

# POSTSECULAR STRATEGIES OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

## ESTRATÉGIAS PÓS-SEculares DA INTERAÇÃO ENTRE TEOLOGIA E FILOSOFIA

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philosophy in theology is the presence of a certain methodology and categorical apparatus, whereas the presence of theology in philosophy is the presence of basic myth, sacred narrative, intuitions of faith and super-rational axioms. The distinction between theology and philosophy is determined by the different influence of the cultural context, the different tasks and strategies of unfolding these discourses, the different forms of cultural interaction, and the dissimilarity of basic narratives and methodologies. In conclusion, we can affirm the qualitative difference, but also the inextricable proximity of philosophy and theology, which determine their interactions in the history of culture.

**Abstract:** In contemporary Christian thought, the demarcation between philosophy and theology, which secular thinking has persistently erected, is being actively blurred. This process corresponds to the main metaphysical and postmetaphysical strategies of modern philosophical and theological thought. In our opinion, all known forms of dialogue between philosophy and theology are conditioned by their deep inner affinity and simultaneous qualitative difference. The fundamental possibility of mutual influence between philosophy and theology is conditioned by their similar structure, the presence of narrative forms of thinking, basic axiomatics, a set of theories and practices expressing the aspiration to live in truth. Equally, they are not empirical forms of knowledge and presuppose theoretical and symbolic generalizations for their theories. They are two non-trivial discourses of open paradox, standing on the border of the incomprehensible. They are equally theories of value, which are related by their ability to take the forms of various cultural phenomena. Theology and philosophy share a similar phenomenological experience of faith and knowledge of the absolute. Their unity can be traced at the methodological level, where philosophy acts as the reflexive basis and self-understanding of theology. The theologian performs philosophical work every time he tries to realise his own initial intuitions and the general worldview and theoretical principles of his theology. It is quite common in theology to use various epistemological strategies and methods. At the same time, no methodology can perfectly capture the content of religious revelation, so the use of methodologies is limited. Methodology can arise and be used in theology under the conceptual influence of a particular philosophical system, or it can arise quite independently. Philosophical work is included in the very basis of theological work; it is quite difficult to distinguish between them. The presence of

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**Resumo:** No pensamento cristão contemporâneo, a demarcação entre filosofia e teologia está a corroer-se no modo dinâmico, contrariamente aos esforços do pensamento secular. Esse processo corresponde às principais estratégias metafísicas e pós-metafísicas do desenvolvimento do pensamento filosófico e teológico contemporâneos. Na nossa opinião, todas as formas conhecidas de diálogo entre filosofia e teologia são condicionadas pelo seu profundo parentesco interno de um lado e pela sua diferença qualitativa de outro lado. A possibilidade fundamental de influência mútua entre filosofia e teologia é condicionada pela sua estrutura semelhante, a presença de formas narrativas de pensamento, axiomática básica, um conjunto de teorias e práticas que expressam a aspiração de existência na Verdade. Da mesma forma, elas não são formas empíricas de conhecimento e pressupõem generalizações teóricas e simbólicas para as suas teorias. São dois discursos não triviais de paradoxo aberto, situados na fronteira do incompreensível. São ambas as teorias de valor, que estão relacionadas pela sua capacidade de assumir as formas de vários fenômenos culturais. A teologia e a filosofia são semelhantes em compartilhar uma experiência fenomenológica de fé e conhecimento do absoluto. Sua unidade pode ser traçada no nível metodológico, em que a filosofia atua como base reflexiva e autoconhecimento da teologia. O teólogo realiza um trabalho filosófico toda vez que tenta realizar suas próprias intuições iniciais e a visão geral de mundo e os princípios teóricos da sua teologia. Na teologia, o uso de várias estratégias e métodos epistemológicos é bastante comum. Entretanto, nenhuma metodologia pode captar perfeitamente o conteúdo da revelação religiosa, portanto, o uso de metodologias é limitado. A metodologia pode surgir e ser usada na teologia sob a influência conceitual de um sistema filosófico específico ou pode surgir de forma totalmente independente. O trabalho filosófico é incorporado à própria base do trabalho teológico; é muito difícil distinguir os dois. A presença da filosofia na teologia é a presença de uma certa metodologia e aparato categórico, enquanto a presença da teologia na filosofia é a presença do mito básico, da narrativa sagrada, das intuições de fé e dos axiomas super-rationais. A distinção entre teologia e filosofia é determinada pela influência diferente do contexto cultural, pelas diferentes tarefas e estratégias de desdobramento desses discursos, pelas diferentes formas de interação cultural e pela diferença de narrativas e metodologias básicas. Em conclusão, podemos afirmar a diferença qualitativa, mas também a proximidade inextricável da filosofia e da teologia, que determinam as suas interações na história da cultura.

**Palavras-chave:** Teologia. Filosofia. Metodologia teológica. Secularidade. Pós-Secularidade.

## 1. Introduction

For modernity, it became the norm to distinguish and contrast the spheres of the religious and the non-religious. Secular thinking distinguishes between philosophy and theology. This position was held by M. Heidegger, K. Barth, and J. Habermas. For them, philosophy and theology are two different sciences that require a clear demarcation. The crisis of secular consciousness, which has been intensively taking place since the middle of the 20th century, led to the need to overcome such an attitude. Starting from the 60s-70s of the 20th century, a more and more active process has been underway. The process of postsecularisation - the return of religion to the public space of the Western world - has been increasingly active since the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, philosophy is experiencing the so-called “theological turn”, a decisive return of God to the circle

of philosophical inquiry. Many modern philosophical trends are trying to return to the formula of the duality of philosophy and theology. At the same time, there is no common and determining situation; philosophy and theology of the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are characterized by an absolute pluralism of approaches. Next to the new metaphysics of the analytic tradition, we find a wide spread of postmetaphysics in phenomenology, hermeneutics and postmodernism. Thus, different methodological positions become the ideological basis of theology in the post-secular world, and there is a repeated convergence of the religious and the secular, theology and philosophy (Uzlaner, 2011).

The described situation is increasingly influencing modern Orthodox theology. Rethinking the problem of the interaction between philosophy and theology is of great relevance for a new reading of the Christian tradition and modernity. It requires a change of previous paradigms, a search for new conceptual approaches. An example of such searches is the comprehension of the history of modern Orthodox theology, within which we can distinguish a neopatristic paradigm and a series of post-neopatristic paradigms (Hrytsyshyn, 2017; Khrystokin, 2021). Continuing our own previous studies, we will focus primarily on the contemporary, post-secular situation in modern Orthodox theology (Khrystokin, 2021).

We are interested in considering how the postmodern situation, the realisation of the demand to overcome metaphysics and the simultaneous search for a new metaphysics, has influenced the reflection on the problem of the interaction between philosophy and theology in postneopatristics as a general situation in which contemporary Orthodox theology finds itself. At the same time, we realise that postneopatristicism does not represent a single paradigm; on the contrary, it is in fact a diversity of both former neopatristic attitudes and new, critical of neopatristic aspirations in Orthodox theology. Thus, postneopatristicism in our study is a set of very different methodologies and paradigms of both metaphysical and postmetaphysical character that attempt to overcome the legacy of neopatristicism and find new and often completely different paths of development for Orthodox thought.

In particular, it is important for us to understand in what ways are philosophy and theology similar and in what ways are they different in the new situation? What are the unifying and differentiating principles that make it possible to speak of unity or difference between them? What role does narrative analysis play in clarifying the interaction between philosophy and theology? Continuing the internal logic of reflection of contemporary theologians, we will attempt to offer some of our own arguments in conceptualising the interaction between philosophy and theology.

The methodology we use is based on a critical analysis of the dominant philosophical and theological narratives in the contemporary intellectual space. It is generally accepted that humanitarian knowledge is based on basic narratives, which determine the main storylines, the internal logic of the development of various discourses, determine their intuitions and axioms, often predetermining their semantic significance and main categories. Orientation to the diversity of narrative strategies is assessed by modern authors (D. Fokema, D. Heyman) as fundamental for modern culture (Mozhejko, 2001, p. 669). Critical examination by R. Hayes, D. Linbeck and N.T Wright of the narratives of modern postmodern Christian theology, makes it possible to conceptualise their principles. We will examine the problem of the interaction between philosophy and theology, taking into account the narrative and paradigmatic approaches.

## 2. Literature review

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, academic theology, in its modernist manner, attempted to overcome the conflict between reason and faith, tried to emphasize the interaction between metaphysics and theology, and argued for the necessity of dialogue between religion and science. The situation in theology was conditioned by the late modern atmosphere of suspicion of rational thinking and the attempt to find the sources of the identity of Orthodox theology in tradition.

It is hard to deny that a new paradigmatic step in the discussion of the interaction between philosophy and theology was made possible by the spread of Heidegger's narrative of the need to overcome metaphysics as onto-theology. Heidegger argued that metaphysics suffers from a forgetfulness of being, it lacks the memory of the ontological difference between being and being, and instead of focusing on this difference and searching for the meaning of being, metaphysics grounds being through God (Konacheva, 2019, p. 16). But as soon as metaphysics calls being God, it becomes theology, when metaphysics asks about the being of being, when it asks about the sufficient grounds of thinking, it becomes ontology and theology. According to Heidegger, the ontological and theological foundations of metaphysics cannot be distinguished; it is they that substantiate being as a whole and set it and other sciences the logic of their development (Konacheva, 2019, p. 17).

The opposite path, postmodern deconstruction, turns the conversation about God into absolute apophaticism, turning God into nothingness, the indistinguishable sublime, the radically Other. The third way is represented by phenomenology, which “asks how God is given to

thinking” (Konacheva, Kyrlezhev, 2020, p. 180). These paths demonstrate different strategies for thinking about God. The first strategy involves a system of rational tools, techniques, arguments of reason capable of proving the possibility of God's existence as something presented to reason, forthcoming to thinking. The second strategy, by means of complex procedures, dissolves any possible positive statements about God. As its variant, “weak theology” rejects traditional dogmatics and speaks about the unrepresentable, weakened, hiding up to the total disappearance of God (Davydov, 2020, p. 28; Drobyshev, 2015). He cannot be named, cannot be named, nothing definite can be said about him - God as an absolutely Other is removed from the world (Davydov, 2020, p. 29). The third, requires postphenomenological procedures for fixing the givenness of consciousness, for describing its own nature rooted in God. For postphenomenology, consciousness does not describe God as an external object, and does not construct him out of and in himself, and does not dissolve him in apophysis, but describes the experience of a relation that has already been pre-assigned to consciousness (Konacheva, Kyrlezhev, 2020, p. 182).

Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, European theology has undergone a complex path of transformation and search for identity in the conditions of postmodernity and post-secularity culture. As a result, together with attempts to renew metaphysics, we can speak of two main variants of post-metaphysical thinking about God: “metaphysics without metaphysics” and “metaphysics after metaphysics.” Here “it is either an attempt to abandon speculative, universalist thinking, and to turn to the singular, to the concrete, to the very other, which is not necessarily the Other (with a capital letter); or an attempt to overcome the Heideggerian project of “overcoming metaphysics” itself, an attempt to find those ways of ontological thinking that will be exactly metaphysics after metaphysics” (Konacheva, Kyrlezhev, 2020, p. 188). Given this division, it is important for us to trace some important Christian concepts that have become iconic for the Orthodox milieu because they offer their own interesting reflections on the relationship between philosophy and theology.

In the post-Soviet space, a kind of metaphysics after metaphysics was proposed by S. Horuzhiy, who was one of the first to attempt to formulate an Orthodox response to Heidegger. In the article “Philosophy and Theology” (1995-1998) the problem of interaction between theology and philosophy was considered on the example of Eastern Christian discourse, which is thought by the author in three forms: the discourse of philosophy, identical to ancient thought; the discourse of theology, which is most similar to philosophy; the discourse of mystical-ascetic theology (Horuzhiy, 2000, p. 3). It was theology, which was closely connected with spiritual

practice, that was the most distant from the structure and image of European metaphysics (Horuzhij, 2000, p. 7).

The question of the relation between philosophy and theology, according to Horujogo, is a question about the interaction of two types of initial experience, - the experience of thinking and the experience of communication: these “two discourses refer to different ontologies and different kinds of being-experience” (Horuzhij, 2000, p. 7). Thus, Horužij defends the thesis of the absolute difference between philosophy and theology: “they are not reducible to each other and no direct, visual relationship or correspondence between them can be established” (Horuzhij, 2000, p. 9). The absolute difference between philosophy and theology is reconciled through theoretical theology, it “can be built in different ontologies and be in different relations of inclusion or subordination with both philosophy and theology” (Horuzhij, 2000, p. 9). This separation gave rise to the situation of “split discourse” - the gap between philosophy and theology, and between philosophy and theology, as well as “split experience”, when the experience of knowing God becomes purely subjective and is opposed to the scientific as objective. This is why M. Heidegger refers theology to the scientific type of thinking and thus contrasts it with philosophy as ontological ontological.

A similar late-modern position of a sharp distinction between philosophy and theology is held by most conservative Orthodox thinkers. Regardless of Heidegger's criticism, they perceive philosophy as abstract metaphysics, empty theorising, which is contrasted with theology based on spiritual experience, devoid of a metaphysical component. Recognising the onto-theological structure of metaphysics, as well as overcoming metaphysics in theology, is not a priority problem for them; they continue to think in “modern-late modern” narratives.

A completely different approach, rooted in postmodern thinking, is demonstrated by contemporary European thought, which seeks to build a “metaphysics without metaphysics”. John Caputo, whose views have influenced the formation of modern Christian consciousness, in his work *Philosophy and Theology* (2006), tries to justify their close union (Caputo, 2006). In his opinion, there are many preconceived notions regarding the conflict between philosophy and theology, which has its roots in the opposition between Athens and Jerusalem. Many have tried to see in faith and reason “two different styles of life - the theological life of faith and the philosophical life of reason” (Caputo, 2006, p. 18). This conflict, according to Caputo, only intensified in the modern era (Caputo, 2006, p. 22). After all, if in the Middle Ages it was theology that was the “queen of sciences”, in the New Age the place of the top of knowledge is occupied by philosophy and science (Caputo, 2006, p. 23). It is the Enlightenment “age of reason” that

draws religion, theology, as well as God to responsibility. As a result, not just philosophy ceased to be the handmaiden of theology, but the latter became one of the disciplines that is “controlled by the higher principles of philosophy, overseeing all knowledge and the sciences as a whole” (Caputo, 2006, p. 43).

In fact, J. Caputo notes, philosophy and theology are inseparable, they necessarily require and provide for each other. And this is due, first of all, to the fact that they are fundamentally two types of narratives, on which the theoretical concepts of each are based (Caputo, 2006, p. 79). Philosophy and theology have their own intuitions, premises, “a perspective, a vocabulary that we trust” (Caputo, 2006, p. 78). They are mutually necessary as they help to evaluate each other. In particular, philosophy helps to identify logical, hermeneutical and methodological errors in theological judgements and evaluate them, while theology sets the narrative context and meaning for philosophical thinking. Therefore, a good knowledge of the history of philosophy and theology helps the thinker to avoid the extremes of fideism and rationalism.

A similar view of the interaction between philosophy and theology is developed by D. Hart, who represents Orthodox theology of the postmodern era. Hart's main task is not simply to criticise the “prejudices, language or solutions” of modern philosophy (Hart, 2010, p. 45), but to address the question of the interaction between philosophy and theology as a whole, as an important problem to which Christianity must offer an answer. For D. Hart, philosophy and theology are not separate and fully autonomous, on the contrary, they are thought by him to be internally united. After all, theology has always been an integral part of the European tradition, and it was this theology that gave birth to philosophy, which is to a large extent “the theology's bastard child”, a kind of “secularised theology”. Philosophy was born out of “the collapse of the language of faith”, and therefore all the search, and the denial of this faith, is conditioned by “the internal struggle of the Christian West with itself” (Hart, 2010, p. 46). Philosophy is thus a continuation of theology in another way, it is the self-denial of theology that the European tradition carries out in order to find itself. The theological problematics of being and being, the hermeneutic interpretation of texts, the problem of the transcendent and immanent, the moral law, transcendentals, eternity and time, fate and freedom, as the essential nodes of the European philosophical tradition, permeate its entire history up to the present. Theology therefore bears the burden of primogeniture in relation to philosophy, which, since antiquity, has never been detached from theology. The whole problematics of philosophy from Thales to Derrida are reflections on theological themes, and the search for solutions to theological problems.

Hart tentatively finds a similar view of the inseparability of philosophy and theology, as well as his own theology of beauty, in G. W. von Balthasar, who lays the unity and inseparability of the transcendentals of truth, goodness, and beauty as inherent properties of being at the heart of his theoesthetics. This provides an ontological foundation for any reflection on the relationship between philosophy and theology that rests on these fundamental principles, without which any thinking about God, the world, and man is impossible. For Balthasar, philosophy and theology are modes of transcendental thinking, which creates an inseparable unity between them. That is why Balthasar comes out of the principle axiom: “without philosophy there is no theology” (Bal'tazar, 2013, p. VII). Any thinking in the categories of the unity of being, truth, beauty and goodness presupposes the mutual conditionality and inseparability of philosophy and theology. “If the theologian is capable of being serious at all, he” must be, “first of all - a philosopher ...”, notes the Catholic thinker (Bal'tazar, 2013, pp. VIII-IX). Since the world “as a subject of cognition is always already” included “in this supernatural sphere”, philosophy, “penetrating into this supernatural” inclusion of “created nature, is able to reveal certain natural fundamental structures of the world and cognition”, so philosophy “is in no way eliminated by this inclusion .... in its essence.” On the contrary, the closer philosophy “approaches a concrete subject and the more insistently it demands concrete cognitive possibilities, the more, consciously or unconsciously, it attracts to itself the data of theology” (Bal'tazar, 2013, p. XII). For Balthasar, the supernatural is rooted in the innermost structures of being and thinking, so “it would be madness to try by all means to drive out of the philosophical heritage this flavour of supernatural truth; the supernatural permeates nature too much for it to allow it to be reconstructed in its pure state (*natura pura*)” (Bal'tazar, 2013, p. XII).

Balthasar “does not share Heidegger's distinction between ontological and ontic science, nor the traditional attribution to the sphere of philosophical interest of pure nature, comprehended exclusively by means of natural reason, separate from Revelation” (Konacheva, 2019, p. 42). Balthasar, following the representatives of Patristics, believes that there is no “pure nature” of reason, which would not have been illuminated from the beginning by the light of divine glory, therefore the contemplation of this light “is included in the initial experience of the philosopher” (Konacheva, 2019, p. 42). Therefore, Christianity accepts these theological beginnings, which “firmly grow into any philosophy” and recognises “the unforgettable presence of such theologoumena in the environment of concrete philosophical thinking” (Bal'tazar, 2013, pp. XII-XIII). Therefore, theology neither precedes nor completes philosophy, but rather “theology and philosophy deepen each other from within” (Bal'tazar, 2013, p. 136). That is, both philosopher and theologian can have a common basic experience of “gracious reason” that touched the



transcendental structures of being and thinking, which becomes the basis for the development of theological and philosophical discourse, each of which carries out its own interpretation of this experience.

J. Manoussakis' approach continues the Christian aesthetic metaphysics without metaphysics (Manoussakis, 2014). His texts not only develop theology, but they can be referred to religious philosophy, to the Christian philosophy of the postmodern. After the “theological turn” in phenomenology, it has become the norm to overlook the distinction between theology and philosophy. For Manoussakis, as for Hart, they are a single type of thinking, and it is impossible to distinguish between them. The very possibility of pure “secular” thinking about science or philosophy, which would be “free from religious and worldview components, is an artificial ideological construct of the Enlightenment” (Chernomorec, E). The postmodern deconstruction of the Enlightenment ideal shows that “any philosophy is theology in the broad sense of the word, that is, a doctrine about God, man, and the world, relying not only on the data of reason, but also on extra-rational sources of knowledge” (Chernomorec, E). Therefore, the thought about God in the conditions of post-secularity, can be predominantly phenomenological.

Theology, for Hart and Manoussakis, is a metadiscourse that is “characterised only by a greater breadth than philosophy, and can therefore claim priority over it” (Chernomorec, E). In contrast to Heidegger, philosophy and theology are thought of as mutually agreed ways of comprehending being, having a joint subject field. Heidegger's position is a variation of the late modern narrative, which limits theology to the space of faith, the interpretation of the existential experience of Revelation. According to Heidegger, since God is not being but being, he is not the subject of theology, and therefore it does not attempt to think God, but to think belief in him. For Heidegger, thinking and believing are opposite forms that cannot be united or harmonised. Therefore, theology is a self-interpretation of faith, not a form of God-knowledge; theology is the thinking of faith and the religious experience of knowing being. According to Heidegger, “it is impossible to construct a Christian theory of being or to think through the phenomena of revelation in terms of an event. Theology and philosophy can be carried out in an authentic way, only realising their differences as sciences of being and sciences of being” (Konacheva, 2019, p. 45). Balthasar, Hart, and Manoussakis categorically reject Heidegger's doctrine of the distinction between philosophy and theology as sciences of being and essence; for them theology is thinking about being and its properties.

The attempt to build a “new metaphysics after metaphysics”, on the basis of Thomism and Neoplatonism, is developed by theologians belonging to radical orthodoxy, whose works can be

considered a real “philosophical turn in theology”, which also influenced Orthodox thinkers (Milbank, Pickstock, Ward, 1999). D. Milbank, unfolding arguments against the enlightenment narrative, sees it impossible for a Christian to follow the postulates of secular reason. “Christian theology must develop its own philosophy and modernity that does not contradict Christianity” (Uzlaner, 2011, p. 10). Philosophy and theology should not be separate constructs, “they constitute a whole” (Milbank)], and should carry out “a double movement: theology rushes into philosophy, and theology into philosophy” (Uzlaner, 2011, p. 10). The modernist opposition of philosophy and theology as faith and reason is meaningless, since they act as two forms of rationality that are called to think the absolute and the ultimate. In so doing, Milbank returns to the patristic-Thomist position, when there was no separation between the two. Milbank criticises the “nominalist revolution in theology”, which, in his opinion, led to the loss of the dynamic balance of faith and reason, to the break with metaphysics (Davydov, 2015, p. 377). Genuine Christian philosophy is possible only as a metaphysical project, attempts to overcome which end in the nihilism of postmodernity. “The post-metaphysicality of modern Orthodox theology and religious philosophy does not mean that it is anti-metaphysical. Even the 'removal' of metaphysics is more of a conception than a reality. In fact, post-metaphysicality means the freedom of theological and religious-philosophical thinking from metaphysics. This freedom is possible because of the utilisation of the potential of phenomenology and hermeneutics” (Chernomorec, E). Through metaphysics, theology should become a metacognition capable of conceptualising all ultimate questions on the way to building a new “Christian world”. It is a “dynamically developing and fundamentally unfinished project”, which should offer solutions to current socio-political problems and provide answers to the challenges of modernity (Davydov, 2015, p. 380).

O. Davydov's version of metaphysics after metaphysics, which can be considered a kind of Orthodox radical orthodox orthodoxy and transcendental ontology, is original. He sees his task in proving the cardinal difference between modern metaphysics and theology. He refers modern metaphysics to speculative, rationalistic, sometimes dialectical types of philosophy, which are fundamentally opposed to theology. According to Davydov, metaphysics is “a narrative about the foundations and first beginnings of all things, about being as such” (Davydov, 2020, p. 116). The theologian categorically does not share the view that theology is a variant of such metaphysics, which has displaced being and blocked aletheia (Davydov, 2020, p. 9). In contrast to Heidegger, the thinker believes that metaphysics differs essentially from theology in that it aims at the knowledge of being, whereas theology is the knowledge of God as the source of being. Following Milbank, Davydov introduces a distinction between immanentist variants of metaphysics, centred

on the apprehension of being, and theology proper, which proceeds from the consistent transcendence of God and the world. It is the application of the analogy of being that is the criterion by which we can distinguish theology from metaphysics, or true theological metaphysics from all its immanentist variants (Davydov, 2020, p. 96; Davydov, 2015, pp. 367, 369-370). Thanks to the principle of the creation of the world out of nothing, theological rhetoric overcomes the metaphysical narrative; it is not characterised by schematic, systematic, but by openness and creative movement. Therefore, theology should not be a “closed system,” for there is always the threat of reducing theology to a rationalistic dialectic, a clear system of obligatory categories. And theology in its spirit is the speaking of a religious narrative, thinking not in principles but in symbols, paradoxical rhetoric, the poetics of glory and praise in which the indescribable is voiced.

Metaphysics becomes itself through theology, in which it opens to being. When philosophy assimilates the ontological narrative of analogical being, then it “finds in theology the true vision of being as a groundless and causeless trinitarian gift, joy and pleasure” (Davydov, 2020, p. 192). Without analogical theology, without experiencing the encounter with Revelation, philosophy falls into nihilism, logical irrationality, because “any metaphysics of creaturely being is necessarily included in the broader and more comprehensive context of theology” (Davydov, 2020, p. 90). Davydov here timely cites the opinion of Przywara, the author of the modern interpretation of the analogy of being, that “philosophy swims in the ocean of theology” (Davydov, 2020, p. 90).

Unlike metaphysics, the origin and completion of theology is apophatic inexpressibility, the silence of the mind. The whole of theology consists in pronouncing this inexpressibility through cataphatic judgements, while being aware of their limitations. Without mystical mystery, there is no theology, without mysticism theology is metaphysics, and conversely, metaphysics becomes theology when it accepts the postulate of mystical ineffability. Philosophy acquires meaning and perspective when it is included in theology, which, in turn, is immersed in mysticism: “Theology goes beyond metaphysics, overcoming the dialectic of the expressible and the inexpressible, and mysticism is not something extraordinary or extravagant in relation to theological discourse, but its necessary habitat” (Davydov, 2020, p. 131-132).

The metaphysical and postmetaphysical strategies of Christian thought presented above do not seem to us to be mutually opposed. In our opinion, they equally help to return theology to the modern cultural space, allow it to find itself - to realise itself as an integral part of European culture. In this sense, the entire intellectual archaeology of modern and postmodern philosophers is the development of new theological narratives, the search, rediscovery, recovery and revival of their problematics. Having made a great circle, separating theology from philosophy and then science

from them, European culture has once again come to realise the importance of their dialogue and mutual interaction.

### **3. Metaphysics as the basis of thinking**

All the attempts made by modern and postmodern thinkers to separate theology from metaphysics have only shown that metaphysics is an integral basis of thinking. One can agree with M. Mamardashvili's opinion that in the broadest sense metaphysics refers to judgements that have a "super-experiential character". Metaphysical is thinking capable of boundary generalisations, operating with universals, without which neither philosophy nor theology is possible. It constitutes the indivisible basis of philosophy. "Metaphysical statements are, first of all, statements about the conditions of human existence..., firstly, metaphysical statements are the condition of maintaining human existence as human and, secondly, they are the condition that man can cognise anything at all" (Mamardashvili, 1996, p. 110). Here we should distinguish between metaphysics as part of philosophy in its traditional sense, modern metaphysics as onto-theology, and metaphysicality as a universal characteristic of thinking. It is possible and interesting to overcome the projects of onto-theologies, but it is impossible to completely abandon metaphysics in philosophy, because of the cardinal metaphysicality of human thinking, the universal capacity of man to understand himself and the world in worldview universals. Post-metaphysical narratives also need metaphysical axioms and narratives, without which morality, law, science and modern civilisation in general are impossible.

At the heart of almost all theological, and in particular post-metaphysical projects, one can find metaphysical foundations without which religious thinking is impossible. Philosophy reinforces the immanent metaphysicality of theological thinking, so that liberation from speculative metaphysics in theology takes the form of a liberation from philosophy, or a critique of philosophical metaphysics. But even with the struggle against metaphysics, the basic foundations of theology remain metaphysical, the complete overcoming of which is impossible. "The death of metaphysics" means the completion of a certain historical form of it, but not a complete liberation from metaphysical thinking, which does not disappear completely even in apophatic silence before the indescribable. Therefore, the end of the age of metaphysics postulated by postmodernists is not the end of theology, much less the end of philosophy.

### **4. Theology and philosophy as two analogous forms of thinking**

This analysis allows us to propose our own reasoning about the inseparability of philosophy and theology, to see an additional possibility of thinking metaphysically about God after modern metaphysics. Even a superficial comparison shows that it is not easy to establish a fundamental boundary between philosophy and theology. They both appear as forms of discourse aimed at comprehending the universal and fundamental foundations of the world, man and explaining the reasons for their existence. To distinguish between philosophy and theology is also very difficult in depth, because theology, in the broadest sense, is a religiously oriented philosophy, and philosophy presupposes a certain philosophical theology. Obviously, under the conditions of a secular society, philosophy and theology have become two autonomous entities, the difference between which can be traced in their subjects, tasks, functions, and institutional forms of organisation. We are aware of this difference, we cannot neglect it, but we must state that in the postsecular perspective, philosophy and theology are essentially forms of discourse on the absolute, and therefore they can mutually refer, overlap and complement each other. In our opinion, all known forms of dialogue between philosophy and theology are conditioned by their deep inner affinity and simultaneous institutional and functional difference (Khrystokin, 2017; Khrystokin, 2015; Khrystokin, 2016).

In our opinion, the fundamental possibility of mutual influence of philosophy and theology is conditioned by their structure. Theology itself structurally contains a philosophical component, which constitutes one of its parts, rational, speculative-metaphysical, which can never replace the other, related to the content of supernatural revelation and religious faith. As long as the discourse is directed towards the comprehension of the Word of God, it is theological, and when the revelation disappears, so does theology. The bipolarity of Christian theology is also historically conditioned. Averintsev notes that the specificity of both Christianity and its theology are conditioned by the historical synthesis of ancient philosophy and biblical mentality, the cultural conflict and unity of which led to the formation of Christianity (Averincev, 1984). A. Baumeister expressed a similar position on the paradoxicality, inner conflict and together providentiality of the meeting of ancient philosophy and Christianity. In his opinion, from “the beginning of the meeting of antiquity and Christianity, there was an internal tension, dispute, conflict. And this situation of internal tension and dispute from the very beginning was charged with a powerful creative potential, created a force field in which all the main phenomena of our tradition were developed” (Baumejster, 2012, pp. 102-103). As a result, Christian theology was formed under the influence of ancient philosophy. The latter, according to Y. Chernomorets, “is a discourse similar

to the philosophy” (Chernomorec, Ju). What brings theology and philosophy together is that they comprehend the most common subjects - the world, man and God, based on axioms accepted without proof, the only difference is that theology has more axioms. Together they claim the status of meta-discourses for all sciences; together they are specific sciences, worldview discourses.

Philosophical and theological discourses have basic narratives (idea, myth, revelation) at their core, which is what lays their underlying axiomatic. It is impossible to deprive philosophy of the narrative; it is revealed to the philosopher intuitively, it is accepted as a symbol that holistically explains reality. On its basis, the reality is rationalised and a picture of the world is formed. Thus, for Heraclitus the narrative was the idea of the fluidity of being, and for Hegel the intuition of the development of logical triads. For the Stoics, the basic narrative is the narrative of the eternal cycle of being, and for Nietzsche the idea of eternal return and superman.

Aristotle's initial intuition was the idea of the integrity of the world, and for Plato the primacy of the spiritual over the material. Philosophy consists in the unfolding of primary intuitions that are taken on faith by the thinker. Similarly, theology is impossible without narratives, which are the essence of revelation. The latter is a kind of sacred myth that requires belief and interpretation, and theology unfolds this narrative into a coherent doctrine. It is difficult to prove as well as deny the fallacy of the narrative; theology is defined by it, conditioned by its internal logic. The theologian accepts it, he is not able to change it, he follows it and justifies it, reveals and explains it by means of symbols, analogies and proofs.

As similar doctrines, philosophy and theology represent a set of certain theories and practices. No one doubts that theology presupposes and reflects the spiritual life of the theologian, but philosophy is also a spiritual and intellectual exercise, it is a spiritual practice and moral life that substantiates itself rationally (Il'in, 1994; Nikiforov, 2012). The French philosopher P. Ado noted that philosophy in general, and Christian philosophy in particular, arise “simultaneously as a discourse and as a way of life” (Ado, 2005, p. 252). An important component of not only theology but also philosophy is the endeavour to gain practical wisdom. Philosophical work, no less than theological work, involves great concentration, the concentration of all spiritual effort. The comprehension of an important problem, or the deep reading of texts, requires a certain humility, a forgetting of one's own self, an inspiration. And just as the life of a theologian must correspond to what he speaks about, so the life of a true philosopher bears witness to the truth. It is in this that philosophy demonstrates its own religious origins, approaches theology, serves as a model for it, and influences its form (Il'in, 1994). Even Aristotle defined the purpose of philosophy as the pursuit of knowledge and goodness. The natural human desire to know and the natural desire for

the good, form together the “philosophical life” or “blissful life”. It aims at the comprehension of God as Reason, Reason, Goodness and Love, and only the philosopher realises in the end the high Truth and the highest Good (EN 1094 a 1) which make him wise and happy. In this Christian thought follows an ancient philosophy.

The problem of experience and its conceptualisation once again emphasises the analogy between theology and philosophy. Among empiricist philosophers, there is a widespread attitude to derive knowledge from experience, predominantly sensual. It is opposed to the position of modern epistemology, which proves “the impossibility of obtaining absolutely direct and reliable knowledge” derived from experience. In their opinion, experience is always “a product of active activity of the subject, which implies the use of certain schemes and standards, categories of culture or scientific language” (Lektorskij, 2010, p. 159). Some theologians, using simplified empirical approaches, also note the exclusive role of spiritual experience in the formation of theological knowledge (Horuzhij, 1998). In fact, both philosophy and theology, as rational discourses, are not empirical sciences; they do not derive their basic theories from direct experience. The basic categories of philosophy (being, consciousness, spirit, idea, time) cannot be derived from experience. It plays a role only in sense cognition, but experience does not give us universal concepts (truth, knowledge, law, reason). For theology, experience does not create its basic categories (God, salvation, sin, good and evil, truth); they are symbols of the invisible world, in the construction of which cultural-historical and philosophical reasoning plays an important role.

Both discourses equally have their own limits. Rational thinking in general has its own limits, beyond which it becomes paradoxical, or disappears altogether. As J. Danielou “philosophy, meeting the mystery of the Godhead, must turn round and bow before it” (Danielju, 1998, p. 131). Philosophy is a discourse that has a vertical line, but there is no limit to the horizontal. It was written about by J. Deleuze and F. Guattari: philosophy is a limitless development of ideas (Deljoz, Gvattari, 1998). Transcendent, inaccessible for cognition being, determines the vertical feature of philosophy, but horizontally it unfolds infinitely. Philosophy lives as long as one thinks, inquires, problematises, presupposes and proposes universal statements, it continues to exist even when its narratives and basic principles are destroyed. Theology, on the contrary, has a horizontal line; it cannot multiply its own concepts to infinity, nor can it generate new ideas that would contradict the basic narrative and axiom system of the faith.

Theology is open to verticality, capable of perpetually deepening and generating new interpretations of revelation and multiplying readings of its various contexts. Therefore, change of concepts and doctrines is permissible in theology as long as its basic narrative and axiomatics of

faith are not changed. So, what is common is that both discourses have fundamental boundaries, though they are limitless in their natural development (Larshe, 2012, pp. 124-125).

Philosophy and theology together oppose everyday triviality, routine, passive inertia, pettiness and worldliness of human existence (Baumejster, 2012, pp. 108-110, 112). This is their universalism, the desire to overcome the limitations of human nature. In addition, meaningfully theological and philosophical discourse are forms of rationally organised paradox. The logic and paradoxicality of theology is conditioned by the logic and paradoxicality of Christian faith. The task of theologians is not to explain these paradoxes, but to fix them and harmonise them with the preceding tradition, with the words of Christ, with the life and faith of the community, and with the existing culture. Philosophy is also paradoxical, it thinks of man in the interaction of the opposite categories of freedom and necessity, life and death, nature and personality, social and individual, good and evil. Cognition of the world paradoxically combines the finite and the infinite, the accidental and the regular, the permanent and the mobile. Only this mutual paradoxicality makes theology and philosophy mutually involved and capable of interaction.

Philosophy and theology together are valued theories, which are related by their ability to take different cultural forms. They can engage with myth, poetry, art, morality, science, law, politics, mysticism, publicism, etc. Such synthesis with certain cultural languages, has conditioned the diversity of their typological forms: moral, artistic-symbolic, narrative, scientific, political, mystical. Using to the same extent the available cultural-semantic potential of language, symbols, primary intuitions, philosophy and theology realise their main task - to explain to man his place in the world. Thus, theology and philosophy are universal metadiscourses, capable of adapting to historical forms of culture and revealing a universal typology for all cultures (Khrystokin, 2017; Khrystokin, 2015).

It is possible to distinguish between philosophy and theology institutionally, doctrinally, ideologically or functionally, but it is impossible to distinguish them in the believing and questioning person himself. We proceed from what is phenomenological, acts of faith and knowledge give birth to understanding and in this they are one. In them, the world, the other, God can be revealed to the direct experience of man. In acts of faith and knowledge, man acquires a primary pre-knowledge, which organises experience to varying degrees. This is the unified experience of philosophy and theology. Their essential difference, however, arises at the level of the organisation of discourse, the constitution of subject matter, semantic certainty, narrativity, and methodology. The logic of the organisation of discourse seeks to formalise and define meanings, to delimit fields and meanings. But before that, the same person asks questions that she



does not internally distinguish into philosophical and theological questions. When a person asks himself in prayer - who speaks to me, whom do I hear, to whom do I answer? Or, when the same person asks himself - who is God? What is he like? What are his properties? What is his essence? In these cases, does the person ask as a theologian or a philosopher? Here there is primary experience and primary awareness of it, but there is not yet a distinction between philosophy and theology, it arises depending on the context in which the question falls, which discourse provides the answer? Thus, at the level of the phenomenology of consciousness, philosophy and theology are one, the differences arise at the next levels of rationalisation.

The obvious kinship between philosophy and theology can also be seen at the methodological level (Khrystokin, 2016). Since the task of philosophy is the reflexive comprehension of human categories, values, and activities, in the broadest sense philosophy is the methodology of any rational discourse, its self-understanding. It is in this sense that philosophy is the basis of science, law, morality, art, all forms of culture and, in particular, the basis of the discourse of theology (Khrystokin, 2016). Therefore, if we proceed from the fact that every organised discourse (and first of all philosophical and theological) has its own form, structure, content, categories, semantic series, symbolism, then it must also have its own methodology - ways, methods, ways to achieve theoretical and practical knowledge for the implementation of its own goals and objectives.

And since philosophy is the reflexive and theoretical basis of methodology, and theology has its own methodology within the framework of religious discourse, which can be comprehended, philosophy is the methodological basis of theology in general and philosophical theology in particular. At the same time, one should distinguish between the very reflexive ability to comprehend reality - universal for all people, method - a certain way of cognition, and methodology - the doctrine of the methods of cognition.

It is obvious that it is in the reflexive-methodological sense that philosophy forms the basis of philosophical theology; it is as a methodology of theological discourse that philosophy determines its categories, structure, and argumentation. It is as a methodology that philosophy determines the ability of theology to develop its own positions, self-analysis, reflection, and critical evaluation of its own achievements and shortcomings. Philosophy acts here as an instrument of faith, a form for making sense of the revelation narrative. At the same time, the theologian can criticise philosophy as he likes, but it is impossible to avoid it. For the theologian's attempts to think about himself, his faith, or to communicate the content of his faith and experience to others, attempts to compare his faith and spiritual experience with the knowledge and experience of

others, necessarily lead to the use of certain intellectual tools, which in general constitute the methodology of theology.

But even when the theologian relies on intuitive experience or revelation narrative and does not subject them to reflection, when he accepts a certain religious picture, he accepts, though not always consciously, a certain basic system of means of framing his experience. And if the theologian develops a conceptual doctrine, he is even more obliged to use a more sophisticated methodology - immanent to a certain worldview that corresponds to the narrative of faith. It is only at the beginning that faith may be naïve relative to knowledge, but subsequently the space for theory becomes larger, and with it the space for philosophy, and in particular the methodology of religious discourse, becomes more elaborate and meaningful.

Since theology is a form of rationality, to affirm and to compare, to evaluate and to analyse, to criticise and to question, to polemicise and to agree are important components of rational, and with it of theological discourse. In short, every theologian, as soon as he or she attempts to thoughtfully preach and explain his or her faith - begins to religiously philosophise. It is wonderful if the theologian recognises the conditioning of his intuitions and worldview on previous theories and religious teachings, on historical practice, on his own intellectual position, and on a host of cultural influences. But even if the theologian has no such understanding, even if he postulates the simplicity of his doctrines, he is still the bearer of a certain style of philosophising and, accordingly, accepts certain methodological principles as true. All this applies to all theologians and religious thinkers of all epochs and directions, to rationalists and mystics, to fideists and intuitionists. But not all theologians manage to realise their own initial intuitions and general worldview and theoretical principles. Reflection on the methodology of one's own theology is a super task of the theologian, and in order to realise it, he must become a philosopher.

Practically all philosophical methodologies, logical procedures, epistemological paradigms, and conceptual solutions can be used in theology. Emphasis on reason as the basis of knowledge of the world, man and God, actualises the use of rational modes of theological knowledge. Conversely, the reliance on faith as the only light of truth creates the possibility of forming a methodology of fideism. Reliance on direct divine apprehension and experience of the sacred sets the foundation for intuitivism. The construction of different interpretations of religious texts, the search for new meanings and contexts, form religious hermeneutics. The use of mystical experience as a defining way of obtaining religious knowledge gives rise to the methodology of mystical empiricism. Finally, the ability to contemplate the obviousness of the world, scriptures, and religious experience, is a manifestation of phenomenological methodology. The use of

dialectic, transcendental analytic, and analytic philosophy in theology is not excluded. It is clear that in a particular theological discourse one, or several methodologies are found, the individual configuration of which makes these teachings original in their own way.

The formation of Christian theology and its methodology was influenced by numerous external and internal factors. The use in theology of the historical methodologies of Platonism, Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism, Kantianism, Schellingianism, Romanticism, analytic philosophy, existentialism, phenomenology, etc., has been proven. In terms of conceptual influences, overwhelmingly, the formation of Christian theology was the result of creative reinterpretation of external influences under the influence of one's own religious narratives, intuitions, and theories (Khrystokin, 2021).

## **5. Conceptual and methodological aspects of the influence of philosophy on theology**

Based on the above, it is worth distinguishing between the conceptual and methodological aspects of the influence of philosophy on theology. They do not necessarily coincide. Thus, the conceptual influence on Christian theology involves a complex process of assimilating and reinterpreting a set of ideas and teachings of a particular philosophy. While the use of methodologies (rationalism, empiricism, conceptualism, intuitionism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, communicative theory), was not necessarily accompanied by the assimilation of philosophical concepts and doctrines. For example, several methodologies (intuitionism, phenomenology, hermeneutics) could coexist within one conceptual influence of Neoplatonism in the Patristic period, while at the same time, the same doctrine in the 1st-13th centuries could be explained through different conceptual approaches (Stoicism, Platonism, Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism).

Recognising the cardinal importance of methodology for the formation of theology, it is necessary to recognise that the content of theology cannot be reduced to its methodology. In general, theology is not a complete analogue of the narrative of religious faith and knowledge, which, in turn, cannot be absolutely adequately reduced to religious experience or intuition. The same meaning can be narrated in different ways. Historically, Christian doctrine is not tied to one type of methodology and conceptual solution. Certain philosophies and methodologies can act as lasting ways of organising religious ideas (Augustinianism, Thomism, Christian Neoplatonism,

Neo-Thomism), but still, no historical form of theology, no philosophical methodology can perfectly convey the content and completeness of religious ideas, beliefs and knowledge. This is due to the fact that religious revelation is not fully rationalised to the end, and cannot be fully systematised, and in general to the fact that narrative thinking can only be rationalised to a certain extent. Theology, changing its own paradigms, is searching for more adequate ways of realising the revelation narrative.

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Finally, the question may arise as to why we speak of philosophy as the predominant form of methodology, can't theology develop a methodology on its own? Does it not have its own theological methods? It is the theologian himself who develops the methodology, and when he deals with the substantive part - interpreting texts, creating doctrines - he theologises, and when he thinks about the instrumentation and reflects on his theological constructions, he philosophises. Thus philosophical work is included in the very basis of theological work; it is impossible to distinguish between them at this level; without such philosophical work, a thoughtful theology is not possible.

All the above allows us to conclude that philosophy and theology are related forms of humanitarian knowledge. In our opinion, the presence of philosophy in theology is the presence of a certain methodology and categorical apparatus in it, whereas the presence of theology in philosophy is the presence of basic myth, sacred narrative, intuitions of faith, and super-rational axioms that have an internal logic and from which a certain rhetoric and rationality are derived. Here, one discourse is an extension and the foundation of the other, thinking and rationality

provide for irrational grounds of faith and intuition, which in turn have an underlying logic that is revealed in theological rhetoric and metaphysics.

In conclusion, we have to define an approach to the criteria for distinguishing between theology and philosophy. In our opinion, philosophy and theology appear to be two forms of metadiscourses, the specificity of their stylistics, semantics and forms of being is predetermined by a complex mechanism of factors, among which the main ones are: adaptation to the cultural environment, the accepted basic narratives, and the methodological tools used. At the heart of the cultural multidimensionality of philosophy and theology we see their narrativity, which allows them to construct the reality of their subject matter. The methodology here serves not just as a tool for the unfolding of myth, but essentially predetermines its interpretation. The final form of theology and philosophy is determined by the cultural context and the particular cultural form in which they exist. It is impossible to explain the specificity of philosophy and theology without taking these components into account. This is their analogy, but not their identity. The difference between theology and philosophy is determined by the different influence of the cultural context, the different tasks and strategies of unfolding these discourses, the different forms of cultural interaction, and the dissimilarity of basic narratives and methodologies. Conversely, the coincidence of these elements makes possible the essential similarity between them, dialogue and unity.

## 6. Conclusion

In contemporary Christian thought, the demarcation between philosophy and theology, which was persistently erected by secular thinking, is being actively blurred. The very style and content of the texts of I. Zizioulas, H. Yannaras, D. Hart, J. Manoussakis, and O. Davidov demonstrate the convergence of the methodological positions of philosophy and theology, their inseparability and intersubjectivity. Such a process corresponds to the main metaphysical and postmetaphysical strategies of development of modern philosophical and theological thought (A. Badiou, G.W. von Balthasar, S. Žižek, D. Caputo, D. Milbank). In our opinion, all known forms of dialogue between philosophy and theology are conditioned by their deep inner kinship and simultaneous qualitative difference. The fundamental possibility of mutual influence of philosophy and theology is conditioned by their structure, which has a historical basis. Equally, philosophy and theology are narrative forms of thought that presuppose a basic axiomatics. They together have a body of theories and practices that express the pursuit of the integrity of life in truth. They

are not empirical forms of knowledge, and presuppose theoretical and symbolic generalisations for their theories. Both discourses have fundamental boundaries, but they are boundless in their natural direction of development. They are two non-trivial discourses of open paradox, standing on the border of the incomprehensible. They are equally theories of value, which are related by their ability to take different cultural forms. At their core, theology and philosophy share a similar phenomenological experience of faith and knowledge of the absolute. Their unity can also be traced at the methodological level, where philosophy acts as the reflexive basis and self-understanding of theology. The theologian performs philosophical work every time he tries to realise his own initial intuitions and general worldview and theoretical principles and influences on his theology. The use of various epistemological strategies and methods is quite common in theology. Theology has experienced the major conceptual influences of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, Kantianism, Schellingianism, Romanticism, analytic philosophy, existentialism, phenomenology, etc., in its theory of God-knowledge; it makes extensive use of the methodologies of fideism, rationalism, empiricism, intuitivism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, communicative theory, dialectics, and analytic philosophy. At the same time, no methodology can perfectly capture the content of religious revelation, so the application of methodologies is limited. Methodology can arise and be used in theology under the conceptual influence of a particular philosophical system, or it can arise quite independently. Philosophical work is incorporated into the very foundation of theological work; it is quite difficult to distinguish between the two. The presence of philosophy in theology is the presence of a certain methodology and categorical apparatus, whereas the presence of theology in philosophy is the presence of basic myth, sacred narrative, intuitions of faith, and super-rational axioms. The distinction between theology and philosophy is determined by the different influence of the cultural context, the different tasks and strategies of unfolding these discourses, the different forms of cultural interaction, and the dissimilarity of basic narratives and methodologies. In conclusion, we can affirm the qualitative difference, but also the inextricable closeness of philosophy and theology, which determines the permanence of their interaction in the history of culture.

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