

Unpublished notes

**Speculations on Zorns Lemma, Language, and (Re)Presentation:Frampton's *Zorns Lemma* and The System of Representation to Come**  
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Frampton believed that the consciousness that defines our being partakes at once of words and images. In the preface to *Circles of Confusion*, he remarked

Language and image are the substances of which we are made; so it is much more than a matter of interest—it is our most inescapable and natural desire—that we undertake to invent, and to specify (using language, and even subverting it, if we can) the system of images. Such a project needs forbearance: even the notion of a grammar of the image, which must, itself, finally wither away in favour of a syntax, recedes perpetually, merging imperceptibly into that zone where intelligence struggles to preserve a distinction between what may be brought into focus and what may not.

Eventually we may come to envision an intellectual space in which the systems of words and images will both, as Jonas Mekas once said of semiology, “seem like half of something,” a universe in which image and word, each resolving the contradictions inherent in the other, will constitute the system of consciousness (CC 9–10).

But no reader, I am sure, can fail, when thinking of something being a broken half of a greater whole, to think of the well-known, much read and much cited passage from Plato's *Symposium* (189d–193e). There Aristophanes explains the reason for human desire: when we experience desire, what we feel is a nostalgic craving. Once humans were spherically-shaped beings, composed of what now are people (usually what now is one male and one female, but sometimes two males or two females), joined face-to-face. These beings rolled about everywhere they went and were completely happy. Their happiness came to end, the result of overambitiousness: a number of these blissful creatures rolled themselves towards Mount Olympus and Zeus, and Zeus split them in two, producing humans. So we go through life, longing to meet the person who, by joining with us, can make us whole again. The story links two related themes, both of which turn out to be of key importance to Frampton's work and thinking. We realize, then—most of us, I suppose, with something of a start—that Frampton conceives of the division of words and images on the pattern of a lost unity, that (following Eros) we long to recover: a new medium, that re-unites word and image on some higher plane, will, he speculates, come to replace language and cinema.

This new medium will no doubt be a successor to the “infinite film”—in “For A Metahistory of Film: Commonplace Notes and Hypotheses,” Frampton wrote

We are used to thinking of camera and projector as machines, but they are not. They are “parts.” The flexible film strip is as much a “part” of the film machine as the projectile is part of a firearm. The extant rolls of film out-bulk the other parts of the machine by many orders of magnitude.

Since all the “parts” fit together, the sum of all film, all projectors, and all the cameras in the world constitutes one machine . . . which is by far the largest and most ambitious single artifact yet conceived . . .

If we are indeed doomed to the comically convergent task of dismantling the

universe, and fabricating from its stuff an artifact called *The Universe*, it is reasonable to suppose that such an artifact will resemble the vaults of an endless film archive built to house, in eternal cold storage, the infinite film (OCA 137)

Just prior to that, he remarked

The infinite film contains an infinity of endless passages wherein no frame resembles any other in the slightest degree, and a further infinity of passages wherein successive frames are as nearly identical as intelligence can make them (OCA 137).

Furthermore, because the frames of this infinite film are like thoughts, they can be re-thought (as could Plato's ideas and Pound's Heydonist visions). In "For a Metahistory of Film," Frampton suggested that

There is no evidence in the structural logic of the filmstrip that distinguishes "footage" from a "finished: work. Thus, any piece of film may be regarded as "footage," for use in any imaginable way to construct or reconstruct a new work. Therefore, it may be possible for the metahistorian to take old work as "footage," and construct from it identical new work necessary to a tradition (OCA 136).

Frampton began his artistic career as a photographer, but soon largely abandoned that practice (he continued to make the occasional photograph until his death) for film. He gave up photography largely because he conceived no means to embody in photography his belief that human cognition is forged from the intersection of scriptural and visual forms that are taken as mimetic (visual forms that are accepted, unquestioningly, as being identical with their referent even though they are in fact hardly less abstract than scriptural forms)—that those channels organize modern cognition explains the extraordinary potency of all the forms that yoke text and image together: advertising, the cinema, the illustrated news, etc.

Modernist work, to the contrary, attempted to divorce image from word. Frampton's early work was dedicated to bringing photography into conformity with modernist principles. During the years that photography was Frampton's principal practice, he was especially impressed with the work of Edward Weston. Weston's work of his middle period usually presented a familiar object in ambiguous space in such a way as to transform the object's appearance into that of a sculptural form. The haptic properties of the form were enhanced by the method Weston used to make his prints: they were contact prints, made from 8 x 10 negatives—the abundance of surface detail they possess endows the object with an extraordinary tactile immediacy. Frampton's valorization of Weston lead him to understand the special virtue of a great photographer as his or her ability to map tones on a grey scale. In a dialogue with Carl Andre they titled "On Forty Photographs and Consecutive Matters" he endeavours to explain the matter.

What is necessary [to produce a good photograph] is a model that can be held in the mind. . . I have in mind, for the emulsions and processes I use generally, a kind of sloping plane, curving inward at the bottom (toe) and outward at the top (shoulder). It is shaded in *steps* of gray, from black at the toe to white at the shoulder, and there are about ten steps on the full slope. . . Whenever I make an exposure, I visualize the *print* values of areas in the photograph I aim towards, and map these on my sloping gray plane. Readings of light levels, and experience, give me data for a countermap of subject values against my

visualized print (BH 172–3).

Even as Frampton was working out his early photographic principles, this modernist understanding of photography was already under pressure from the Modern spirit. Ben Vautier's documentation of his swim across the harbour at Nice (1963), in the form of photographs with text, or Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965) might have shown Frampton another way of proceeding. His fealty to Weston's photography, however, kept him stultified.

What allowed Frampton to break out of this impasse was the realization that visual and verbal constructions have common features. Thus Frampton conceived a grand project: to link verbal and visual forms, the two channels that organize experience, in a single form. He worked on this project obsessively: the film (*nostalgia*) (1971) pairs texts with images, though in a curiously dislocated manner; one of his last photographic projects, *Adsumus/Absumus* (1982), brings together colour photographs of animal and vegetable specimens with anecdotal texts about how these specimens came into the photographer's possession (and that classify the specimens according to a somewhat Borgesian taxonomy based on degree of edibility); Frampton's essay, "Erotic Predicaments for Camera" attempts to evoke images through verbal descriptions; *Poetic Justice* (1972) is a series of shots (images) of a script (a text that evokes images); *By Any Other Name* (1979–83), a series of colour photocopies of labels whose brand names involve the juxtaposition of incongruous terms (e.g., Meteor Brand Lemon— what do meteors and lemons have to do with one another?) (OCA 89–94)

He also produced a photographic series, *Word Pictures* (1962–3), that present words (commercial signs, for example) as images; the work played on the tension between taking the sign as a material form and taking it as a word, with a meaning (or referent)—the latter response tends to undervalue the materiality of the signifier, by inducing us to think primarily of the referent. However, Frampton was unable to devise a satisfactory form for presenting the photographs—they don't stand alone as autonomous art works with autotelic forms. That failure was one of the impetuses that propelled him into the cinema; the second part of *Zorns Lemma* looks back at, and develops, many of the devices that Frampton used in his earlier series. A key influence on *Word Pictures*, and so on *Zorns Lemma*, was the photographer Walker Evans. Evans had a penchant for making photographs of signs, billboards, advertisements—a penchant Frampton would share (compare Evans' *Movie Poster* of 1936 with any work in Frampton's *By Any Other Name* series). This strand of Evan's work reached its apogee in his SX-70 Polaroids of street signs he made in the early 1970s, near the end of his life. The imagery of Evans' word pictures shows many similarities to Frampton's imagery in the second section of *Zorns Lemma*: often the decorative design of the words form a layer over a quasi-abstract background or a background made more interesting (and, in contrast with the design of the words in the sign, more natural) by the evidence of decay it presents. As Frampton's do, Evan's word pictures revel in their flatness, as though delighting in the evidence they give that the furniture of the world can be taken as a semiotic system—as a language that speaks to those can understand it. Even the vernacular qualities of Evan's images (and of the scenes they depicted) appear to have influenced Frampton.

The seemingly anonymous character of Evan's photographs—that they are more evidence of a world closely observed than expressions of the maker's psyche—would have appealed to artists with whom Frampton associated (James Rosenquist, Frank Stella and Carl Andre, to name a few), artists who repudiated the expressionism of the preceding American generation. Further, Evans' photographs of women shoppers on Randolph Street in Chicago anticipates the work of Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander and Gary Winograd. Frampton's "street photography" in the second section of the film owes something to those masters (though none of them shared Frampton's Lartiquian irony). Finally, Evans frequently cited Flaubert and Joyce as his major influences and Flaubert and Joyce, along with Pound,

were the principal influences on Frampton's aesthetic ideas; Evans admired Flaubert's naturalism, the objectivity of his treatment, his effacement of subjectivity before the object—and what Evans admired in Flaubert's work became attributes of Frampton's films and photographs.

### **On Photography and Motivated Signs: What Set Theory Says on Matter of an Adamic Language in Which the Name and the Thing are Identical, and What this Tells Up about the Medium of the Future**

The beginning of Plato's *Cratylus* has Hermogenes catching Socrates up on what he and an interlocutor had been discussing. "Cratylus has been arguing about names," he tells Socrates. "He says that they are natural and not conventional—not a portion of the human voice which men agree to use—but that there is a truth or correctness in them, which is the same for Hellenes as for barbarians" (*Cratylus* 383b). Hermogenes does not believe that "there is a truth or correctness" in names, that is that names are natural and not conventional, and he solicits Socrates, presumably in the hope that Socrates would take his side or, at least, would temper the argument.

Socrates first remark is that "there is an ancient saying that 'hard is the knowledge of the good.' And the knowledge of names is a great part of knowledge." (384b) The portrait Plato draws of Socrates in this dialogue is utterly charming: Plato has Socrates continue by offering withering mocking of the Sophist, Prodicus (though he asks for indulgence, allowing that he knows very little about the topic, since he is too poor to afford Prodicus' fifty drachma course and could participate only in the single drachma course).

The core issue that Socrates, Cratylus and Hermogenes explore in this dialogue is the correctness of names. To say that there is a correct name, a name appropriate to a thing, is to say what is asserted in the opening sentence of Hermogenes's summary for Socrates, that "there is a truth or correctness in them [names], which is the same for Hellenes as for barbarians" (383a). The idea of a name being correct leads Plato essentially into the territory of magic, for the idea that can be a correct name implies that, since as Socrates points out, when the artisan (and this would include the name-giver whom Socrates refers to as, "nomothetes" or law-giver) "has discovered the instrument which is naturally adapted to each work, he must express this natural form, and not others which he fancies, in the material, whatever it may be, which he employs," the initial law-givers also knew "how to put the true natural name of each thing into sounds and syllables" (389c,d).

Socrates argues, essentially, that assigning names to things is a act that may be performed well or badly, that is, either correctly or incorrectly. If names are correctly assigned to things, then the names of those things correctly indicate their nature; if, on the other hand, names are incorrectly assigned to things, then the names of those things indicate nothing of their nature. While Cratylus avers that names improperly assigned to things are not true names, Socrates argues that names may vary in the degree of correctness or accuracy with which they indicate the nature of things. Names, he reminds them, cannot always be transformed into perfect likenesses of the things which they designate. Names and things are not identical (as Walter Benjamin believes names in the language of God to be); rather names are representations of those things. Cratylus reiterates his assertion that the purpose of naming things is to indicate something of their nature. Socrates responds by saying understanding the names of things is hardly the same as understanding things themselves. Furthermore, stating a version of the 'paradox' of discovery that Plato also presents in the *Euthydemus*, the *Meno*, the *Constitution* (or the *Republic*, in the section which presents the myth of Er)—that one cannot discover or 'learn' anything without already knowing it—Socrates suggests that in order to assign names to things, we must already have attained some knowledge of those things. We can acquire knowledge of things either directly by investigating the things themselves or indirectly by

investigating the names of things. Socrates avers that direct knowledge is superior to indirect knowledge. The dialogue ends with Cratylus and Socrates agreeing to continue to deliberate on this topic and to meet again to take up anew the question whether knowledge can be attained by learning the names of things.

Originally the true nature of words was more easily recognizable, but “the present generation care for euphony more than truth” (404d); they improve names (Εἰρέμης “has been improved by us, as we think, into Hermes” (408b) or into Ἑρμῆς; they add sounds merely for the sake of euphony (“the letter κ is added [to “δίκαιον”] for the sake of euphony” (412e); to make the words prettier “βουλαππεροῦν . . ., as I imagine, is improved into βλαβερόν” (417e); they care nothing for the truth, but only for the shape of their mouths” (Take, for example, the word κάτοπρον (mirror) Why is the letter ρ inserted? This must surely be the addition of someone who cares nothing about the truth, but thinks only of putting the mouth into shape,” 414d); [Hermogenes speaks:] “when I hear the word βουλαππεροῦν I cannot help imagining that you are making your mouth into a flute, and puffing away at some prelude to Athena; “you know that the original names have been long ago buried and disguised by people sticking on and stripping off letters for the sake of euphony and bedizening them in all sorts of ways, and time too may have had a share in the change (414c); “the additions are often such that at least no human being can possibly make out the original meaning of the word.”(414d); In brief, “the original forms of words may have been lost in the lapse of ages; names have been so twisted in all manner of ways that I should not be surprised if the old language when compared with that now in use would appear to us a barbarous tongue” (421d). The ancient language, on the other hand, shows clearly the real sense of words (“the fine fashionable language of modern times has twisted and disguised and entirely altered the original meaning both of δέον and of ζημιώδες, which in the old language are clearly indicated,” 418b). It is also clear that, since “as the name is, so also is the thing, and that since he who knows the one will also know the other, because they are similars, and all similars fall under the same art or science . . . that he who knows names will also know things. (435d–e).

This view that language has declined; that this decline has corrupted the social order is one that Ezra Pound embraced. Pound took that view largely from Confucius. Pound rephrased a passage that appears in in *Lun Yü* (Analects) thus:

Tseu-Lou asked: If the Prince of Mei appointed you head of the government, to what wd. you first set your mind?

Kung [that is, Kung Fu-Tzu, or Confucius]: “To call people and things by their names, that is, by their correct dominations, to see that the terminology was exact . . .”

If the terminology be not exact, if it fit not the thing, the governmental instructions will not be explicit, if the instructions aren't clear and the names don't fit, you cannot conduct business properly.

Pound writes in *Guide to Kulchur* (p. 16) The proper name is essential to the “constatation of fact.” For Confucius, the need to rectify names (to effect *cheng ming*) was to undo the damage done when, with the decline of the Chou feudal system, social and moral values went into decline. To ameliorate the situation, everyone must be encouraged to once again recognize his or her place, and that requires ‘*cheng ming*,’ (the Rectification of Names—‘*cheng*’ literally means rectification, and ‘*ming*’ means name). The ideas was (to use another quote from the *Analects*) to “Let the ruler be ruler, and the minister minister; let the father be father, and the son son.” But behind this (very conservative and hierarchical) social view is a view of names and their relations to things very similar to the one we have been considering. Fung Yu-Lan made the point that “every name contains certain implications which constitute the essence of that

class of things to which the name applies. Such things, therefore, should agree with this ideal essence. The essence of a ruler is what a ruler ought to be . . . There is an agreement between name and actuality.”

So, in Canto 55, we read,

Honour to CHING-TSONG the modest  
Lux enim per se omnem in partem  
Reason from heaven, sayeth Tcheou-Tun-y  
enlighteneth all things  
seipsum seipsum diffundit, risplende  
Is the beginning of all things, et effectu

Ching-Tsong (Shêng-Tsung) was one of the Chinese Emperors . . . of whom Pound approved because of his able administration and adherence to the Confucian ideal of the just ruler. The next line as well as [seipsum seipsum diffundit] is a variation of Robert Grosseteste’s (ca. 1175–1253) statement in his treatise “De Luce,” “Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ips[am] diffundit” which means ‘For light, of its nature, shines (diffuses itself) in all directions.’ . . . Tcheou-Tun-y (Chou Tun-I) was a noted Confucian scholar and philosopher (1017–1073) who wrote a commentary on the I Ching. The theory here attributed to [him] is one dear to Pound, neo-Platonism and Confucianism: the natural relationship between heaven and earth is one of essential harmony; the cosmos is governed by divine reason . . . The repetition “seipsum,[punctuated thus] seipsum” suggests a cry of joy.

In fact, the expression of “seipsum seipsum diffundit” commentators seem to agree is simply from the sentence “Lux enim per se in omnem partem se ipsam diffundit.” That is an oversimplification. More likely, the expression “seipsum seipsum diffundit” condenses (if not confuses) the “se ipsam diffundit” in the second sentence of Grosseteste’s text with a part of another sentence (that appears twelve or so sentences later: “Lux ergo, quae est prima forma in materia prima creata, seipsam per seipsam undique infinities multiplicans . . .” In fact, four sentences from Grosseteste appear in Pound’s essay “Cavalcanti,” and the second sentence and a version of this last sentence are two of them, so Pound had some reason to condense the two. Buttressing this conjecture about the source of “seipsum seipsum” here is that fact that in “Cavalcanti,” Pound substituted “seipsam seipsam” for “seipsam per seipsam”! That “Risplende et effectu” comes from Guido Cavalcanti’s “Donna me prega” (A Lady’s Orders), from “risplende—in sé perpetual effetto” gives further support yet to the idea that this “seipsum seipsum” is a similar condensation of the two phrases that had appeared in in Pound’s essay on the inventor of the “dolce stil novo.”

He may have come to see (or imagine) shortcomings in his master’s work, but Frampton was nonetheless an assiduous student of Ezra Pound—as assiduous as a student of Pound as the many other fields he pursued with avidity and rigour. In a manuscript from 1965 that went unpublished in his life-time, “Some Propostions on Photography,” Frampton wrote

Any art hopes to provide intimations of perfection; to speak with some cogency of our condition as human beings; to nourish our affections. Art can accomplish such ends only through accuracy, through exact definition, what Confucius referred to as “calling things by their right names.” I can recommend no higher ambition to anyone (OCA 8).

What could explain the inclusion of the remark on name in an article on photography?

In 1907 Hilarion, a starec (Russian: старец, fem. старица; a starec is an elder and venerated teacher in a Russian Orthodox monastery) and Schema-monk (an Eastern Orthodox monk, who has attained the grade of being allowed to wear the colourful patterned monk's habit known in the Eastern monastic tradition as a schema), at Saint Panteleimon, a Russian monastery on Mount Athos, Greece, published *На Горах Кавказа* (Na Gorakh Kavkaza, In the Mountains of Caucasia). Hilarion (Иеросимонах Иларион Домрачев, Ieroskhimonakh Ilarion Domrachev, b. as Ianvari Domrachev ca. 1845) was a hesychast, a practitioner of a form of prayer, dating from the fifth century, that serves as a meditative practice (fasting, yoga-like 'asanas,' and breathing exercises are sometimes involved, the last because a purpose of the prayer is to achieve complete harmony with one's breath, which allows for complete harmony with one's heart-beat), which quiets the mind and makes enlightenment possible. Hilarion advocated a form of onomatodoxy and his book recounted his spiritual experience with the "Иисусова Молитва" (the Iisusova molitva or Jesus Prayer), the words of which sometimes have consisted simply of "Иисусе" ("Jesus"), or Господи, помилуй (Gospodi, Pomilui; Lord, have mercy), but much more commonly Господи Иисусе Христе, Сыне Божий, помилуй мя грешного (Gospodi Iisuse Khriste, Syne Bozhii, pomilui mia greshnago, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner). The prayer was described by Saint Diadochos of Photiki (400–486) and Saint John Cassian (d. 435), and its use is recommended by Saint John of Sinai (523–603) in *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. The theology of the Jesus Prayer was most clearly set out by Saint Gregory Palamas (1296–1359).

Hesychasts ("hesychia" means stillness or rest) repeat the prayer silently, for many hours continually, concentrating on the meaning and the sound of every word. The Jesus Prayer is sometimes known as the Prayer of the Heart, the Prayer of the Mind, or simply the Prayer; the names, reflect the degrees of absorption the prayers, given adequate amounts of practice, can engender. First there is the oral prayer, and at this stage, the thoughts are scattered and concentration is not very deep, but the name of God begins to reveal itself in the words. Later the larynx, is penetrated and still later, as the oral prayer becomes the breast prayer, the breast is penetrated. Then, as the prayer become the heart prayer, and as the heart takes up the prayer the supplicant experiences a kind of ecstasy, in which the whole of the personality is absorbed into the prayer, and feels his devotion to the name with every beat of the heart and every breath. Then all thought is quieted, everything intelligible shines forth in the unity of the Uncreated Light (or Tabor Light, revealed at Mount Tabor at the Transfiguration of Christ), as the Divine Name shines forth in an all-embracing power.

Franny Glass, from J. D. Salinger's *Franny and Zooey* (1961) described the imputed effect of the Jesus Prayer, which, according to the story she learned from *The Way of the Pilgrim*, the story of a Russian peasant who learned the technique.

If you keep saying that prayer over and over again—you only have to just do it with your *lips* at first—then eventually what happens, the prayer becomes self-active. Something *happens* after a while. I don't know what, but something happens, and the words get synchronized with the person's heartbeats, and then you're actually praying without ceasing. Which has a really tremendous, mystical effect on your whole outlook. I mean that's the whole *point* of it, more or less. I mean you do it to purify your whole outlook and get an absolutely new conception of what everything's about.

According to Eastern tradition, the purpose of all life is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to become one with Christ, a process known as *theosis* (deification). The Jesus Prayer is understood as fostering theosis.

These hesychastic practices were driven out of the Byzantine Church, though they continued to be practised on Mount Athos. Hilarion's book put an end to the secrecy of this Athonite form of spirituality. What *На Горах Кавказа* added to the traditional understanding of the hesychastic practices was that word itself had magical powers, that the Name of God, when uttered, is God Himself; accordingly, anyone who invokes God's name in prayer in a way that enables him (or her) to truly experience the name, thereby experiences God himself—indeed, is united with God Himself. The prayer invoking the name of God should be repeated until the name of God becomes the reality of god. Hilarion averred that the name of God is God Himself and can produce miracles. These last claims attracted special attention, both among the Russian monk on Mount Athos, but even beyond that circle, and formed the basis of *имяславие* or the *imiaslavie* (those who glorify the Name). Adherents to the movement argued that, since according to Plato, the name of an object exists since before the object itself does, the name of God must pre-exist before the world was created, and so the Name cannot be anything but God Himself. Knowledge of the secret name of God alone allows one to perform miracles. The adherents of the *имяславие* were told to exercise extreme caution when using names like Jehovah, Christ, etc.

Hilarion's book provoked a great deal of controversy. In 1909 several Athonite monks - Khrisanf (Minaev) of the Il'inskii Skete, Ieroskhimonakh Aleksei (Kireevskii) of Novaia Fiviada retreat, and Ieromonakh Agafodor of Panteleimon Monastery raised objection to Hilarion's teaching. The monk Chrysanthos vigorously condemned Hilarion, arguing, first, that *имяславие* taught a variety of pantheism and, second, that before the Creation, God had no need of this name; the name is simply a created thing, an empty sound having no mystical attributes. Father Avraamy (acting on his own initiative and without the sanction of the central ecclesiastic authorities) instructed priests at the retreat not to admit Hilarion's followers to the sacrament of confession. The controversy travelled quite far in Slavic monastic circles, and the opponents of the *имяславие* came to be called *имяборчество* (*imiaborchestvo*, those fighting the Name). Nonetheless, the book did go through three printings by 1912. A number of Athonite monks who had embraced *imiaslavie* migrated to Russia, and through their travels the doctrine spread. Антоний Булатович (Anton Bulatovich, b. as Ieroskhimonakh Antonii Bulatovich) composed a "Апология веры во имя Божие и во имя Иисуса" (literally *Apologia of Faith in the Name of God and the Name of Jesus*, or *Defense of Faith in the Name of Jesus*, 1913) which offered a vigorous polemic on the *имяславие*'s behalf and, later, in 1917, to the same end, "Оправдание веры в непобедимое, непостижимое имя Иисуса" (*Justification of Faith in the Insurmountable, Unattainable Name of Jesus*). The Georgian Fr. Pavel Florensky (Па'вел Алекса'ндрович Флоре'нский, 1882-1937) put his formidable influence behind the idea and Sergius Bulgakov (Михаил Афанасьевич Булгаков, 1881-1940) and Aleksei Losev (Алексе'й Фе'дорович Ло'сев, 1893-1988) lent their considerable intellectual strengths to defending *imiaslavie*. Florensky was influenced by the Ukrainian linguist, Oleksander Potebnia (Aleksandr Potebnya, 1835-1891) and adopted his notion of the internal form of the word. Losev, Bulgakov, and Florensky sought to provide a firm conceptual foundation for onomatodoxy, by identifying the elemental language units (i.e. words and names). In doing this they drew on Plato's *Cratylus*, Potebnian linguistics, Eastern Orthodox theological concepts, and, of course, *imiaslavie* hesychastic practices.

Eastern Orthodox theology maintains a strong distinction between the Divine's Being and his acts, or (to state the distinction more properly) between God's essence, which in Eastern Orthodoxy is called οὐσία (*ousia*) and His activities in the world, his ἐνέργεια (*energeia*, equivalent to *actus* in Latin). God's *ousia* represents God as his, while His ἐνέργεια allows us to experience something of the Divine, whether through sensory perception and intuitively or noetically. The Eastern Orthodox traditions God's οὐσία (*ousia*, being) has no existence or subsistence in another or any other thing. God's *ousia* is beyond nous (He is therefore



incomprehensible to human beings), beyond being and beyond nothing. God's οὐσία is uncreated, beyond having existence, beyond being non-existence. God in essence is above all ontological forms. The source, origin of God's *ousia* is Father hypostasis of the Trinity; thus it is One God in One Father.

Bulgakov's philosophy of language begins at much the same point as Potebna's, with a broad discussion of the substance of the word, its underlying structure which he referred to as удельно-звуковая масса (*udel'no-zvukovaia massa*, sound per unit), its structure, which (recall Langan on autology) relates to the intrinsic meaning of a word, independent of the iconic graphemic or gestural features. What is it in a word form, a word as object, that is essential and constant, Bulgakov asked? He responded by saying that the internal form of the word constitutes its soul. A word contains ideal energy and so is included in the life of the cosmos. Language's denominative function links it to the designated thing and gives it life. According to Bulgakov, the germinal word "as the Symbol of the Universe, is not invented by man but manifests itself within him." He considers the word as speech, incarnating the Word. Bulgakov connects icon worship, a well-established Orthodox practice, is connected to Name worship. Divine energy is present in the icon as much as in the Name—in fact, Bugakov insisted, an icon is a form of the expanded Name, clothed in colours and visual forms rather than in sounds of words. The iconic image in the icon is a "иероглиф Имени" or hieroglyph of the Name. Bulgakov (as though against the *имяборчество* or *imiaborchestvo*) averred that the Divine Name is not an external Symbol of the Deity, a empty token, sharing nothing with what it symbolized but referring to it only by convention. Rather, the Symbol is the energetic presence of the Deity.

Florensky, too, was interested in the relation between icon and the word as the manifestation of the divine energies. Florensky was much taken with the idea of optically transitional things and events. The transitional he most often cites is the icon, which acts as screen separating secular and sacred space, but also allowing some form of crossover between them; the icon also allows an exchange between the "writer," maker of icons and the worshipper. Other optically transitional phenomenal, for Florensky, are dreams and memories, which mediate between the past and future. Florensky sometimes uses the Kantian terms "phenomenon" and "noumenon" to characterize the zones which these *limen* mediate, and he used these optically transitional phenomenal to argue that Kant was quite incorrect to maintain his rigid separation between the realm of the phenomenon and the realm of the noumena. Phenomena are really manifestations or emanations of noumena, and in seeking truth we ascend *de realibus ad realiora*.

This discussion of the power of the Divine Name can seem very remote from the issues of film. But consider the ontological bond between a photographic image and its model. We can conceive this relation as being one in which the being of the image is dependent on (that is, ontologically tied to) the existence of the object. That is not the only way to understand the relation, however: one might also understand the relation as one in which the image and the object or event of which it is an image were both produced by "cosmic" energies—and engendering and sustaining ἐνέργεια (*energeia*) rather similar in both image and object, a fact testified to by the similarity of their appearances. This would be very close to Neo-Platonic ideas on imagery (or at least some sorts of imagery)—after all, the Orthodox beliefs about the power of the icon are essentially Neo-Platonic in the outline.

There is more. As a way of considering Frampton's deep interest in words and images, and his belief that every visual form is invested with a verbal form, recall that Bulgakov suggested that similar icon worship, a well-established Orthodox practice, is connected to Name worship. Divine energy is present in the icon as much as in the Name—a "иероглиф Имени" or hieroglyph of the Name. Words and names alike contain the same energies. Moreover, Bulgakov's ideas on the internal form of words linked the word's semantic properties to its phonemic structure (in much the way that Socrates comments on etymology in *Cratylus* did—

the energies that words impart are composites of the energies of the phonemes that compose it. Frampton, too, stressed the elementary structures of words (in his case, they are compositions of letters), and he insisted that these elementary forms of which words are composed possess the powers of images (all letters are hieroglyphs). The fact that words are compositions of hieroglyphs links verbal and visual forms. It is a short step from here to the idea that verbal and visual forms manifest similar energies and so are closely related.

The *imiaslavia* movement was suppressed when the Russian government sent troops, accompanied by Archbishop Nikon of Volga, to Mount Athos to root out what the Orthodox Church had declared a heresy. (As the archbishop polled the monks on the convictions, many responded “Имя Божие есть Сам Бог” (Imia Bozhie est' sam Bog, The Name of God is God, the unofficial slogan of the Name-Worshippers) Nonetheless, it attracted many adherents in the years after the Bolshevik Revolution. An Austrian journalist, Rene Fulop-Muller, spent a long time in the Soviet Union of the 1920s, and published the remarkable *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (indeed some of my information on the movement of the имяславие has been taken from that work). He asserted that a great part of the intelligentsia, as well as some of the peasantry belong to this movement, which is led by the best men in Russia, who proclaim the magical power of the Divine name.

Undoubtedly, the Moscow School of Mathematics is one of the crowning glories of Russian intellectual life of the Soviet era. Russia in those years produced an astonishing number of great mathematicians. These ideas from the religio-philosophical theories of language and poetics meet up with mathematics in a most extraordinary convergence, one that sheds light on the extraordinary interest both Pound and Frampton have in the symbol (consider Frampton's delightful interest in mathematical notation to explain his ideas). A genealogical chart that is well-known amongst Russian mathematicians even today traces the School back to Dmitrii Egorov (1869–1931) and Nikolai Luzin (1883–1950). Luzin was a student of Egorov, at the same time as Florensky. All three were taught by Nikolai Vasilivich Bugaev (1837–1903), who was the father of Andrei Bely (a pseudonym for Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, 1880–1934), the Symbolist poet and author of “Магия Слов” (“Magiia Slov,” “The Magic of Words”). Many of these figures went on to make massive contributions to a mathematical field known as Descriptive Theory, in which sets are organized into hierarchies based on the complexity of their definition and the structure of the set at each of these levels in the hierarchy is analyzed.

The philosopher and erstwhile mathematician, Pavel Florensky, had close ties with the *imiaslavia*. He passed on their ideas to the seminal Russian mathematicians Luzin and Egorov, and recast their religious ideas into the lexicon of mathematics. In the early 1920s, there was an имяславческий кружок (imiaslavcheskii kruzhok, circle of imiaslavie) in Moscow. There the religious ideas of the Name Worshippers were brought together with the concepts with which mathematicians were adept. Florensky and Losev both attended meetings of the circle, which was made up of fifteen or sixteen philosophers, mathematicians, and religious thinkers. This имяславческий кружок met in Egorov's apartment and the religious philosopher Florensky often gave papers. At these meetings, Florensky maintained that “the point where Divine and human energy meet is ‘the symbol,’ which is greater than itself.”

In “Столп и утверждение истины: Опыт православной феодицеи в двенадцати письмах” (Stolp i utverzhdenie istiny: Opit pravoslavnoy feoditsei v dvenadtsati pismakh, The Pillar and the Ground of Truth: an Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters), Florensky argues that the Kantian antimony, Husserlian epoche and skepticism of all forms lead to a “bad infinity.”

Expressed in words, epoche come down to the following two part thesis:

I do not affirm anything.

I also do not affirm the fact that I do not affirm anything.

. . .

If this is the case, I do not have any proved proposition; I do not affirm anything. But having just stated what I have stated, I must also remove this proposition, for it too is unproved. If we open up the first half of the thesis, it will have the form of the two-part judgment:

I affirm that I do not affirm anything. (A');  
I do not affirm that I do not affirm anything (A").

Now, as it turns out, we are obviously violating the law of identity by stating contradictory predicates about one and the same subject, about its affirmation, A, in one and the same connection. But that is not all.

Both parts of the thesis are an affirmation. The first is the affirmation of an affirmation, while the second is the affirmation of a nonaffirmation. The same process is inevitably applied to each. Thus, we obtain:

I affirm (A<sub>1</sub>');  
I do not affirm(A<sub>2</sub>');  
I affirm(A<sub>1</sub>"");  
I do not affirm (A<sub>2</sub>"").

In the same way, the process will go further and further. Each new link will double the number of mutually contradictory propositions. The series goes toward infinity, and sooner or later, we are compelled to interrupt the process of doubling, in order to fix in immobility, like a frozen grimace, this obvious violation of the law of identity. We then get a powerful contradiction, i.e., at the same time we get:

A is A  
A is not-A.

This is typical of Florensky's way of proceeding. He commonly tried to show that a phenomenon (icons, language, dreams, cathedral space, the creative process) involves two separate and self-cancelling properties, and then, against logic, to show that these two categories occupy the same space in a cross-over zone. Shortly earlier, about a related epistemological problem, that of giving justification for all beliefs, Florensky had asserted

Therefore, to the question, "Where is the end?," we answer, "There is no end."  
Instead, there is an infinite regression, *regressus in indefinitum*, a descent into the gray fog of "bad" infinity, a never-ending fall into infinitude and bottomlessness. . . . *Regressus in indefinitum* is given *in potentia*, as a possibility, but not in *actu*, not as a finished reality, a reality that is realized at a given time and in a given place. A reasonable proof only gives rise in time to the dream of eternity but never makes it possible to touch eternity itself.

Florensky goes on to show, in *Мнимости В Геометрии* (*Mnimosti v geometrii*, *Imaginarities in Geometry*), that infinity—actual infinity, what Florensky calls *актуальная бесконечность* (*aktual'naia beskonechnost'*), is knowable, through revelation. There he purports to draw on ideas from Carl Friedrich Gauss, Bernhard Riemann, A.F. Moebius *et. al.*, to discredit the

conception of space that has come down to us through Leibniz, Newton and Kant. There, he claimed to show that the universe can be conceived as a finite, homogeneous, galactic system. There is no space beyond space, he says, space is not endless (in the way of the bad infinity). This can be so, he says, because space is curved. His image for this is the Moebius strip. Space is a *limen*, a divide and a cross-over, a transitional area between real and imaginary, a fourth-dimension where the extrinsic and intrinsic, the visible and the invisible cross-over. He proposed about Dante's *Commedia*, the rather wild, but not utterly baseless notion, that travelling along the circles of hell is like following great circles in the new global geometry (gaiametry). This led Dante to the discovery that the geometry of the spiritual world is a non-Euclidean plane that resembles a one-sided plane, a sort of Moebius strip. Thus, he found a mathematical form for the ontically transitional surface of the icon.

Florensky relished mathematics, but he believed that nineteenth-century mathematics had been a disaster. Nineteenth-century mathematics had been dominated by the idea of a deterministic "continuity," which he characterized as the conviction that all phenomena pass from one state to another smoothly; this idea of deterministic continuity had even had the effect of eroding the crucial notion of free-will, Florensky averred. He proposed replacing the idea of continuity with the mathematically, morally and religiously superior idea of discontinuity. Florensky drew this idea partly from his teacher, Bugaev: discontinuous functions he affirmed, functions that Hermite had referred to contemptuously, as monsters, spare us from fatalism, Bugaev averred.

"Discontinuity," Bugaev insisted, is a "manifestation of independent individuality and autonomy. Discontinuity intervenes in questions of final causes and ethical and aesthetic problems."

Together with the emphasis on naming, this stress on discontinuity steered Bugaev toward a philosophy of freedom. The claim that we are free to bring new mathematical objects into being simply by naming them was itself a proclamation of our freedom. Bugaev had made the connection between freedom of the will and discontinuity in a paper for the Russian Psychological Society, published in its journal in 1889. In that paper he proclaimed that freedom of the will was the most human of attributes, the ground of human's autonomy and foundation of law, morality, education and sociability. Free will was threatened by the philosophy of determinism (and, as Florensky was later to argue, extending his teacher's thought, by continuous functions).

If nineteenth-century mathematics had been dominated by analysis, the new mathematics would be based on Cantor's set theory. To be sure, Florensky believed that Cantor had dealt with idea of a "continuum" as merely a set among possible other sets, and in doing so had depleted its metaphysical richness. Indeed, discontinuous functions have a mathematical connection to infinity – while the connection is considerably more complex than is implied by this method, one way to glimpse the connection is to consider what happens when a function passes across a point at which it involves a division by zero at that point a discontinuity arises (we say the function is "undefined" at that point), and the popular image of what occurs is that the value of the function goes off to infinity.

Florensky, who practised Name-Worshipping also believed that the proponents of *imiaslavie* had raised the issue of "naming" to a new prominence. To name something was to bring forth a new entity. (Mathematics provides an interesting analogy: when we define, or name a set, we bring it into existence. Moreover, a set is a division, marking off those objects that possess the attribute common to all members of the collections and those who do not. Thus, in naming the set, we bring it into existence, and so make a division, or cut, in conceptual space. The similarities with Frampton's thoughts are clear.) A set is called into being simply by renaming entities according to a concept, that is a freely created mental construct, and not by identifying types of real material objects. Florensky was very taken with Cantor's emphasis on the freedom humans have in creating mathematical objects, on the difference between mathematical reality and "transient reality," and on the autonomy of the realm of mathematics. Cantor had characterized

the integers (mathematical objects) thus:

we may regard the integers as actual in so far as, on the basis of definitions, they occupy an entirely determinate place in our understanding, [and] are well distinguished from other parts of our thought ... let us call this kind of reality of our numbers their intrasubjective or immanent reality (KH 895).

He went on to contrast these mathematical entities with the numbers of things in nature, which, he said, belong to “transient reality.” This provided him with a basis for asserting mathematics’ total freedom.

Mathematics is in its development entirely free and is only bound in the self-evident respect that its concepts must both be consistent with each other, and also stand in exact relationships, ordered by definitions, to those concepts which have previously been introduced and are already at hand and established. In particular, in the introduction of new numbers, it is only obligated to give definitions of them which will bestow such a determinacy and, in certain circumstances, such a relationship to the other numbers that they can in any given instance be precisely distinguished. As soon as a number satisfies all these conditions, it can and must be regarded in mathematics as existent and real (KH 896).

Cantor contended that “... the essence of mathematics lies entirely in its freedom” (KH 896). When, by naming it, a mathematician creates a set, he calls a new mathematical entity into being. Florensky believed that mathematicians, in creating new entities (for example, sets) by naming them, come as close as humans may to the Divine. Florensky criticized the mathematics that were in ascendancy in his time, for it stressed continuous functions (obviously, the phenomenon of discontinuity must be central in any science, or in any way of thinking that is to be relevant to life, for life, in its most profound depths, is characterized by ruptures and transformations). However, a new form of mathematics was coming, Florensky averred, one that would rescue humankind from the materialistic, deterministic ways of the nineteenth century. This new mathematics was set theory (which, since it deals with collections of discrete things has taken discontinuity into its very constitution); unfolding the insights set theory has to offer on discontinuous phenomena became hallmarks of the Moscow School of Mathematics. In 1905, the French mathematician Henri Lebesgue (1875–1941) asked, “Is it possible to prove the existence of a mathematical object without defining it?” That way of thinking, as Graham and Kantor show, is typical of the French approach to mathematics, which is still so very committed to the Cartesian primacy of reason. The Georgian/Russian Florensky, we have seen, conceived of mathematical objects in Platonic terms, so for Florensky to pose that question would be tantamount to asking if it is possible to prove the existence of God without defining Him? For Florensky (and later for Egorov and Luzin), when we name a set, we call it into being—the act of naming bestows existence on the object. In mathematics, as in religion, the power of true naming is disclosed. Just as the *imiaslavie* call God to presence by worshipfully naming Him, mathematicians call sets into being by naming them and by working with them. As Loren Graham put it, “The Russian mathematicians asked, for example, ‘How can we know that there are numbers greater than infinity—transfinite numbers—if infinity is defined as the largest possible number? We know because we can name them—we call them ‘aleph numbers’—and we work with them.’”

The idea that *Zorns Lemma* suggests, that one can generate all possible names by permuting the letters of an alphabet of thought and generating thereby all possible names (which pre-exist

the creation, as they are eternal Ideas) one summons all that can be (all possible existents) into reality (into actuality), has a long and fascinating history.