Das revolutionäre Ebenbild Gottes: Anthropologien der Menschenwürde bei Nikolaj A. Berdjaev und Sergej N. Bulgakov. by Regula M. Zwahlen
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_Slavic Review_, Vol. 71, No. 2 (SUMMER 2012), pp. 473-474
Published by:
Accessed: 24/07/2012 03:20

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kingdom of God always remained a divine-human project for Solov'ev, he does argue for a profound shift in the nature of the human contribution—from reason and will to feeling and imagination, in particular to love and beauty. In making this argument, which will long be discussed by Solov'ev scholars, Smith explores a range of topics: Solov'ev's assessment of Plato, his concern over various "counterfeits" (including some of his own former enthusiasms) for the genuine good and truth, his understanding of prophecy as the highest form of theanthropic consciousness and activity, and of course his philosophy of love and aesthetics. At points Smith (influenced by William Desmond) seems to push Solov'ev's theanthropic balance too far in the direction of the transcendent divine and the "pathos of the end," at the expense of the immanent human side of the equation. That takes nothing away from the major contribution that he has made to the study of Russian religious philosophy.

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In this monograph, Regula M. Zwahlen presents a detailed, well-documented, and nuanced comparison of the philosophical positions of Nikolai Berdiaev and Sergei Bulgakov. The study covers all periods of their relationship, from their first meeting in 1901 in Kiev through their careers in the Paris emigration. The philosophical focus falls squarely on the problem of how human dignity is to be grounded metaphysically. To get at this, Zwahlen compares Berdiaev and Bulgakov's philosophical anthropologies. While this might seem to be a highly specialized approach, the fact that philosophical anthropology lay at the heart of Berdiaev and Bulgakov's thought allows Zwahlen to construct a wide-ranging discussion touching on virtually all of these thinkers' main concerns. This breadth, along with an appropriate measure of historical and biographical information, makes Zwahlen's volume a good introduction to Berdiaev and Bulgakov for graduate students and nonspecialists.

For specialists in Russian philosophy and religious thought, the justification of a comparative study based on well-known primary sources and standard secondary literature must lie in the degree to which the comparison enhances our understanding of the thinkers under scrutiny and of the broader intellectual tradition to which they belonged. Zwahlen succeeds in both respects. The distinctive contributions made by both Bulgakov and Berdiaev are clarified by her careful juxtaposition of their positions, and some of the strengths and weaknesses of modernist Russian religious philosophy are also made plain.

Zwahlen's story has a dramatic quality to it thanks to the nature of the relationship between Berdiaev and Bulgakov. From the beginning, the two recognized that they stood on common ground in their rejection of positivism, materialism, atheism, and, later, communism and fascism. They also agreed on the basic rightness of philosophical idealism and Christian faith, commitments that came together in their vision of human beings as bearers of the image of God. Yet both men also knew that they responded to different philosophical and religious cues and were engaged in different projects. Berdiaev saw the image of God as endowing human beings with a radical independence that sets them apart from and in some sense against the empirical world. His logic was dualistic and his view of the human situation, tragic. Bulgakov's vision was incarnational: the image of God exists in the here and now as a resource that can be uncovered and deployed in such a way as to make the divine beauty of the world manifest—a discovery with transformative, not tragic, implications in the temporal world.

Zwahlen does an excellent job of showing how this difference in outlook conditioned the way in which the two thinkers applied the distinctive concepts and code words of Russian religious philosophy. For example, both men embraced the Solov'evan concept of bogochelovechestvo (Godmanhood, divine humanity), a term signifying the unbreakable
The divine-human bond to which the concept of the image of God also answers. But they construed the concept in different ways. Making a distinction that works well in German, Zwahlen shows that for Bulgakov bogochelovechestvo was a gift (*Gabe*), something on which to build, while for Berdiaev it was a task (*Aufgabe*), something to be built. Berdiaev’s view was apocalyptic and other-worldly; Bulgakov’s, more harmonious and inner-worldly. The difference had broad implications for the way each man handled social, political, and ecclesiastical issues, and these differences in turn raise a host of questions about the practical orientation of twentieth-century Russian religious philosophy.

Berdiaev and Bulgakov, while always aware of their disagreements, never severed their ties. Their “parting of the ways” in 1912, when Berdiaev resigned from the editorial board of the journal *Put*, did not put an end to their occasional collaboration. Their life’s work ran along parallel rather than intersecting lines, yet as Bulgakov put it in a letter to Berdiaev in 1937, an “antinomic and” (359) somehow bound them together, an antinomy that Bulgakov confessed he had come to love. This is the spirit in which Zwahlen, too, construes the relationship. Only occasionally does she attempt to referee their disputes. When she does, she usually sides with Bulgakov. But she leaves no doubt that the most dynamic dimension of her subject is “the antinomic and” of the relationship itself.

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This is not an easy book to accommodate—not for ordinary working historians nor, I would think, for scholars in the other established disciplines. It abounds in the language and methods of the putatively interdisciplinary—superordinate?—field of critical theory. And true to that form, its author, Kevin M. F. Platt, a professor of Slavic languages and literatures at the University of Pennsylvania, makes large claims for both the value of his approach and the importance of his findings.

Regarding the second claim, Platt thinks that his account of the modern unfolding in Russia of myths of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, seen as inseparable avatars of political terror-cum-greatness, reveals the key to a “uniquely complex” Russian collective identity (7, 12, etc.). But this can be neither proved nor disproved on the basis of the data presented, replete though Platt’s book is with verbal and visual representations of Ivan and Peter produced by several dozen Russian historians, novelists, playwrights, poets, painters, “party hacks,” and filmmakers from about 1800 to the 1930s–1940s, the period of high Stalinism and the apparent source, be it noted, of Platt’s ruling paradigm of “state management of historical knowledge . . . accompanied by the rise of allegorical critique in the cultural arena” (268). For “ultimately,” as he says, “the Stalinist attempt to remake the Imperial Russian myths of Ivan and Peter was but one more turn in the folding and refolding of trauma within greatness, one more instrumental application of the perverse functionality of liminal figures in the Russian mythology of history” (250).

No, assent to Platt’s sweeping claim about the importance of his findings requires acceptance of the validity of his methodology, about which he has this to say: “My own method of cultural historiography represents a substantially new approach, particularly in its attention to the dynamic interrelationships of differing cultural, political, and scholarly social institutions and the complex process of the use and reuse of historical myths over the long term. A common oversight of studies of historical knowledge is that they forget a step, placing historical representations in direct relation to historical ‘events.’ Instead, I study the intervening history of historical representations as they wend their way through time in their own contingent unfolding. In short, I have sought a thoroughgoing historicization of the histories of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great” (4). Or again, in his conclusion: “If, as I have proposed, the history of history unfolds as an accumulation of competing and interrelated images, representations, and interpretations, the 1990s mag-