogma, and perfected their techniques of prayer. This way was created, preserved, and passed down the "hesychast" monastic tradition, sometimes regarded as a tradition of religious esotericism.] See also Pozov.

36. For example, the author identifies Losev's *Filosofiia imeni* as written "in the late 1910s-early 1920s" (115), which is an obvious mistake.

37. The date of the concrete creation of this text is not entirely clear up. This treatise was either written, like *Filosofiia imeni*, in the 1920s, or somewhat later, in the first half of the 1930s, after the philosopher's release from the GULag.

38. See Polovinkin, Postovalova, and Trubachev.

39. For clarification on the general context of Bulgakov's onomatodoxy during the Silver Age, as well as Solov'ev's main philosophical course (Platonism and Neo-Platonism), see Khoruzhii.

40. *Filosofiia imeni*, which originally had a slightly different title (*K filosofii imeni* [Toward the philosophy of the name]), was published only after the author's death, in the first half of the 1950s in Paris. Bulgakov may have worked on this book from time to time during his years in exile. Critics sometimes write that this process continued up to 1942. This can serve as at least some justification for starting our overview with the younger Losev, who nevertheless *formally* published his *Filosofiia* first.

41. To find out more about their shared views of onomatodoxy, see Reznichenko.

42. See the detailed article on the subject by Fr. Dm. Leskin of Toliatti. See also Dennes.

43. On the details of the Onomatodox controversy see, for example, the valuable two-volume work by Bishop Illarion (Alfeev) of Kerch. See

also Leskin. There are also some important series of anthologies (contemporary editions) of the relevant documents. See, for example, Polovinkin.

44. [Bulgakov created the ontological concept of speech and sentence; developed the ontology of appellation. In his *Filosofiia imeni*, Bulgakov explicated and summarized the so-called Athonian controversy regarding the nature of the name, which originated within the Church and resonated strongly in scientific and social circles.]

45. See the recent edition: S.N.Bulgakov 1998.

46. [Sheet music contains music whether or not it is being performed.]

47. [Words are born and not invented… the most long-lived and important words are coined precisely from the abyss of irrationality …]

48. Note that this idealism, was, in a certain sense, independent and firmly rooted in the Russian soil. It was, however, rather loosely connected with "classic German idealism." See Bezlepkin.

49. See, however, Bulgakov's somewhat typical compilation: *Ot marksizma k idealizmu* [From Marxism to Idealism]. The context of Bulgakov's public talks, dating back to the time just before the First Russian Revolution of 1905, is analyzed in the work by Kolerov. The discourse on "passing from Marxism to idealism," was, as is well known, associated in Russia with Georgii Chelpanov and the famous compilation, uniting the cream of Russian philosophical and sociological thought, published in 1902 under the title of *The Problems of Idealism* (many of the participants later gained wide recognition as a result of the publication of the famous compilation *Vekhi*). For research on the juxtaposition of Marxism and idealism in Russian history, see the classic study by Putnam.

50. [(a word) is [been] born spontaneously from the union of sound and sense – or it is not born at all. Words are not made by men; no one has ever contemplated what sound combination to assign to a certain idea, especially since the meaning cannot be known until it is incarnated. Let us note here the resemblance to the way human beings are physically born: naturally, people *cannot* be born without human participation, without parents, just as words cannot be conceived and born outside of man. But man does not invent words any more than he designs and invents a child. Rather, he accepts it as it is when it is born ...]

51. [Children, as spiritual beings incarnated in bodily form, are in a certain sense *born by themselves*, with parents providing only *their bodies*.]

52. [Words originate all by themselves, and our speech and linguistic history are nothing but incessant processes of word creation.]

53. [Words are in fact living myths … a myth is neither created, nor invented, but exists from the beginning, giving rise to particular concepts.]

54. In this regard, let us remember the reflections by Florenskii on the name of St. Ioann of Kronstadt: "Возьмем [имя] 'о. И.

Кронштадтский.' Ранее отца Ивана этого имени не было, – оно дано именно ему, выражает его идею и отражает его личность. Быть может, оно и умрет когда-нибудь и совсем исчезнет из человеческой речи … Так – каждое имя и всякое слово" (293-4). [Let us take the [name] "Fr. I. of Kronshtadt." The name did not exist before Fr. Ioann, but was given particularly to him, expressing the idea of him and associated with his persona. It is possible that someday it will die and completely disappear from human speech … This is true for any name and every word.]

55. [Words are not invented but rather *materialize* and are fulfilled within and through man by means of language.]

56. [… a thing can only be called something through man, inside man, about man … names of all things are contained in man – he is a microcosm – the being from whom all names come.]

57. This is what Berdiaev—Bulgakov's closest colleague, opponent, and contemporary—wrote in his book *Filosofiia svobody* [The Philosophy of Freedom]:

> Мир сотворен Богом через Логос, через Смысл, через идею совершенства творения, предвечно пребывающую в Боге и равную Ему по достоинству. Идея Логоса была уже сознана греческой философией, соединилась с ветхозаветными чаяниями Мессии и стала основой христианской метафизики. *В начале было Слово, и Слово было у Бога, и Слово было Бог.* В этих словах евангелиста Иоанна сказалась вся правда греческих метафизиков и ветхозаветных пророков. Логос, Смысл творения. Слово было в начале. Слово это было в Боге и Слово было Богом. (65)

> [The world has been created by God through Logos, through Meaning, through the idea of the perfection of the creation, which had been with God from time immemorial and is equal with Him. The idea of Logos had already existed in Greek philosophy, merging with the Old Testament expectation of the Messiah and forming the basis for Christian metaphysics. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* These words by John the Evangelist express all of the truth of the Greek metaphysicians and the Old Testament Prophets. Logos, the Meaning of creation. The Word was in the beginning. The Word was with God and the Word was God.]

58. According to Bulgakov, who insisted on the juxtaposition of poetry and prose: "В поэзии целью является сама форма … Поэзия возникает и задумывается как форма" (*Filosofia imeni* 75). [The goal of poetry is the form itself … Poetry originates and is conceived as a form.]

59. [Words do not disappear without a trace after being uttered, but go on to live their own lives … Why should a room that needs to be aired after smoking not need to be aired after certain words have been said there?]

60. [The Primordial Adam contained within himself not only the names of the lower animal kingdom, but also of the whole of mankind, realizing this power through the particular acts of naming his wife Eve, and later his children.]

61. [It is as impossible to change one's name as it is to change one's sex, race, age, descent, or eye color.]

62. [This naming establishes the unity of an icon with the *being* it portrays – the Virgin, for example – attracting Her power. The name is that entity, that energy which pours onto the icon … The icon, in fact, consists of name and inscription – a hieroglyphic (iconographic) and a text.]

63. See my article in the Amsterdam journal *Russian Literature* (Fall 2007) on the language philosophy of Florenskii and its onomatodox context.

64. [The being in the initial pagan state, especially in ignorance of Christian Revelation, can be a natural object of piety, and, moreover, a kind of "natural" revelation of divine powers, of the *Sophianic nature* of cosmos. The names of gods are in fact the real powers of the revelation of those gods.]

65. On the sophiology of Fr. Pavel and the "Brotherhood of St. Sophia" see Struve, ed. See also the invaluable treatment of this topic by the late Bibikhin.

66. See Robert Bird, "Bogoslovie o.Sergiia Bulgakova… "

67. Where they had secured a legitimate place for the concept of "Spirit"— a scornful and forbidden word in the USSR during these times.

68. That meant, in its particular context, something like "being a most scorned *obscurantist* and a forbidden remnant (or defendant) of the persecuted Russian Orthodox clergy."

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