

PHILOSOPHY

Patsan V.O.

THE META-ONTOLOGY OF THE PERSONHOOD AS A CRITERION OF REFLECTING THE IDEAS OF PERSONALISM

Vasyl O. Patsan (Archbishop Eulogius of Novomoskovsk), PhD in Theology, PhD in the History of Philosophy, Vicar of Dnipropetrovsk Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Associate Professor of Philosophy Department of Oles Honchar Dnipro National University, Ukraine

Abstract

The article analyzes the process of establishing the meta-ontological dimension of personalistic thinking responsible for overcoming the ratiocentrism of the philosophical classics and return of non-classical and post-non-classical philosophical reflection to the foundations of theism; combining the methods of historical-theological and historical-philosophical reconstruction, the author reveals the semantic transformations of the antique philosophical categories *υπόστασις* and *ουσία* made by the Fathers and Teachers of the Christian Church in the golden era of Theology to explain the personal principle of being uncovered by the Supernatural Revelation; in the course of research for the sense-forming resource of the Greek term *προσωπον* and its Latin counterpart *persona* etimologically detached from ontology, the study marks the ways of ontologizing the concept person paved by the patristics and predicting the comprehension of the mode of existence of the created personality as his/her communion with Absolute Personhood of Creator.

Keywords: the Personality of God, interpersonal relationship of the created person with Creator, human cognition of God, patristic theology,

trinitarian meta-logic, personalist trend of philosophizing.

The present stage of the historical-philosophical process defined as the starting point of post-secular philosophy by its self-reflection [1] marks the limits of “the secular discourse” (S. D. Smith) on humanity, initiating the turn of philosophical thought to “the theistic suggestion” (B. P. Bowne) which laid the foundations for the attempts of personalizing the ontology performed in the late 19th — mid-20th centuries in the USA and predicting the ways of problematization of the classical ratiocentric concept of the depersonalized subject by both non-classical and post-non-classical trends of philosophizing not only in the New but also in the Old World.

It is of common knowledge, that a departure from the rationalistic mainstream of the history of ideas occurred in the last century, having been initiated by the comprehension of the personal character of the subjectivity which had developed throughout the nineteenth century as a reaction to the depersonalizing elements revealed in seventeenth century and Enlightenment rationalism, Kantian epistemology of transcendental idealism and Hegelian idealistic monism. Such a revision of the classical rationalism resulted in realizing the irreducibility of becoming the subject only to forming the subjective cognitive core equalized in the famous formula *cogito ergo sum* introduced by R. Descartes.

The change of the paradigmatic precepts of philosophical reflection, leading to the formation of non-classical philosophy, manifested itself in the course of identifying the subject's characteristics exceeding the cognitivity substantiated by both metaphysics and phenomenology (in its primary version formulated by I. Kant). Such an extension of the subjectivity revealed in the different areas of philosophizing: the neo-Kantian advancement to the realization of the being as a dialogue predicted by opposing “the explanation” to “the understanding” (W. Dilthey) and the nomothetic method to the ideographic approach (W. Windelband); the phenomenological establishment of the category of inter-subjectivity (E. Husserl); the explication of irrational vital sources forming the basis of “philosophy of life” (H. Bergson, F. Nietzsche); the exposition of the ultimate experience of human existence fundamental for existentialism (S. Kierkegaard, K. – Th. Jaspers, J. - P. Sartre).

All these philosophical branches emphasized interpersonal relations as both premises and criteria of the subject's self-definition inspired by the transcendently experienced communion of the human personality with the Source of being. But focusing on the horizontal of interacting “the self” and “the other”, the indicated currents of thought did not grasp the communicative vertical formed by the appeal of the created person to Creator because of their

orientation to the rationalist detachment of both human cognition of God and self-knowledge from the alive communication with Him. Manifesting itself through the perception of living and absolutely personal God as depersonalized Transcendent Absolute, the kernel ontological abstraction which was intended to rationalize the relationship of the subjectivity with the Source of being condemned the human mind striving for non-dogmatic definition of its limits to the vain search for “the god of philosophers and scholars” (B. Pascal). Being involved in this process, non-classical trends of philosophizing aimed at affirming the anthropocentric “duplicates of dogma” (J. Derrida) rejected the depersonalization of the subject based upon rationalistic limitation of the spiritual experience of the human personality. But the personal mode of existence could not be disclosed by any logic of rational thinking detached from theism and in the course of non-dogmatically oriented argumentation against the depersonalizing rationalist definitions of the Source of being, related to the metaphysical concept *causa sui* breaking the soil for the substantiation of non-phenomenality of God. Thus in the space of the critical revision of classical philosophy undertaken in the late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries the only way of realizing the personhood as the ultimate “of all the reality” [2] was paved by theistic philosophical branch defined by both its self-reflection and historical-philosophical discourse as personalism. Denoting its core intention by the term introduced in the *Über die Religion* (1779) by Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834) and primarily applied to the philosophical current in the *Die wirkliche und die scheinbare Welt* (1882) by Gustav Teichmüller (1832 — 1888), the mode of philosophizing “in terms of personality” [3, p. vi] rose simultaneously in North America and Europe as an intellectual movement diversified by the differentiated attitude of the apologists of personhood to the heritage of rationalism. The European start of the personalist thought was marked with the radical rejection of the rationalistic scope of the subject's self-definition initiated by the founders of French personalism Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950) and Jean Lacroix (1900 – 1986) “to clear the way for the eternally young spirit” by eliminating “the dead forms which oppress even eternal values...” [4]. On the contrary, the trajectory of philosophical reflection of personal principle of being in the USA was predetermined by “the American thinkers' initiative for the explanation of irreducibility of the personhood in the space of philosophizing” [5, p.122] marked with the rationalistically established frames of the subjectivity. This idea was actualized by the progenitors of American personalistic philosophy Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910), George Holmes Howison (1834–1916) and Josiah Royce (1855–1916) to overcome both the impersonalistic tendencies of traditional metaphysics and classical (Kant's) phenomenologism. Explicated in

the most persistent way by Bowne's demand "to form the right habits of thinking" [3, p.219] for constructing the "personalized" ontology, such intention embodied in its versions forming "the most metaphysically oriented" [6] personalistic trend recognized as "the first complete and comprehensive" [7] philosophical system in America. These are: the personal metaphysics of B. P. Bowne founding the Bostonian hub of American personalism and inspiring the apologies of the personality performed by his disciples Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953), Francis John McConnell (1871–1953), George Albert Coe (1861–1951) and Ralph Tyler Flewelling (1871–1960) known as the originator of the second important center of North American personalistic movement in the University of Southern California; the doctrine of personal idealism proposed by G. H. Howison and laying the foundations for the personalist school of the University of California, Berkeley; the personalizing interpretation of absolute idealism made by J. Royce and awakening the personalistically oriented strains of thought at Harvard University manifested by William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966) and Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000).

Therefore at the background of the personalist doctrine declared in the 1930s in France as the Pan-European program of "the spiritual revolution", formed apart from reflecting the ultimate cognitive experience of philosophy, the philosophical explication of the personhood performed in the late 19th — mid-20th in North America reveals itself as the form of explaining in the immanent concepts of philosophizing liberated from their depersonalized meanings "the constitutive transcendence" [2] of the human person realized on the basis of theism as his/her communion with the Absolute Personality of God. Moreover in contradistinction to French personalism which was restricted by its non-communicative position "between the wall of the Catholic Doctrine and the monolith of the Thomistic philosophy" [8, p. 379] and exhausted its resource of withstanding the impersonal modes of thinking defined as dehumanizing intellectual tools in appeal to create a new humanism based on the ideal of Christian being perceived as "being in communion with others" [4], American personalism remains the developing intellectual trend motivated by the unsteadiness of its Protestant foundations to accumulate its potential of reuniting spirituality and rationality in the interaction with the emerging currents of philosophizing. While the Polish personalist school founded in the 1960s by Karol Józef Wojtyła (1920 – 2005), since 1978 Pope John Paul II, turned out to be the only national strain of European personalism crossing the Rubicon of two millenia with the call for "theological renewal based on the personalistic nature of man" [9], the theory of the personhood ontologically grounded in the philosophical-humanitarian space of the USA predicted the disposition of problematizing the personal identity at the present stage of the

historical-philosophical process which proved the impossibility of solving the problem of the personality without developing the dialog between philosophy and theology initial for the personalization of ontology.

Defining “the failure of impersonalism” [3] in its both idealistic and naturalistic forms as the deadlock of the intention to reduce the subjectivity to his/her superindividual source or core, the personalist thought of the North American continent argued against such substantiation of the subjective self-identity by affirming the cognitive priority of self-experience got by the human person in the lively communication with Absolutely Personal God. This critics of the impersonalistic branches of philosophical reflection provides both the comprehension of the personal mode of existence as non-objectified reality transcendently experienced as the communion of the created self with Creator and the realization of need for appealing to the theological explanation of the personhood as the ultimate principle of being in the course of constructing the personalized ontological systems.

Thus the theistic trend of non-classical philosophy formed in North America did not exaggerate its historical mission by affirming its kernel intention of personalizing the ontology as a key moment of developing the personalistic mode of thinking. Moreover, the doctrine of personality, created at the climax of the personalistic movement in the USA, anticipated the difficulties of correcting “the fallacies of abstractions” [3], revealed by post-non-classical philosophical thought at the turn from the ontological concepts to “the pre-ontological notion of being” (G. Deleuze) predetermining the intentionality of “post-metaphysical thinking” (J. Habermas).

Realized by both deconstructivist and communicative branches of postmodernism as a fatal check of metaphysics and phenomenology, the lack of definite ontological status of the personhood was transformed into the problematic mode by post-structuralist and post-phenomenological practices of deconstructing the foundations of ratiocentrism. Restricting the cognitive resource of the personal-subjective self-manifestation to recognizing the absence of the Source of being in the human existence, reduced by such denial of the ultimate experience of communication to non-final differentiation between the self and the other, deconstructivism and communicative philosophy formed the alternative ways of the person's self-definition coinciding in the elimination of the absolute criterion of verity from its field. At the background of the deconstructive matrix of “the split subjectivity” doomed to interiorize the irreducibility of the semantic difference by the definition of depersonalized Transcendent Absolute as the absent “transcendental signified” (J. Derrida) in the discourse equalized to the existential reality, the ethical-communicative model of the subjective self-identity introduced by E. Levinas conceptualizes it

as “the otherness-in-the-same” forming by the non-reciprocal responsible relation to the neighbour perceived as the Image of Absolutely Transcendent Personal God apophatically defined as absent in the actual reality of human cognition.

Arguing for the absence of Creator in the created world by non-verbalization of His Absolute Personhood, indefinable in the categories of rational thinking, and comprehending the neighbourhood of the other as the alterity of knowledge (originally indicated by the construction “autrement que savoir” [10]), the ethical-phenomenological version of dialogism affirms the superiority of personal being over all the modes of its rationalization performed in classical and non-classical forms of ontology. But Levinasian reflection of the personal-subjective responsibility grasping it as “a more severe name” [11, p.43] for loving the neighbour does not provide the subject's self-manifestation by means of ethical perception restricted by prohibiting the immediate appeal to God and mediating the relationship of the created person with Creator by his/her encounter with the other. Inspired by unconditional God's love for humanity the human ability to love the neighbour can not reveal itself without the communion of the created self with Creator. Therefore the core imperative of the transcendental ethics of communication separating the human personality from unconditional being makes him/her unable to identify himself/herself in the dialogue concealing godlikeness of the self and removed from the ultimate communicative situation ensured by the supernatural Revelation and the personal access to it. Thus, evidently correlated with the Bible topology of the personhood as the restrictive reception of both Christ's commandments of love, the pattern of the personal-subjective self-definition proposed by the founder of ethical transcendentalism remains unfeasible depriving the created personality of the potential to communicate with Creator “beyond the being” [11] by the renewal of the rationalistic separation of both human cognition of God and subjective self-knowledge from the live communication with Him.

Detached from the evidence of “the subject's authenticity” (M. A. Mozsheyko) by both forms of manifesting “the agnostic position” of post-metaphysics, the rationally oriented person's self-reflection of the late twentieth – early twenty-first centuries achieves the threshold of understanding the return to the unconditionally-personal truth of God's Word (“I am the way and the truth and the life”(John 14:6)) as the only way of overcoming the limits of anthropocentrism responsible for the self-destruction of post-traditionalist mind. Revealing itself in the sphere of philosophizing as the development of “the personalistic inspiration” (J. Lacroix) of post-non-classical philosophy into the movement of philosophical thought towards the comprehension of the theocentricity of the ultimate communicative experience reflected by theology,

such initiative of restoring the unity of the human spirit is supported in theological domain by the call to revise on the basis of theism both the metaphysical devices of depersonalizing the Source of being and the forms of their phenomenological application. Therefore in the current epistemic situation “the theology wends its way to the philosophy, and the philosophy is directed towards the theology” [12, p. 10] to surpass the delimitation between rational and spiritual dimensions of the personhood.

Aimed at expounding the personal principle of being for the rationally oriented person of after-post-modernity, trying to manifest his/her identity in opposition to the radical pluralism characteristic of “the post-modern condition” [13], the emerging dialogical interaction of philosophical and theological discourses lays the foundations for post-secular philosophy realizing the insufficiency of the rationalistic tools of human cognition of God and subjective self-knowledge and striving to acquire the arsenal of perceiving the self-experience elaborated by theology. Such convergency of both ways of transcending explanations dissociated by the impersonal modes of thinking presupposes reviewing the trajectory of moving towards the Revelation paved in the late 19th — mid-20th centuries by the philosophical reflection breaking the ground for constructing the “personalized” ontological systems in the space of rational consciousness formed on European and North American continent. Intended to explicate the transition from the rationalistic arguments for the person's primacy to its spiritual witnesses, the reconstruction of the philosophical-theological dialog giving rise to American personalism should check its concepts with the meta-ontological dimension of the personality disclosed by the Scripture topology of personal being. To provide the movement of the historical-philosophical thought towards the origins of spirituality such methodological orientation orders transcending the limits of retrospectively the genesis of the personalistic philosophy predicted by the theological landmarks of its founding fathers. Thus, taking into consideration that “the scope of comprehending the meta-ontology of the personhood revealed in the Biblical topoi of personal being is determined by confessional affiliation and spiritual experience of philosophers-personalists” [5, p.124], the study of rising the personalist branches in North America and in Europe should methodologically equip itself with the arsenal of trinitarian meta-logic explicated by the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church in the golden era of the theology to explain God's Breathed testimony of hypostatic mode of existence and overcome in such a way all actual and potential rationalist restrictions of human cognition of God and person's self-knowledge including the rationalized models of relation between the created person and Creator introduced by the originators of the philosophical doctrines of the personality

due to their devotion to the Western philosophical-theological tradition. Therefore the key moment of founding the methodology valid for reconstructing the formation and ideas of personalism is the explication of the meta-ontological frame of reflecting the “personalized” ontologies which defines the aim of the investigation in this article achievable on the base of combining the methods of historical-philosophical and historical-theological reconstruction.

The majority of historical-theological, philological and philosophical studies focusing on the problem of the personhood have proved that both its statement and search for the way of solving were inspired by perceiving the mystery of the Incarnation, the appearance of the Word in the human nature (In.1:14), and consequently by reflecting (in the limits of the human mind) and either acceptance or denial of Christological and Trinitarian dogma based upon the Divine Revelation, which has an extraordinary character being God Breathed.

The main stages of forming the concept of personality manifest itself in the shifts of the meaning of the term *υπόστασις*.

The God of the Old Testament is the Creator Who creates the human being and forms the interpersonal relationship with His iconic creation. He is clearly Personality. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the God of the living (Matt. 22:32), He is the Person in the conceptual perception, but the Biblical language, especially the language of the Old Testament period, does not indicate Him in the terms of the personhood. The adherents of Jewish Hellenism under the auspices of Philo of Alexandria identified Him with the philosophical Absolute.

The concept of personality was meta-ontologically grounded by “the patristic theology which opposed the impersonal source of the world of the Greek philosophy with Personal God” [14, p.34]. To denote the personhood the representatives of the Eastern Church rethought the primary, formed by the antic philosophical reflection, categorial semantics of the term hypostasis (*υπόστασις* in Greek) correlating it with the mode of existence, while the devotees of the Western Church used the term person (Lat. - *Persona*) not conceptualized by the thought of Antiquity. But for all them this category became one of the most important notions in the Christian theology. In any case, “the basic concept of personalism is the concept of personality» [14, p.34], and the comprehension of the phenomenon of personality performed by Eastern European (mainly Orthodox), Western European (mainly Catholic) and even North American (mostly Protestant) personalist philosophers was influenced by the patristic heritage.

Having failed in conceptualizing the personhood in both Divine and Human dimensions, the antique philosophy did not introduce the appropriate term. Philosophical “Absolute could not be considered a personality - either in the modern sense of the word, or in the common sense of the person and the individual” [15, p. 165-226], because from the point of view of such monistic philosophy the personality is not associated with the Source of being in his/her limited existence. It was Christianity, and specifically, the Incarnation, that “revealed a personal dimension of human being unknown for pre-Christian antiquity” [15, p. 165-226].

The short list of anthropological terms formed in the epoch of Antiquity and correlated with the personhood did not contain the relevant etymological meaning. The words most closely connected with the semantic field of the personal existence, such as **προσωπον** - **persona** [16, 54] (person, face or rather mask), **σώμα** [2, 54] (body), **ἄτομον** - **individuum** [2, 54] (individual) and **ὄνομα** [16, 54] (name) defined the personality superficially [15] without reflecting the uniqueness of his/her spiritual characteristics, values, significance and mission. Taking the top position in the antique range of words the most relevant to the meaning of the personality, **προσωπον** was not chosen by Fathers and Teachers of the Church as the primary indicator of the personhood due to several reasons: it was not etymologically equivalent to the concept of the human person, moreover it «had no ontological power equal to the concept οὐσία» [15, p. 165-226], and at least it was «compromised» [15, p. 165-226] by anti-trinitarian heresy of Sabellius from Ptolemais of Pentapolis (the third century) [17].

The radical semantic transformation of **προσωπον** made in the process of founding the patristic theology and overcoming the impersonal character of this term started with the refusal from it motivated by realizing the fact that in the indicated historical context the initial marker of the person reducing him/her to the face-mask had no the potential of uttering the ontology correlated with the sense-expressing resource of οὐσία and might misrepresent the hypostatic diversity of the Triune God and set the heresy of Sabellius “deposing the Holy Trinity” [18, 1.99], thus, it might form the false doctrine stating the ontological secondarity of both the Son and the Spirit as for the Father, attributing in such a way the illusiveness to Their differences from the Father and problematizing the autonomy of the Son's and the Spirit's existences. Therefore the Holy Fathers of the early period of Christianity preferred the term **υπόστασις** [19]. In the sixth century Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius introduced the Latin term **substantia** formed as the calque of **υπόστασις** [50]; his initiative inspired the formation of **essentia** as the Latin equivalent of οὐσία [20]. the long theological discussions between the representatives of the unitary Eastern and Western

Church resulted in the identification: ουσία = substantia, essentia; υπόστασις = προσωπον = persona.

The Greek word υπόστασις appeared much earlier than the Latin term persona and even Christianity itself. Poseidonius known as the most learned man of the entire Stoic school was the first to fix υπόστασις in writing (in the first century B. C.) [21, p.150]. Plotinus used this term as the indicator of the trinity of the supreme being in the Sixth Enneade named «The Three Initial Hypostases» [22]. Originally the word υπόστασις meant «existence» [19]. But neither υπόστασις in the Greek environment nor persona in the Roman environment acquired the proper meaning of personality.

Later the term υπόστασις was accepted and popularized by the Teacher of the Christian Church Origen (about 185 - about 254), but the founder of Biblical philology found no etymological difference between the concepts υπόστασις and ουσία (person and nature). As the verbal derivatives, these nouns manifest the semantics of existence, being: υπόστασις was derived from the verb ὑπὸ + ἵστημι = ὑφίστημι — to substantiate, while ουσία was derived from the verb εἶμι — to be. In his works Origen did not differentiate between υπόστασις and ουσία; but such use should not be considered a testimony of the incompetence of the Great Teacher; it argues for the lack of the elaborated Trinitarian and Christological doctrine of the young Christian Church, and consequently for the lack of demand for more exquisite dogmatic formulations at that time.

Even Athanasius the Great (about 298-373), Archbishop of Alexandria and the members of the Council of Alexandria (362) used both concepts as the interchangeable terms, focusing on the convergency of their semantic fields in expressing the ontological primacy, the origin of life and neglecting the significant difference between υπόστασις and ουσία revealed in the character of the denoted existence: the first of these markers of being indicated the single existence while the second one signified the general being. In particular, Saint Athanasius in the Epistle to the African bishops (369) wrote: «Hypostasis and essence have no other meaning besides being (τό ὄν) ... Thus being (ὑπαρξις) is hypostasis and essence: it is and it exists» [23, Sh. 20-21].

In the course of forming the patristic thought the appropriate differentiation between the terms υπόστασις and ουσία was performed by the Great Cappadocians - Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (about 330—379), Gregory the Theologian (329—389) and Gregory of Nyssa (about 335 — after 394). Substantiating the doctrine of the trinitology the Great Church Teachers from Cappadocian region argued against the undifferentiated usage of the categories actualized by the antique philosophical reflection for defining the principle of being and the mode of

existence and involved into the sphere of the theological explication of the trinity of God. Saint Basil the Great expresses concern that «some people» use the terms hypostasis and essence indiscriminately, and they «presume to state that as the essence is one so hypostasis is one, and vice versa - those who recognize three hypostases, think that this confession should allow the division of the essence into the equal number of parts» [24, p.80].

Appealing to the numerous examples, the Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia clarifies “the difference between essence and hypostasis as the difference between the general and the personal; the mentally comprehended universal nature is a set of the essential features of a particular class, but the real expression it finds in the separate [being], and where there is no no singular (personal) [existence] nobody can speak of the universal nature”[25, p. 214]. Due to his definition, hypostasis is “such a concept that depicts and describes the general and the vague in some subject by visible distinctive properties... That's why carry the concept of differentiating essence and hypostasis in us grasped by you in the divine dogmas – and you will not sin” [24, p. 81-82] - “... neither difference of hypostases breaks the continuity of being nor essence merges the distinctive features” [24, p. 85].

Therefore the Christianization of the concepts of hypostasis (υπόστασις) and essence (ουσία) formed the arsenal of trinitarian thinking realized in formulating the headstone dogmatic doctrine of the Triune God existing as one Essence in three Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), in Whom «the excellent qualities of every Hypostasis shine in the general essence» [24, p.87], and the doctrine of Christ uniting in His Hypostasis fully Divine and fully human natures. In the Trinity «every hypostasis contains the Divine nature in Its entirety. The Hypostases are ... infinitely unified and infinitely different - they are the Divine nature» [26, p.375-376], the Hypostases of the Trinity are completely identical in the substance and completely different in the properties, each value is equal to the other two values and three values together are equal to the each value taken singly.

Such meta-mathematics and such a meta-logical approach overcome the limits of the rational understanding of the dogma of the Triune God and lead to the irrational, spiritual perception of the mystery of unity and interpersonal communication of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit - one God. The theological comprehension of the living God requires not only the amount of knowledge but also the practical experience of spiritual life in God. The communion of the created person with Creator has an exclusively eschatological character; the acts of God's will are performed for our sake and for the sake of our salvation. When we speak of the Trinity «without praise and

worship, outside of the personal attitude bestowed by the faith, our language is always wrong" [26, p.384].

We can not characterize the three Persons of the Trinity as «the first person», «the second person», «the third person», all of them are the first and the last, Α and Ω, the beginning and the end. The Monarchy of God the Father conceptualized by the theologians of the fourth century also gives no reason to presume the subordination between the Divine Hypostases.

The dogmatic doctrine based upon the faith, namely «the trinitarian theology has opened for us a new aspect of the human reality, that is the aspect of the personality" [26, p. 376] in its meaning close to that of the contemporaneity. "It was not the rationalization of Christianity, but the Christianization of the mind, the transphormation of philosophy into contemplation, saturation of the thought with the mystery that was not any secret hidden from all but the inexhaustible light" [23 p.369-370].

Reflecting the correlation between *υπόστασις* and *ουσία* established by the patristic theology and determining the trinitarian meta-logic, we should emphasize the position of Saint Gregory the Theologian. He identified the hypostasis as «the mode of existence» (*τρόπος της υπάρξεως*) with *προσωπον* («the face») and connected its meaning with the terminology of the Western Fathers (*persona*). The Hypostatic features of the Persons of the Holy Trinity were called Fatherhood, Sonhood and "Emanation".

But the key moment of forming the ontological concept of the personhood applicative to the created person occurred in the era of the Christological Controversies when the theological thought grasped both the distinction between two Christ's natures and the unity of His Personality (*υπόστασις = προσωπον*), fixing these dogmatic statements in the Canons of the Third (351) and the Fourth (451) Ecumenical Councils. Thus, the concept of the Hypostasis as a synonym for the Person was included in the *όρος* of the Council of Chalcedon [21, p.150] and gained a top, dogmatic actualization in the doctrine of the Christian Church stating the belief in «one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us"[27, p.62]. It was dogmatically proved the identity of Jesus Christ's *υπόστασις* revealing in the relations to both His Divine nature and His human nature. In

such a way the patristic theology laid the foundations for realizing the human selves as the hypostases and ontologizing the concept of the person on the base of identifying *υπόστασις* and *προσωπον*. These semantic transformations inspired the establishment of the meta-ontological dimension of the humanity where the human person could comprehend “the infinity and even the absoluteness”[15, p. 165–226] of his/her soul.

Interpersonal, living relationship between Creator and His likeness reveals that He is knowable, but not wholly knowable. The process of the human cognition of God is sacramental, eternal, blissful, synergetic, and therefore personal. In the living experience of communion with Creator the created person realizes His properties, enjoying God's presence and reveals His transcendence, His infinite and unattainable essence. Holiness and majesty of the sphere, revealing itself to the spirit of Christian zealots urged them to reflect upon the ultimate communicative situation speaking about the Divine not only with reverence, but even with fear.

Emphasizing both the need for approaching God and the benefit of the communion with Him, calling to realize remembering Creator as source and result of the human cognition of Him, the Holy Fathers of the early period of Christianity “warned of the impossibility and sometimes the irrelevance of describing the objects of the highest spiritual jurisdiction”[34, p.36]. Neither cataphatic knowledge of God nor apophatic cognition of Him makes it possible to define the nature of the ineffable God. Divine *ουσία* could not be formulated, it is impossible to say who God is, who is not God. He is above every name and “He made darkness around Him His canopy” (2 Sam. 22:12). He calls Himself - “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex. 3:14), He is called “Spirit” (John 4:24) and “Love” (1 John 4:8), and all of “these highest names even the name “love” express the Divine essence, but do not exhaust it”[26, p.361]. Only God Himself can know God.

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