

Boris Groys  
**Wisdom as the  
Feminine World  
Principle:  
Vladimir  
Soloviev's  
Sophiology**

01/07

e-flux journal #124 — february 2022 Boris Groys  
Wisdom as the Feminine World Principle: Vladimir Soloviev's Sophiology

In the Russian intellectual and cultural tradition, the concept, or rather the name, “Sophia” is primarily associated with the Sophiological doctrine of the philosopher and theologian Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900). Soloviev’s first major philosophical work, *The Crisis of Western Philosophy: Against the Positivists* (1874), was written as a reaction to the pessimistic doctrine of Schopenhauer, with its denial of self and world. Under the influence of the nineteenth-century Russian Slavophile intellectual tradition, which accused Western philosophy of a disregard for material cosmic life and a one-sided development of pure conceptual thinking, Soloviev viewed Schopenhauer’s philosophy as the authentic consequence of this Western one-sidedness. There the world is not only neglected, but practically denied. Soloviev’s reaction – not unlike Nietzsche’s – consists in the world’s theoretical affirmation, which is meant to give rise to its practical affirmation as well.<sup>1</sup> This project leads to Soloviev’s Sophiology.

Soloviev follows the ancient Neoplatonic, Gnostic, and mythical traditions in associating the materiality of the world with the feminine principle. In all likelihood, however, he received the immediate impetus for his Sophiology from his reading of the later philosophy of Friedrich Schelling, which he always admired.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in his *Philosophy of Revelation*, Schelling speaks of the “*Weltmutter* – world mother, the substance of the future Creation,” who “does not really belong to divine nature and yet cannot be separated from it.” He continues:

She is the *maya* (related to power, possibility, potency) which spread the web of mere semblance before the Creator in order to trap him and impel him toward the actual Creation.

This potency is most pointedly expressed in the Proverbs of Solomon – as *wisdom* (*chokhmach*): “Jehovah” (the name of the one who is the *Lord of Being*) possessed me at the beginning, etc. ... This principle is not regarded here in its Being-outside-of-itself but in its possibility, before its actual Being. Here it is, however, subject, *prius*, presupposition of all future movement.<sup>3</sup>

In this passage from Schelling, a few important themes of Soloviev’s Sophiology can already be recognized in a nutshell. There is the *Weltmutter* as *Maya*, which Soloviev, under Schopenhauer’s influence, understands as the demonic, fallen, deceitful aspect of Sophia, as the negative reality of earthly life as it is. In his view, this reality must indeed be denied; in this he agrees

with Eastern Buddhism as well as with Schopenhauer's "Western Buddhism." He believes, however, that Schopenhauer is prevented by Buddhist nihilism from seeing the true face of the divine Sophia: that is, as it were, an ideal materiality, the possibility of harmonious, true life that was opened already before the Original Sin. In the divine, personalized Sophia, the dividedness and fallenness of the material world are always already potentially overcome, and the task of philosophy (that is, of the love of Sophia) is to unite the lover, that is, the philosopher, with Sophia and thus to accomplish a "theurgic" act of world transformation. Like many thinkers of his time – and not without the powerful influence of socialist utopias – Soloviev aspired to turn thought into reality, to pass from describing the world to transforming it. For him, however, this transition was not to occur through work or the will to power, but rather through eros.

For Soloviev – unlike Nietzsche, for example – the task of "justifying matter" did not stand in opposition to the Christian tradition. On the contrary, for him Christianity is distinguished from all other high religions by the fact that in it "the Word became flesh," that is, that matter has been recognized as equal in dignity to spirit. According to Soloviev, the primacy of spirit, rationality, and Logos over matter, which is characteristic of Western culture and links it to Eastern Buddhism, does not have its source in Christianity; it is the consequence of the West's turn away from Christianity, which is above all characteristic of the modern age. The Nietzschean project of the justification of the world is here conceived as a reaction against the perverted Western form of Christianity and in favor of the true, Orthodox Christianity of the East. Soloviev therefore seeks to anchor his Sophiological visions in the still unbroken Christian tradition of Russian Orthodoxy, in whose theology Neoplatonic thought remained present. Sophia is conceived from this perspective as the feminine and simultaneously material dimension of Christ, as Christ's transfigured body – in close proximity to the Mother of God and the Church that is also regarded, theologically, as the mystical body of Christ. However, by situating the materiality even before the world's creation within the embodied Logos as the feminine principle manifested through the person of Sophia, Soloviev effectively expands the divine Trinity, introducing into it a new female divine hypostasis. Soloviev's philosophical, theological, and Sophiological efforts were thus primarily directed toward achieving the maximum divine "equality" for Sophia without adopting a position that could be interpreted as heretical. He presented the most

detailed philosophico-theological interpretation of his Sophiology in his *Lectures on Godmanhood* (1877–81).

Soloviev begins by rooting his understanding of Sophia in traditional Christology:

In the divine organism of Christ, the acting, unifying principle, the principle which expresses the unity of the unconditionally extant one, is obviously the Word or Logos. The unity of the second kind, the produced unity, in Christian theosophy bears the name of Sophia ... Sophia is God's body, the matter of Divinity, permeated with the principle of divine unity. Christ ... is both Logos and Sophia.

To speak about Sophia as an essential element of Divinity does not mean, from the Christian point of view, to introduce new gods ... But it is precisely in order that God be unconditionally distinguished from our world, from our Nature, from this visible reality, that it is necessary to acknowledge in Him His particular eternal nature. His special eternal world. Otherwise our idea of Divinity will be poorer, more abstract, than our conception of the visible world.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, if Christ is understood as the ideal human being, then "Sophia is the ideal or perfect humanity, eternally contained in the integral divine being or Christ."<sup>5</sup> Humanity as Sophia is the eternal body of God. It is only the divinity of matter, recognized as Sophia, that guarantees the possibility of "deification" (in Russian: "obozhenie") for human beings and the hope for eternal life. Human beings only become immortal through matter, through their participation in the body of Christ. In this way, Soloviev seeks to transform the familiar irrefutable proof of human beings' finitude, mortality, and "contingency" – namely their "materiality" – into proof of their immortality; only materiality, as the maternal, feminine principle, and even more as the person Sophia, can redeem human beings through love – and especially the human being who loves her: the philosopher or Sophiologist.

Soloviev asserts the defeat of rationalism and rationalist moralism in their struggle against "lower nature." As symptoms of that defeat, he identifies the demise of the French Revolution and of German Idealism, as well as the rise of empiricism and positivism on the one hand and of the pessimistic aversion to nature in the style of Schopenhauer on the other. The aim of Soloviev's philosophy is to bring human beings to accept and justify matter and to love it as

02/07

e-flux journal #124 — february 2022 Boris Groys  
Wisdom as the Feminine World Principle: Vladimir Soloviev's Sophiology

Die himmlische und irdische Eva, die Mutter aller Creaturen im Himmel und auf Erden.

Der Stern der Weisen aus Morgenlande.

Gott ist ein ewiger, unerschaffener, uns endlicher, übernatürlicher, selbständiger, himmlischer und wesentlicher Geist, und ist in der Natur und Zeit ein sichtbar, leibhaftiger, sterblicher Mensch worden.

OCULUS DIVINUS  
per quem Deus vidit & creavit omnia.

Ein jedes Ding hat seinen Ausgang; verkündigt seinen Anfang.

Lumen Gratiae, Ergon sunt duo

Himmliche Eva,  
die Neue Geburt.

O Mensch, o Mensch, betrachte, wie Gott das Wort ist Mensch worden.

Einfältig hab ichs empfangen,  
Wer nicht glaubt, der ist verdammt.

Tinctura Coelestis.  
S. S. Sacramenta.

ROSA CRUCIS  
VENITE.

Videte. Videte. Videte.  
Wer Augen hat zu sehen, der kann und wird wohl recht sehen.

Suche Freundschaft bey dem Archäo, dem vertrauten Thierputzer.

Natura ist ein erschaffener, natürlicher, zeitlicher, endlicher, geistlicher, wesentlicher und corporalischer Geist, ein Gleichniß, Bild und Schatten, nach dem unerschaffenen, unendlichen, ewigen Geist, verborgen und auch sichtbar.

OCULUS NATURÆ  
five Coeli, per quem Natura visitat & regit terrena omnia.

Lebendig, tödlich, wüthlich, verderblich und wieder neugebärllich.

Lumen Naturæ, Parergon Fratres

Irdische Eva,  
die Alte Geburt.

O Mensch, o Mensch, bedenke, wie die Natur ist eine große Welt, und ein Mensch worden.

Einfältig gebe ichs wieder,  
Beracht dich nicht dir selbst zur Schand.

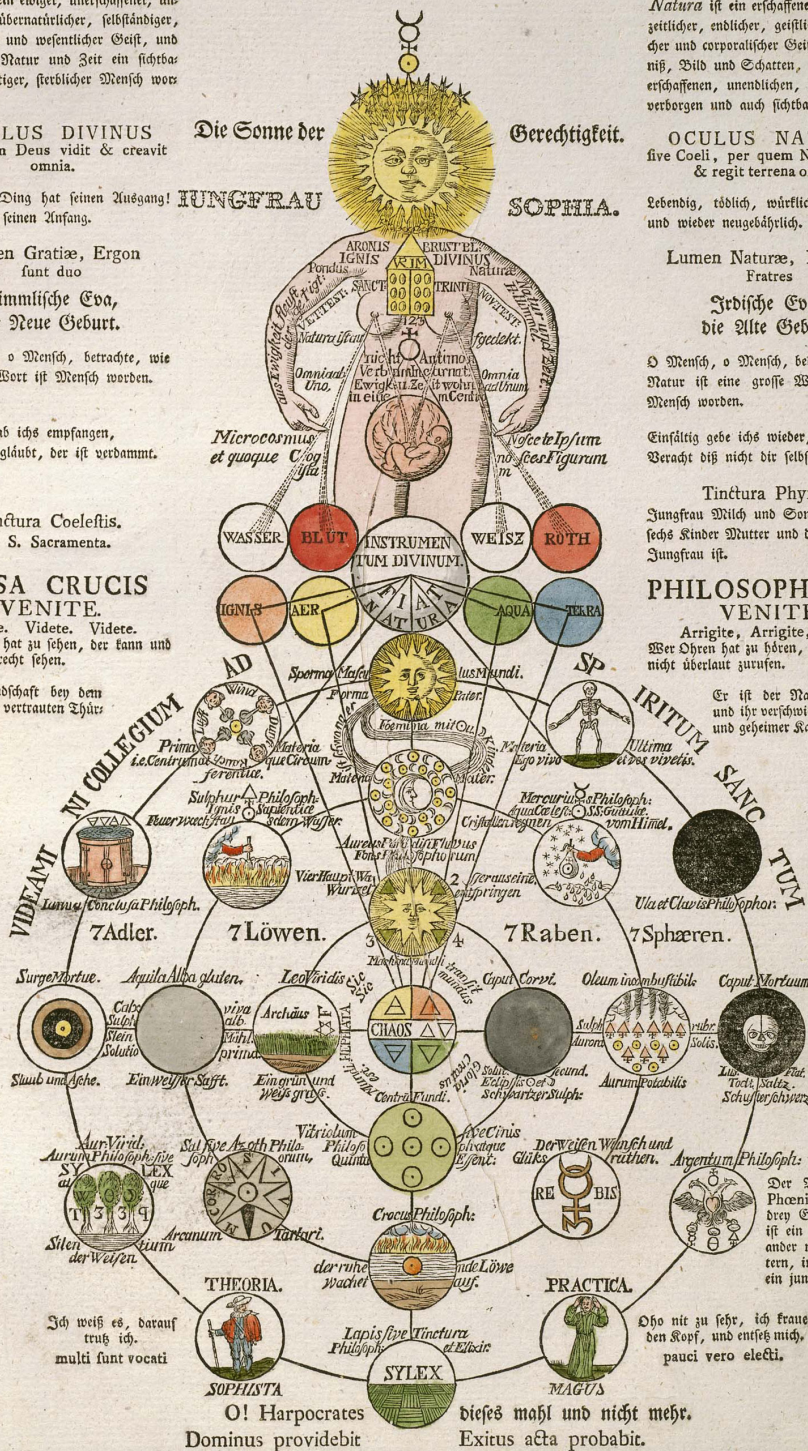
Tinctura Physica.

Jungfrau Milch und Sonnen-Schweiß, sechs Kinder Mutter und doch eine reine Jungfrau ist.

PHILOSOPHORUM  
VENITE.

Arrigite, Arrigite, aures.  
Wer Ohren hat zu hören, dem darf man nicht überlaut zurufen.

Er ist der Natur verediget,  
und ihr verschwiegener Laborant und geheimer Kammerdiener.



A mystical depiction of Sophia from Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer, Altona, 1785.

Sophia. Through love, which is understood here very much as erotic love, philosophy's one-sided theoretical orientation will be overcome. Philosophy thus becomes practical: it recognizes the true hidden face of the material world, of Sophia, and thus transforms the fallen life of the cosmos in its totality.

The reason for the world's imperfection lies in its dividedness, in the war of all against all. In order to establish harmony, individuals must cease to assert their will unchecked, as they do, for example, in the Hegelian dialectic, but they must not simply deny it either, as in Schopenhauer. They must set limits on it – take their place within the Sophiological totality. The recognition of the world's true Sophiological character, its "Sophiicity" (*sofiynost*), offers every individual person the possibility of finding an appropriate place for his or her own drives and passions and those of others, without having to "struggle" against them. Sophiicity, in this context, represents an application to the cosmic totality of the earlier Slavophile concept of "conciliarity" (*sobornost*), which essentially means taking one's place within the social totality without losing one's own subjectivity or individuality, and which, in the view of the Slavophiles, distinguished the original condition of Christianity before its division into East and West: this disintegration is regarded as the root malady and evil of the whole of European civilization.

Soloviev's Sophiology is also closely connected with his historiosophy. For him, as for the Slavophiles, the Western world is the historical embodiment of rationalism and egoistic, loveless materialism, which is incapable of the true Sophiological "materialism" of love. The completion and consummation of human history in a theurgic act of disclosure and embodiment of the eternal Sophia thus requires a "new historical force" – namely Russia. Here Soloviev follows the conception of history of Schelling and Hegel as well as that of the Russian Slavophiles, for whom every nation has a specific role to play in the world-historical drama determined by historical logic. For Soloviev, however, this assertion of Russia's messianic role is combined with a vigorous critique of the actual state of Russian culture. Russia, in his view, has preserved the Christian truth that the West has rejected in bringing forth an "anti-Christian civilization." But it has not created a Christian civilization; it has been incapable of translating its faith into historical reality. Thus, its development has proved to be just as one-sided as that of the West. Soloviev's critique of the ascetic and conservative spirit of Russian Orthodoxy was continued in the Russian philosophy that followed him, with strong

Nietzschean undertones, as the struggle to "rehabilitate the flesh." According to Soloviev, in order to realize its Sophiological possibilities, Russian culture must first be fertilized by the free and anti-Christian spirit of the West. Just as, earlier, matter was fertilized by the divine spirit, so, writes Soloviev, "the fertilization of the divine Mother (the Church) by the active human principle must produce the free deification of humanity," for "in Christ ... the ideal became a fact ... The active divine principle became something physical and material; the Word became flesh."<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Sophia turns out to be a mystical name for Russia, which is meant to enter into a mystical marriage with the Antichrist-West (which thereby becomes aware of its own Christian origin and is therefore redeemed) – with "West" referring more to the Westernized Russian intelligentsia, including Soloviev himself, than to the actual geographic West as such. Soloviev, who worked for the journal *Vestnik Evropy* (The European Herald) for a long time, later described himself as the Antichrist in his mystical autobiography *Three Conversations about the Antichrist*. However, he also belonged to Russian culture. In this sense, for Soloviev, Sophia signifies the discovery of his own feminine (Russian, Christian, etc.) dimension, which Carl Jung, for example, calls the anima. Thus, the world-historical drama of the ultimate union (in an apocalyptic context) of the two halves of Christianity, the West and Byzantine Russia, also signifies the inner mystical marriage in the souls of Russian intellectuals between their Western culture and their Russian unconscious, which lends them the long-desired wholeness, androgyny, or, in Soloviev's words, "all-unity." Elsewhere, quoting Dostoevsky, Soloviev writes that the apocalyptic vision of the woman clothed in the sun who seeks to give birth to a son refers to the Russia that is destined to speak a new word to the world.<sup>7</sup> The mystical marriage between the active but perverted and anti-Christian spirit of the West and the passive but faithful Russian Sophia thus promises to give birth to the new Logos, the Third and final Testament. Out of this there later emerges "the religion of the Third Testament" propagated by the novelist Dmitry Merezhkovsky (1865–1941) and his symbolist group.

The peculiarity, meaning, and influence of Soloviev's Sophiology are not limited to metaphysical and historical speculations. Its esoteric but pivotal dimension is a belief in the immediate experience of personal contact with Sophia, which is described indirectly but clearly enough in Soloviev's poetry. For example, his poem "Three Encounters" (1898) describes three personally experienced apparitions of Sophia: in

04/07

e-flux journal #124 — february 2022 Boris Groys  
Wisdom as the Feminine World Principle: Vladimir Soloviev's Sophiology

a Russian church during the time of his childhood (1862), later in the British Museum (1875), and in Egypt (1876), where Soloviev purposefully traveled for a rendezvous with Sophia.<sup>8</sup> At bottom, however, all of Soloviev's poetry describes a transcendent love affair, in which Sophia appears almost as a real woman and reciprocates Soloviev's love. Fragments of a manuscript by Soloviev have also been published in which he uses an altered handwriting reminiscent of that of Sofia P. Khitrovo, one of his earthly platonic lovers, to transcribe messages conveyed to him by Sophia through his own inner voice. The entries are written in French and signed "Sophie" or, in the Greek form, "Sophia." Similar entries can often be found in Soloviev's other manuscripts as well. An example: "*Sophie. Mange un peu plus aujourd'hui. Je ne veux pas, que tu t'épuises. Mon chéri, nous voulons te préparer pour la grande mission, que tu dois remplir etc.*"<sup>9</sup>

This unity between Soloviev's Sophiological doctrine and his life has fascinated many Russian poets and thinkers since and has served as a model for some of them. Thanks to the ambiguous use of the name Sophia, Soloviev succeeded in fashioning a language in which religious questions, the cosmic life, the world-historical process (including such political and intellectual currents as idealism, positivism, socialism, Nietzscheanism, etc.), the relationship between the West and Russia, the role of the Russian intelligentsia, and at the same time the most intimate, subjective, erotic experiences and feelings could be articulated in nearly identical terms. This language therefore became the dominant idiom for almost the entire Russian non-Marxist intelligentsia of the turn of the century and for several decades thereafter, informing their cultural production. These developments cannot be traced in all their facets here. It will nevertheless be useful to mention and briefly characterize at least those authors who explicitly regarded their work as a further development of Soloviev's Sophiology. This further development primarily pointed in two directions: radicalizing and systematizing metaphysical speculation, and an intensification of the personal experience of the personified Sophia.

The potential problems with this personification became clear when the provincial journalist A. N. Schmidt (1851–1905) proclaimed herself the earthly incarnation of the divine Sophia and Soloviev himself the new incarnation of Christ – and this while Soloviev was still alive.<sup>10</sup> Her talented mystical writings, which made a strong impression on the following generation of Russian Sophiologists, revolve around the female hypostasis of the divine Trinity

and were regarded by their author as the Third Testament. Soloviev reacted to these writings with a mix of sympathy and horror. However, the search for Sophia's earthly incarnations went on and involved a circle of younger Russian symbolist poets that included first and foremost Soloviev's nephew, Sergei Soloviev (1885–1942), as well as perhaps the most important Russian writers of the early twentieth century, Alexander Blok (1880–1921) and Andrei Bely (1880–1934).

Blok's early poetry, which according to Bely was written almost entirely within the horizon of Soloviev's ideas and, with its direct address to Sophia, represents in formal terms a further development of Soloviev's poetry, continues the theme of the transcendent love affair that was so characteristic of Soloviev's poetry.<sup>11</sup> Bely writes: "In 1901, we lived in the atmosphere of his poetry, as the theurgic consummation of his doctrine of Sophia – wisdom."<sup>12</sup> And Bely goes on to observe that, in this circle, all aspects of daily life were seen and analyzed just as much from the standpoint of Solovievian philosophy as were the abstract problems of poetry, religion, sociology, etc. The aesthetics of symbolism sought to recognize the personal erotic experiences of the poet as symbols of the cosmic relationship between Logos (understood as the poetic word) and Sophia. This explains the specific atmosphere of Blok's poetry, which suggests the romantic ecstasies and disappointments of its poetic subject as ontologically grounded insights into the true nature of the feminine world principle – sometimes that of the divine Sophia, sometimes that of the deceitful Maya. This intention is characteristic of Blok's first book of poetry, *Poems about the Beautiful Lady* (1902–04). The spiritual atmosphere of endlessly and anxiously waiting for Sophia to physically appear is also depicted by Bely in his early "symphonies."<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the dominant tone in these descriptions is often one of romantic irony, which was also characteristic of Soloviev and sometimes expressed itself in almost blasphemous forms.

While the symbolist poets focused on the idea of Sophia's personal incarnation, the philosophers of the period developed Solovievian Sophiology as a purely metaphysical doctrine of all-unity – although the personal aspect was almost always implicated by the esoteric doctrine. In one form or another, the philosophy of all-unity was propounded by all the representatives of the so-called Russian religious renaissance. These included not only Merezhkovsky and his group as well as philosophers like Simon Frank (1877–1950), Lev Karsavin (1882–1952), Sergei Askoldov (1871–1945), and the poet Vyacheslav Ivanov

(1866–1949), but also science-oriented researchers like Gustav Shpet (1878–1940), exponents of radical individualism like Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), Lev Shestov (1866–1938), and Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919). They all sought to justify matter, rejected rationalistic “external” morality, and saw this as the main task of the “new religious consciousness” confronted with the Nietzschean question. All of them had attempted to reconcile liberal individualism with the idea of the cosmic order and saw in this reconciliation a promise of the future apocalyptic victory of Russia, or at least of Russian philosophical thought.<sup>14</sup>

However, the main themes of Soloviev’s Sophiology were developed with particular single-mindedness by Sergei Bulgakov (1871–1944) and Pavel Florensky (1882–1943?), both of whom were ordained as Russian Orthodox priests. In his major theological work, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, Florensky follows Soloviev in understanding Sophia as the “all-integral creation.”<sup>15</sup> She is the eternal bride of Logos, without which she loses her unity and disintegrates (or turns into Maya). Sophia continues to be associated with the Mother of God and the Church and is described as preexisting the world: Sophia signifies eternity – the immortality of the material world in its inner, ideal materiality. Certainly, Sophia continues to be understood as God’s creation. She exists, however, in an eternal relationship to God, so that the concept of creation itself alters its original meaning and becomes a relation between creator and creature that is no longer radically distinct from the relations between the hypostases of the divine Trinity (and since Florensky intimates that Russia should also be understood as Sophia, it too is effectively deified).

Florensky is aware of the dangers of heresy and seeks to avoid them by claiming that Sophia is not a fourth person of the Godhead but is nonetheless “admitted” to the Godhead as a fourth person by divine love and is linked to the other three persons of the Trinity in various ways; that is, Sophia effectively structures the Trinity.<sup>16</sup> According to Florensky, it is this position of Sophia that guarantees eternal life for the material world.<sup>17</sup> In all of this, Sophia is pointedly understood not as a concept but as a person, with whom a personal relationship is possible. These aspects of Florensky’s Sophiological doctrine were later elaborated into a new Sophiological theology by Sergei Bulgakov, above all during his exile in Paris in the 1930s and ’40s. This theology met with strong opposition from many Russian theologians, since at that time a clear turn away from the utopianism of the

earlier years became a defining feature of post-revolutionary Russian émigré theology. To be sure, Bulgakov was not explicitly accused of heresy. His views, however, were not regarded as Orthodox but as derived from German mysticism – Jakob Böhme’s, for example – and German idealism.

Thus, the famous historian of Russian philosophy Zenkovsky writes that the entire Sophiological tradition of all-unity was essentially a failed attempt to find a third way between the Christian doctrine of creation on the one hand and pantheism and modern evolutionary theory on the other.<sup>18</sup> The result, in his view, was fantastic, mythical systems, which are full of contradictions and as unacceptable to Orthodox faith as they are to science.<sup>19</sup>

While discussions of Sophiology went on for decades in the Russian emigrant community – up to the time of the Second World War and even afterward – in the Soviet Union censorship made them impossible. But they were constantly referred to indirectly, a prime example being the literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, for whom the “polyphony of the novel” and the “novelistic quality of the world” are tantamount to their Sophiicity. In Bakhtin’s theories, all the traditional Sophiological themes are easily recognizable: the justification of matter and eternal life, harmony between the individual and the other from an apocalyptic perspective, etc.<sup>20</sup> But the personal relationship with Sophia is almost entirely absent from his work.

Of particular interest, however, is the question of the relationship between Russian Sophiology and official Soviet dialectical materialism.<sup>21</sup> The parallels are in fact quite evident. In dialectical materialism, matter (that is, the feminine principle) is posited as the highest and eternal principle, understood not as the objective dimension in the sense of empirical science but as an all-integrating principle to which the subject of knowledge and action is also subordinate (an aspect that was expressed in Soviet Marxism among other things as the subordination of historical materialism, that is, history, to dialectical materialism, that is, the cosmic life). Thus, for example, Lenin defines the bourgeois and the idealistic attitude as “one-sided” but the “materialist” attitude as inherently self-contradictory and alive, a formulation strongly reminiscent of the classical definitions of “*sofiynost*.”<sup>22</sup> The fundamental law of the “materialist dialectic,” namely “the unity and struggle of opposites,” which takes the place of the Hegelian dialectic in Soviet Marxism, dehistoricizes and, as it were, cosmologizes Hegelian historicism. (Although the struggle for the new world is meant to be waged until the adversary is destroyed, which of course

contradicts the Sophiological doctrine, Soviet Marxism postulates “the eternity of the contradiction,” which is not meant to be resolved but rather experienced in its unity.) At the same time, this formulation reads as a description of the dreamlike logic of the erotic relationship between party and people, or spirit and matter, and only finds its redemption in the eschatological prospect of their eternal marriage in communism (which is officially defined as a unity of party-spirit, that is, one-sidedness, spirituality, historicity, and of people’s spirit – in other words, cosmic wholeness); thus spiritualized, materiality will triumph over the one-sidedness of bourgeois idealism.

These parallels between Russian Sophiology and dialectical materialism are doubtless due primarily to their common origin in the philosophy of German Idealism. More important in both cases, however, are the transformations undergone by the respective models, which it is impossible to characterize in detail in the context of this essay. Suffice it to say here that in both cases these transformations presuppose the peculiar split between the Western and the Russian in the consciousness of Russian intellectuals, which they attempt to reflect and overcome on various levels, the name Sophia marking one of the most intensive attempts of this kind in Russian intellectual history.

×

Translated from the German by James Gussen.

07/07

e-flux journal #124 — february 2022 Boris Groys  
Wisdom as the Feminine World Principle: Vladimir Soloviev's Sophiology

1  
Soloviev later describes Nietzsche’s doctrine of the superman as a “preliminary stage” of his own doctrine of the Godman. Vladimir Soloviev, “VI. Solov’ev Idjeja sverchceloveka,” in *Krizis zapadnoj filosofii (The Crisis of Western Philosophy: Against the Positivists, 1874)*, reprinted in *Sobranije sodinenij Vladimira Solov’eva*, vol. 9 (Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1966).

2  
In an unpublished treatise entitled *Sophie*, Soloviev writes: “Schelling is the true precursor of the new universal religion. Kabbala and Neoplatonism. Böhme and Swedenborg. Schelling and I.” As quoted in S. M. Solov’ev, *Zizn’i tvorceskaja evolucija Vladimira Solov’eva* (Brussels: Zhizn’ s Bogom, 1977), 121. For more on the relationship between Soloviev and Schelling, see also L. Müller, *Solovjev und der Protestantismus* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 1951), 93ff.

3  
F. W. J. Schelling, *Philosophy of Revelation (1841–42) and Related Texts*, trans. Klaus Ottmann (Spring Publications, 2020), 199. In another passage on page 262, Schelling refers to Sophia directly.

4  
V. Soloviev, *Lectures on Godmanhood*, trans. Peter Zouboff (Dennis Dobson, 1948), 154–55, translation modified.

5  
Soloviev, *Lectures on Godmanhood*, 159.

6  
Soloviev, *Lectures on Godmanhood*, 206, translation modified.

7  
V. Soloviev, “Tri réci na pamjat’ Dostojevskogo,” in *Sobranije sodinenij Vladimira Solov’eva*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1966), 218.

8  
V. Soloviev, “Tri svidanija,” in *Sobranije sodinenij Vladimira Solov’eva*, vol. 12 (Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1966), 80.

9  
“Sophie. Eat a little more today. I don’t want you to burn out. My darling, we want to prepare you for the great mission, which you must fulfill etc.” Quoted in S. M. Solov’ev, *Zizn’i tvorceskaja evolucija Vladimira Solov’eva*, 119.

10  
For more on the relationship between Vladimir Soloviev and A. N. Schmidt, see S. Bulgakov, *Tichije dumy* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1976), 71ff.

11  
Andrei Bely, *Aleksandr Blok v vospominanijach sovremennikov*, vol. 1 (Moscow:

Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1980), 208–13.

12  
Bely, *Aleksandr Blok*, 209.

13  
Andrei Bely, *Staryi Arbat* (Moskovskii Rabochii, 1989), 45–200.

14  
An overview of post-Solovievian Russian Sophiological thought can be found in V. V. Zen’kovsky, *Istorija russoj filosofii* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1953), 2:379–457.

15  
Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, trans. Boris Jakim (Princeton University Press, 1997), 237.

16  
Florensky, *Pillar and Ground*, 240, translation modified.

17  
Florensky, *Pillar and Ground*, 252.

18  
See G. Florovsky, *Puti russoj bogoslovija* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1981).

19  
V. V. Zen’kovsky, *Istorija russoj filosofii* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1950), 455f.

20  
For more on these parallels, see R. Grübel’s foreword to Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Die Ästhetik des Wortes*, ed. R. Grübel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 70f.

21  
The relationship is also discussed in Boris Groys, “Elemente des Gnostizismus im Dialektischen Materialismus,” in *Gnosis und Mystik in der Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. P. Koslowski (Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1988), 352–67, forthcoming in English.

22  
For more on this, see Boris Groys, “The Problem of Soviet Ideological Practice,” *Studies in Soviet Thought*, no. 33 (1987): 191–208.