

# Georg Simmel and Semyon Frank: from Kant to *Lebensphilosophie*

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Georg Simmel’s legacy is traditionally distinguished between sociological and philosophical works so that researchers have little overlap in his areas of interest with their colleagues.

Simmel, however, was different in each of these disciplines. It is particularly evident in the context of his relationship with Kant. His sociology, more relevant before 1908, leads to Kant, while his philosophy (the so-called *Lebensphilosophie* or ‘philosophy of life’) developed after 1908, is opposed to Kant. This research aims to explain this dichotomy.

Many thinkers transitioned from Kant to Simmel’s *Lebensphilosophie*, including Simmel’s student, Semyon Frank, whose fate resembles that of his teacher in many ways. Frank attended his lectures in 1898, translated and reviewed his works, and wrote about Simmel in his own essays. In general, it is difficult to find a figure among the foreign contemporaries of Frank who had a more significant influence on him than Simmel.

In many ways, Frank was Simmel’s Russian counterpart: both were baptized Jews in Christian countries; both passed through a school of controversial opinions in many ways fatal to their destiny; both were exiles, despite their prolificacy and significance, and both were unsteady in their academic statuses, but highly appreciated by their colleagues.

Frank is a well-known figure in the history of Russian religious philosophy, but his philosophy in the context of his path from Kantianism to his philosophy of life has not been sufficiently studied. This research also aims to fill this gap and to present Frank to Simmel’s readers.

*Keywords:* Simmel, Frank, Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, Goethe, Russia

*Velut aegri somnia vanae finguntur species*

## I Kant for philosophy of life

In the history of *Lebensphilosophie*, Kant was a very significant but ambiguous figure. For example, Bergson, as one of *Lebensphilosophie* key figures, contrasted his main point in 1889 to “the associationists and the determinists...on the one side, and the Kantians on the other” (2001: 238-239). Dilthey, a founding-father of *Lebensphilosophie* echoed Bergson in 1922 with his words that “no real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a mere activity of thought” (1989: 50).

It is possible to identify Kant as an eternal opponent to *Lebensphilosophie*. However, it will be much more precise to describe him as the prime irritant for *Lebensphilosophie*. No question can be asked regarding *who we claim to be Lebensphilosophen*, but *what do we*

*regard as Lebensphilosophie?* There is no need to trace the origin of the term, but rather the origin of the problem which had already been in existence before the term was coined. Rickert admits that *Lebensphilosophie's* predecessors experienced Kant's appreciable influence (1920: 188). Was it not then that the problem emerged?

It suffices to recall the figure who became "the common point of departure for most of the philosophers of life ... who had received little attention in his own day but whose posthumous reputation was all the more spectacular: Arthur Schopenhauer" (Joas, 1996:117). Leo Shestov, a famous Russian philosopher and a close friend of Edmund Husserl, gives an accurate description of this relation, asking in 1912, "Where are the Kantians who attempt to make deductions from the proposition as to the subjectivity of space and time?" (1916:187) and answering that the philosopher "Schopenhauer is the only exception. He indeed took the Kantian idea seriously, but it may be said without exaggeration that of all Kantians the least like Kant was Schopenhauer." (Ibid.).

It would seem that this is only a particular case from the history of thought of a "predecessor" to *Lebensphilosophie*, but if we turn to his other "predecessors", will it not be possible to find Kantian impulses there as well? Kierkegaard wrote in 1846 that he "admires Haman" (1992: 250), and that he "was often inspired by Jacobi" [Ibid.], but who inspired the thing in Haman, Jacobi, and throughout the German academic community that in its turn inspired Kierkegaard in such a way? Was it not the example of "Hegel's relation to Kant" (328) that has become a cause why "the dubiousness of the [Hegelian] method ... become quite obvious" (Ibid.) to Kierkegaard? The same can be said even about Nietzsche; his acceptance of Schopenhauer in 1872 was also the acceptance of Kant (1911: I, 139-140, 153) and his subsequent rejection of Schopenhauer in 1881 was also the rejection of Kant (1911: IX, 339).

The long winding road from *Lebensphilosophie* through Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and others, albeit in a curious way, leads to Kant.

The Neo-Kantian attitude towards *Lebensphilosophie* was rather indulgent, with a hint at understanding as they saw it as a new turn of irrationalist philosophy: "They expressed the revolt against what was felt to be an ossified culture, a rebellion which in many respects was reminiscent of the *Sturm und Drang* movement of the late eighteenth century, but which now had something more closely resembling a mass base" (Joas, 1996: 117). *Lebensphilosophen* looked at Kant in a more complex way, mainly as a criminal looks at Leviathan: it is quite impossible not to come in contact with him, but one who does will be forced either to fight him (with about the same chance of winning) or to obey. In this sense, the most exciting example seems to be Georg Simmel, who is ranked equally as a Kantian and as a philosopher of life.

## II Simmel: from Kant to philosophy of life

The first questions should be posed here: what is Simmel's Kantianism, and what is his *Lebensphilosophie*?

It is possible to reveal the content of these concepts only after having them differentiated as much as possible. The problems of distinguishing between them will lead to

their essence. It is possible to draw such a distinction on the basis of the periodization of Simmel's work.

This research is based on Max Frischeisen-Kohler's periodization that was the first to divide Simmel's works into three periods, those of his Darwinist-positivist-biological pragmatism, his Kantianism, and then his *Lebensphilosophie* (1920: 10-24). Later, M. Landmann developed and refined this periodization (Simmel, 1987: 7-8). He proposed to divide Simmel's career into three periods, each of them lasting about a decade, from the positivist-minded philosopher (1888-1898) to the Kantian one (1898-1908), and later to *Lebensphilosophie* (1908-1918).

The advantages of this interpretation come from its flaws and vice-versa. It is simple, accurate, and can be traced by relying on Simmel's area of interest at each period of his life. For the same reasons, this interpretation does not offer any complex view of Simmel's work since the latter is split somehow into three parts. Therefore, it solves the problem of organizing Simmel's work within different periods of his life, but faces another problem of the interrelation between these periods. At the same time, the prioritization of the whole of Simmel's work (for example, in the context of his relationship to Kant) is still relevant.

It is not possible to trace the causes of these dynamics by simply stating some changes in the author's thought; if we proceed in this way we are bound to deal only with its consequences. However, this periodization of Simmel's work remains the only form of its reception; it cannot provide us with the key to understanding it after simply pointing out the problem. Thus, we propose then to attach some key (i.e., the hierarchical principle) to Simmel's entire work, which will also complement this periodization.

This principle may be based on the preface to the second edition of *Introduction to the Science of Morality* [*Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*] (Filippov, 1994: 65). Simmel admits here that "further development of [his] views constitutes more replenishment than a simple denial of the preceding" [1904: 5]. At the same time, this phrase reflects Simmel's attitude to his previous works while signaling the program to develop his future thoughts. However, there are reasons to believe that it applies to only his subsequent works. An argument in favor of such an assumption lies in Simmel's attitude towards his three early seminal works.

Simmel's first major work, *On Social Differentiation* [*Über soziale Differenzierung*] (1890), was not highly appreciated by him (Filippov, 2019: 239). The second work, published in 1892, *The Problems of the Philosophy of History* [*Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*] was profoundly revised in the second edition (1905), while the third edition (1907) practically does not differ from the second version (241). Simmel was firmly against republishing his third work titled *Introduction to the Science of Morality* (in the first edition of 1892-1893) (Rammstedt, 2012: 310). *Introduction to the Science of Morality* and *The Problems of the Philosophy of History* were not among his favorites in their original drafts but were regularly revised and republished, while *On Social Differentiation* was not. Given that *Kant* was awarded four lifetime editions, it seems correct to assume that Simmel was free to decide on the subsequent fate of *On Social Differentiation*.

However, he preferred to consign this work to oblivion; he did not entirely discard the early oeuvre but it definitely had lost its relevance.

Based on this principle and the periodization that has already become classical (Levine, D. N. (1997): 179), the question of Simmel's *early period* seems to be reduced in the context of this research, but it can be re-actualized by a different prism of reception, that is, not when each period is assumed to be self-sufficient, but when one of these periods is assumed to be the main one while the others are considered to be subordinate. Thus, three variants of the prism arise here, each a preference of a particular period, or rather the prevalence of fundamental ideas over others in different periods. So, if classical periodization is an internal key because it is based on and subordinated directly to Simmel's ideas and concepts in each separate period, then, by focusing on one side of that prism, one primary idea determines the whole system and becomes the key to the whole of Simmel's oeuvre.

When the early period is considered to be the cornerstone, the choice of the first prism is not a frequent option. A severe limitation for this choice is the circumstances we mentioned above and the fact that Simmel later criticized his early works by saying that "until the age of 35" he was, "actually, silly" (Filippov, 2019: 239). To a much greater extent, his later writings represent Simmel both to his contemporaries and to today's researchers. Although it is wrong to entirely ignore the works of that period, we will have to skip too many important details to consider them as the essence of his entire heritage. The second (*Kantian*) and the third (*philosophy of life*) variants of the prism have their arguments, both pro and con. Before proceeding to their descriptions, though, it is necessary to take the specific case into account where one period subjugates the other, albeit in a slightly different form, that is, not as a starting point of reasoning, but as an outcome. This conclusion can be drawn from the adoption of the third prism, where the first period is subjected to the third one (philosophy of life) and opposed to the second (*Kantian*). Thus, Kantian ideas are either believed to be the beginning of the third period (the subordination of the second period to the third one), or are supposed to be temporary deviations from the path outlined in the early period (the subordination of the second period to the first one).

A prism like this was used by J. Bleicher, who wrote that "already in 1896 asking *What is Kant to Us?* Simmel refers to the classic of German Idealism as a representative of an obsolete position, one that tries to offer a kind of unitary account. The 'modern Weltanschauung', in contrast, recognizes the 'living flux of development' and sees 'the forms of cognition as subject to the stream of development'" (2007: 151). This prism argues for the temporary affirmative appearance of Kant in Simmel's philosophy. However, one can object that Simmel was not only well versed in Kant, (one of the reasons he was strongly recommended to defend the thesis on his philosophy (Frisby, 2002: 10)), but was even his admirer — yet, in an extraordinary and even radical sense — already with *On Social Differentiation*, which "hinted at its positivist inheritance" even by its title (Liebersohn, 1988: 130).

Simmel is one of the most striking examples of the philosopher who defines himself more through his questions (especially unsolvable ones), rather than answers, though the most important achievement of *On Social Differentiation* for Simmel's sociological heritage is its answer.

Designating sociology as an eclectic and not-yet existing science, Simmel emphasizes that it is necessary to proceed from the most complex problems, not from the basic concepts that could be deduced only in an already existing science. Definitions of basic sociological concepts (“What is society? What is an individual? How are the mutual psychological effects of individuals on each other possible?” (1890: 3)) become available only after identification of the most pressing problems of society. Simmel indeed touches basic concepts in his later work, *Sociology* (1908); here we can conclude that Simmel followed the plan outlined in *On Social Differentiation*. It is exactly the case when his “earlier works frequently foreshadow motifs that would later become fundamental to his thought” (Joas, 2000: 70).

Simmel’s formal sociology’s de-radicalization was not only the reason for its development, but a direct outcome of the path charted by *On Social Differentiation*. The temporary nature of its relevance, is already evident in the work. Simmel wrote “this, of course, does not mean that the basic concepts of sociology need indisputable and clear definitions ... It is more appropriate to provide the reader with a general concept of the field, rather than an exact description. We should expect a full understanding of objects after the completion of science, not before it... If science has yet to be created, then it is necessary to proceed directly from these problems. These problems are always highly complex and can only be partially decomposed into their elements.” (1890: 3). Thus, relying on the basis of *On Social Differentiation*, we can conclude that sociology as a discipline already exists in *Sociology* and, therefore, the statement that its study as not yet existing is wrong. In other words, that *On Social Differentiation* is subordinated in advance to later works that could only exist under the conditions of sociology as an independent and already functioning discipline.

Of course, many questions from *On Social Differentiation* found their answers not only in Simmel’s later works but in the works of other authors. However, all the research done in *On Social Differentiation* is a development of the initial thesis (i. e., answer): “...It is impossible to begin cognition with such a conception of society, from which relationships and mutual actions of its components would accrue. These must be established, and society is only the sum of these interactions, which will only become applicable to the extent they are established” (14). Thus, Simmel asks a question that corresponds exactly to the basic premise of his thesis (i.e., the answer) from *On Social Differentiation*, that will appear later in *Sociology* and, more specifically, in *How is Society Possible?* Simmel binds *On Social Differentiation* and *Sociology*, and, to be precise, he again subordinates his earlier work to his later one.

In other words, it is possible to apply the conceptual key from *On Social Differentiation* to the reading of *Sociology* and vice versa. So, in the first book, “Simmel seems to consider the individual primarily as a product of social relations — that is, as an intersection of social circles... That is, a person does not owe one’s individuality to some autonomous hidden essence but to one’s relations. In the last instance, for Simmel the sociologist, the individual *is* one’s relations” (Pyyhtinen, 2010: 140), then in the second one, as Kurt H. Wolf noted, “Simmel in effect suggests that even from an empirical stand-

point one must note that ‘individual’ is no more ‘real’ than ‘society’; that is (one may put it), both are equally heuristic concepts” (Simmel, 1950: xlvi–xlvi). As a result, Simmel’s thesis from *Sociology* directly includes a thesis from *On Social Differentiation* and also, in a sense, introduces its antithesis. Thus, Simmel’s antinomic thesis appears to highlight society’s nature, which constructs its elements and, at the same time, is being constructed by them. Later, Simmel softened his formal sociology approach outlined in *On Social Differentiation*, but it was its original form which would become the cornerstone for his social theory, more fully disclosed below.

Simmel can already be regarded as a Kantian in *On Social Differentiation*, not because he repeatedly and emphatically uses Kantian terminology, but because this can be explained as merely a tribute to the peculiarities of time or culture. He deliberately chose the Kantian question ‘*How is society possible?*’ as an opening chapter, asking the central question (thesis) from *On Social Differentiation*. Simmel would write “the entire contents of this book [*Sociology*], as developed on the basis of the principles presented above [in *How is society possible?*], is the initial attempt to answer this question” (2009: 42). It does not matter how much *On Social Differentiation* contradicts the chief work in the hierarchy (*Sociology*); its initial thesis essentially anticipates *Sociology*’s central thesis, and, using the key (i.e., the internal key) that Simmel deployed in his two other works, *On Social Differentiation* should be read in the sense that does not contradict *Sociology*.

Bleicher demonstrates a mutually exclusive approach to the Kantian and *Lebensphilosophie* periods. He wrote that “[o]nly a few years after the publication of *Kant und Goethe* in 1904, a collection of essays released by Simmel as a monograph entitled ‘Goethe’ joined an impressive array of books under the same title being published around that time. Its content evidences how far Simmel had by then moved along his path from neo-Kantianism towards *Lebensphilosophie*” (2007: 140). Bleicher presented a one-sided vision of Kant in Simmel’s legacy, and preferred to see Simmel either as an already established *Lebensphilosoph* or as a prospective one; he generally chose not to see Kant in early Simmel’s oeuvre in a positive context at all.

Bleicher continues, writing that “*Kant und Goethe*... helps us to trace the development and core ideas of his *Lebensphilosophie* from an early stage” (Ibid.). Bleicher quoted *What is Kant to Us?* only once, extracting Simmel’s only critical remark about Kant and coloring it much more negatively at a time when opposite characteristics are quite predictably found in the work. Simmel wrote in 1896 that “we must constantly search for the conditions which, situated within ourselves, impose their general norms and forms on every field of experience, because they are the laws of the spirit itself, which creates that field for itself by imagining it: this we still have to learn from Kant, and in this task he still lives for us today” (2000a). So, “the truth must prove itself. It is for this reason that the forerunners of the great explorers, now found everywhere, have only an anecdotal value, while the historical significance remains with those who introduced the thought into the spiritual movement and gave it the physical form with which it alone is able to function. Kant made the main idea so fruitful that his branches and offshoots still bear new fruit today” (Ibid.).

There is a particular dichotomy here: if we assume that our reasoning (the priority of the Kantian key to Simmel's early philosophy) refutes Bleicher's entire thesis, then we find out that Simmel retrospectively submits the first period to the second. If this argument does not refute but rather complement Bleicher's thesis, then it provides the evidence for the antinomy in Simmel's ideas, which are not reducible to each other but nevertheless remain valid. Thus, it turns out that either the key, according to which the figure of Simmel's Kant is an homage to the spirit of the age. It is viewed exclusively negatively already at an early stage, and is illegitimate due to the stronger argumentation of the antithesis. That, or these keys exist on different planes and respond to different questions, but, due to their antinomic nature, cannot in principle be used as keys because they do not lead to an unambiguously correct answer. One way or another, the argument here plays the only role of the almost complete reduction of Simmel's early work in the context of this study, and, therefore, it does not matter whether it refutes or complements Bleicher's initial thesis.

Relying on this argument, it seems that blurring the line between the early Simmel and Simmel-the Kantian in the context of formal sociology is possible and necessary; we should do this by subordinating his early works to the Kantian period, as it was done by Simmel himself. This suggests that the emergence of Kant in Simmel's thinking was not sudden, but even predictable and expected. Now that the early period is de-actualized in the context of this research through the proof of the mutually non-exclusive nature of Simmel's work periods, we can return to the topic of his Kantianism and philosophy of life.

Simmel's characterization as *Lebensphiloph* does not say anything about him except that his philosophy's key concept was 'life', but this cannot tell us anything about the concept's content (Joas, 2000: 76). The second period of his work (especially his sociological writings) was associated with Kant's name; something similar can be observed in the third period, which, however, is associated with other figures. The immediate details of Simmel contrasting these authors to Kant are the main milestones on his path from Kant to *Lebensphilophie*.

The first such figure for Simmel might have been Bergson, who had been a strong influence on him since 1908 (Habermas, Deflem, 1996: 406) and the greatness of whom was not even in the least doubtful to Simmel (2000f). Simmel appreciated the suggestive effect of Bergson's philosophy (as well as Husserl's philosophy) on his liberation from "Kantian chains" (2000e); while asking who will take a step further after Kant, Simmel himself notes that Kant was also the genetic part of Bergson's own philosophy (Goodstein, 2017: 5).

To a greater extent, Bergson's vitalism was mostly a catalyst (but rather more the anticipation) of Simmel's *Lebensphilophie*. Simmel, like Tolstoy, was not always interested in his contemporaries; he preferred discussions with figures like Kant or Nietzsche. However, the reasons for the unusual emergence of Bergson in Simmel's texts are perhaps somewhat trivial: his obvious significance (and popularity) along with the fact that in many ways he was the spokesman for Simmel's "own ideas" (4).

The other Simmel's influences were Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, to whom he devoted *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (1907), defined by him as the "chief work" (Liebersohn, 1988:130). However, Kantian motives cannot be ignored here either; in the clash between Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Kant, Simmel repeatedly defends Kant.

Simmel wrote there that Schopenhauer "thoroughly misunderstood the ultimate meaning of Kant's philosophy" (991:19-20), and, although later he added that Schopenhauer did it on "purpose", it does not negate the fact that Schopenhauer's criticism of Kant, according to Simmel, does not achieve its goal.

In 1906, Simmel refutes one of Nietzsche's most important theses on Kant's moralism, writing that "the Kantian imperative is merely a formulation of the fact of human reason made by an objective theoretician who places his ideal outside of time and is even indifferent to its practical acknowledgment." (159-160). Kant created only a form (an ideal of unattainable ethics (2000b), while Nietzsche was a moralist to a much greater extent because, as Simmel noted earlier, "Kant deals only with the *existing*, while Nietzsche talks about how it should be in reality" (2000).

*Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* is perhaps a "brilliant example of his [Simmel's] study of the philosophy of life" (Joas, 1996: 68), but it is also a brilliant example of Kant's study done by Simmel himself.

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche both proceed from Kantian premises. In 1918 these two "personifications of modernity" (Pyukhtinen, 2010: 51-52) were criticized by Simmel precisely because they did not overcome Kant: Schopenhauer did not overcome Kantian phenomenalism, which separates a man from *life* (Simmel, 2011: 72-73); Nietzsche did not overcome his categorical imperative, which remained "above life" (107). However, Simmel wrote that Kant's imperative is presented in a categorically incomplete form (1991: 160), and it turns out that Nietzsche, in this sense, is under heavier attack than Kant.

In 1907, Simmel reproached Schopenhauer and Nietzsche for having had gone too far from Kant. In 1918, Simmel accused them for having had not gone far enough.

Simmel put Goethe on the banners of his philosophy (2007: 186). He showed interest in him for many years, with that interest becoming especially active in his *Lebensphilosophie* period (Bleicher, 2007: 156).

Goethe did not oppose himself to Kant. However, although he knew his works and wrote enthusiastically about them, Goethe did not really rely on Kant and did not criticize him. The opposition between Kant and Goethe emerged later. Although it was already outlined by Schopenhauer in 1819 (2010: I, 628) and was clearly manifested by Nietzsche in 1888 (1911: XVI, 110], philosophers started to oppose Kant en masse under the banners of Goethe precisely in Simmel's era. Earlier, Goethe's opposition to Kant would be unjustified: Kant's significance for Germany's intellectual life became apparent almost immediately after the *Critique of Pure Reason*, with his importance in academic philosophy only growing, while interest in Goethe, after his death, significantly decreased (Mandelkow, 1980: 85). Goethe became relevant precisely because he was not a philosopher and did not even pretend to be (like Schiller). Meanwhile, it was the philosophers who hoisted Goethe's name on the banners of anti-Kantianism and proposed a degree of magnitude



for him even greater than for those who are usually believed to be the direct predecessors of *Lebensphilosophie*. It happened since, in German thought, only a non-philosopher like Goethe could be opposed to Kant who was then hanging menacingly over the whole of German philosophy (Simmel, 2000c). Having inherited the language of Kant's philosophy, post-Kantians had no choice but to inherit Kant himself. In the beginning of XX century, there was a saying in German academic circles that "You can philosophize with Kant, or against Kant; you cannot philosophize without him" (Kohnke, 1991: ix).

Simmel had already outlined contrasts between Kant and Goethe in *Kant and Goethe* (1899) and *Kant and Goethe* (1906), but his acceptance of "eternally young" Goethe against "initially old" Kant (Simmel, 2000d) eventually emerged in 1909. Later, Simmel was busy with 'reconciling' Kant's dualism, thereby subordinating Kant to Goethe for having reduced Kant's nominalism. As early as 1895, Simmel had this motive, although he believed it to be not a development of Kantian philosophy, but rather its original essence (Helle, 2013: 36). Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie* period is characterized by a departure from a rather radical Kantian nominalism, which could be observed in *Sociology*, to a non-philosophical Goethean realism which was primarily provided in *The View of Life*.

Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie* is aimed against Kantianism, but here is the question: which Kantianism? The problem of choosing a prism is thus replaced by the interaction of Kantian and *Lebensphilosophie* tendencies in Simmel's legacy.

Although Simmel himself did not separate different phases of his life into different creative periods, sociologists are primarily interested in his innovative formal (Kantian) sociology which was fully developed before 1908, while philosophers are mainly interested in Simmel's work after 1908 in his *Lebensphilosophie* phase.

Up to 1908, Simmel positioned himself precisely as a sociologist (Filippov, 2019: 225-230), but after that he de facto moved away from sociology. Filippov would write that "Instead, the direction of Simmel's later work seems to confirm Troeltsch's comment that "in later years, when I brought him round to sociological questions, he rejected discussion of them; these things "no longer interested him"" (Frisby, 2002: 19). In his later period, Simmel wrote on sociology only (with the exception of two small articles in the year 1910: *Sociology of the meal* [Soziologie der Mahlzeit] and *Sociology of socializing* [Soziologie der Geselligkeit]) in *Fundamental Questions of Sociology* (1917) [Grundfragen der Soziologie], but did that at the request of the publisher (2019: 240). In this work, Simmel supplements the discipline by surrounding its core of formal or pure sociology with general sociology on the one hand, and philosophical on the other. He did not contradict *Sociology* and, moreover, even then the only Simmel's sociology "in a proper sense" is the formal sociology because other sociologies are beyond the limits of the discipline: general sociology is rather an empirical philosophy of history, while his philosophical sociology is rather epistemology and metaphysics of social science (252). In this sense, general sociology and philosophical sociology are necessary not to expand their scope but to define the boundaries of pure sociology beyond which it becomes some another discipline.

Simmel opposes his *Lebensphilosophie* to some other Kant, whose follower, Simmel, could be called a sociologist. Simmel as the Kantian and Simmel as the *Lebensphilosoph*

treated Kant's work on the basis of different questions. By and large, Simmel-the-Kantian does not ask Kant questions: he focuses his main epistemological question of *how is society possible?* He then goes on to practical philosophy in his own way. As a sociologist, he felt dissatisfaction with practical philosophy, but this did not diminish the role of Kantianism in substantiating his theoretical sociology. In fact, in his last years, Simmel ceased to be a sociologist and, *for the same reason*, he ceased to be a Kantian, or rather ceased to be perceived as a Kantian. Simmel comprehended Kant and understood his philosophy, but his philosophy almost always was concerned with only practical matters; in this way, he always was against Kant and, in that sense, Simmel was never actually a Kantian at all. Simmel the philosopher was never satisfied with Kant's "moralistic" content, but as a sociologist, he remained a Kantian for the rest of his life. It was the combination of the acceptance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* precisely as a criticism, and the rejection of *Critique of Practical Reason* not so much of Kant's ethics, but of its general form, that provoked this break.

Simmel, in criticizing Kant and Fichte together (2011:114), ignores the deep inconsistency between their systems, which Kant himself managed to demonstrate. In Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*, Kantianism became associated with rationality, systematic philosophy as an enemy of living culture, and violence of logic over *life* (Lotter, 2000: 178).

It is particularly crucial not to fall into the teleological snare here: what turns out to be later in the theoretician's individual development is not necessarily its highest stage (Filippov, 1994: 65). Despite the fact that Simmel partially neutralized the dichotomy between Kant and *Lebensphilosophie*, he made not a philosophical but simply a cultural choice in favor of *the latter*. By and large, he only joined this tendency, and in this, his philosophy manifested itself in a quite ordinary way. However, it is precisely this ordinariness that was so unusual for Simmel that speaks of him as a figure inscribed in the cultural context of not only a philosophical crisis, but of a crisis in general. Simmel's thought has not lost its inherent brightness, but many authors had such a view of Kantianism (and also on Kant) as Jacobi or Goethe already had. Therefore, it is not unusual that an immediate disciple of Simmel's from faraway Russia, Semyon Frank, adhered to the same views uniting the German and Russian intellectual environments.

### III Two Exiles

Semyon Frank was Simmel's university student in 1899 (Boobbyer, 1992: 36). Later, Frank visited him in 1907 together with his elder comrade, Peter Struve (82). Frank was overwhelmed by Simmel's thought (Frank, 2001: 40). He called him "perhaps the most gifted Kantian" (2020: 398) and "one of the best contemporary philosophical essayists" (520). At the beginning of the 20th century in Russia, perhaps only Struve who was "Simmel's first discoverer in Russia" (Rezvyh, 2017: 173), comprehended Simmel better than Frank.

This acquaintance could not fail to impress Frank.

Frank was heavily influenced by Simmel's perception of Nietzsche (Frank, 2020: 439, 444, 463, 483, 634, 642) — he, following Simmel, emphasizes the moralistic side of

Nietzsche's teachings (318). Frank read Goethe (134) through the eyes of Simmel. To a lesser extent, this is also a characteristic of Frank's reading of Kant (2006:75-77).

There were also coincidences on a more implicit level. It is felt in the influence of Spinoza, who was an important inspiration for the worldview of both Simmel (Helle, 2013:152-160) and Frank (Frank, 1986: 119); in Mach's influence, which can be found in the epistemology of both Simmel (Skidelsky, 2003: 367) and Frank (through Schuppe) (Frank, 2019: 487-488); and in Marx's influence (Goodstein, 2017: 82; Frank, 2018: 163-428).

Frank completed the Russian translation of Simmel's *Kant and Goethe* (1906) in 1908, referred to Simmel (*Friedrich Nietzsche — Eine moralphilosophische Silhouette* (1896)) in his writings (*Nietzsche and the ethics of 'love of the distant'*), and wrote works dedicated to him (*Simmel and his book on Goethe* (1913)).

He was equally influenced by Simmel's early works such as *Introduction to the Science of Morality* in 1900 (329) and *On Social Differentiation* in 1899 (2018: 159), his Kantian (*Philosophy of Money* in 1902 (463), *Sociology* in 1909 (Frank, 2020: 290-298), and his *Lebensphilosophie* writings (*Kant and Goethe*) in 1908 (596).

Furthermore, one should not overestimate Simmel's influence on Frank's philosophy as a whole: what is most fascinating is not the fact that Frank in some way followed Simmel, but that he followed a similar path and largely repeated Simmel's fate.

Simmel's and Frank's lives both were strongly influenced by anti-Semitism. In fact, Simmel was bound to come across it during his entire academic career. It is not an easy task to say whether Simmel was aware at the end of his life of the huge role anti-Semitism played in his academic failures. Simmel would underestimate the power of anti-Semitism in Germany until the end of his days.

Frank also could not help but encounter anti-Semitism in Russia, but, being an exile, he happened to face its far more-outspoken version (first in Germany, then in occupied France), which threatened not only his career but his life as well.

Simmel and Frank were both expelled from Jewish community at the same time. After all, there is an assumption that in 1899, Simmel wrote (Rammstedt, 1997: 455) that the Dreyfus affair was exclusively cultural in its nature and one should not be afraid of it (Filippov, 2019: 233), having thereby alienated the Dreyfusards (including Emile Durkheim). Frank once faced Hermann Cohen's fierce reaction caused by the fact of his baptism (Scherrer, 1973: 438). The assimilation was an obvious choice for both, although it cannot be said to have brought them many benefits.

Simmel, as a confirmed German patriot, welcomed the Germany that was supposed to arise out of the First World War (Cotesta, 2017: 432). Although it cannot be denied that, in the long term, he was right (Simmel, 2000h: 13) and Germany actually leads the whole of Europe in the 21st century, with regard to his personal fate, there is a dry irony in the fact that Simmel somehow was a part of the movement that thoroughly ruined his life and, after his death, in its more explicit form of Nazism, almost thoroughly erased it from the memory of people.

In 1944, Frank considered The First World War as defensive for Russia (2001: 475); however, it scared him (1990: 578), just as the Russo-Japanese War did (2019: 148-149).

His patriotism was expressed in his youth mostly not as in conservative Simmel's way, but in his progressive political activity which was not radical, but still was Marxist opposition to imperial authorities. The same force, the Marxism turned into a political regime, later made him an exile, one of the passengers on the famous *philosopher's steamboat*.

All contemporary accounts of Simmel's thought agree that he was considered to be one of the most brilliant, if not the most brilliant, lecturers of his time (Coser, 1977: 211). The same can be said about Frank. Probably the most influential historian of Russian philosophy, Vasily Zenkovsky, considered that "without hesitation ... Frank's system is the most significant and profound system in the history of Russian philosophy" (1967: 853]. However, they are united not only by lifelong respect but also by posthumous oblivion.

Of course, Simmel's scholars did not forget him; for sociologists, though, he still remains in the shadow of Durkheim and Weber, and he is of marginal interest for philosophers. Frank, in this sense, was also overshadowed by such figures as Berdyaev and Shestov. Despite the keen interest among Russian scholars, he is still not widely available to the general reader, since only 4 of 8 volumes of his complete works have been published to date.

#### IV

The tradition of Russian religious philosophy with all its originality is adjacent to the mostly German pan-European tradition. Russian philosophers of the late XIXth century, at the dawn of Russian thought, actively read Pascal, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Through the reception of these authors, Russian religious philosophy also absorbed Nicolas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, Jacob Boehme (Evlampiev, 2015), and many others.

In the context of the reception of European philosophy in Russia, Semyon Frank has a particular place; "Plotinus, Nicolaus Cusanus, Leibniz, Jacobi, Goethe, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler, Dilthey — all of them were real accomplices of the philosophical process in which Frank's position was developed" (Porus, 2012: 7). This list could also include Simmel, Marx, Mach, Nietzsche, Bergson, Spinoza, and Windelband. Frank was deeply immersed in the context of European continental philosophy throughout his life, and the traditions of Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* did not bypass him either.

There are descriptions of Frank's philosophy as a path from Kantianism to *Lebensphilosophie* (Boobbyer, 1992: 46), and as a combination of the latter with Neo-Kantian approaches (Swoboda, 1992: 14). Of course, these positions neither describe, nor do they pretend to fully comprehend Frank's philosophy, but they do show the essential phases of his development. To uncover the meaning of these descriptions, it is worth it to start with the first one.

Frank was studying Kant during his university studies (Frank, 1986: 121), but he became more deeply immersed in Kantianism in 1899 when he was studying in Berlin with some prominent professors such as Simmel, Windelband, and Riehl (Boobbyer, 1992: 37). In 1903-1908, his neo-Kantianism (influenced by G. Simmel, W. Windelband, and

W. Schuppe) experienced a distinct gravitation towards neo-Fichteanism (Aliaiev, Tsygankov, 2019: 173). Already at the pinnacle of his Kantianism he displays in the work *On Critical Idealism* (Obolevich, 2017: 26), Frank writes of critical idealism as the main idea of “Kantian-Fichtean philosophy” (2019: 205-206). Thus, it can be said that Frank’s Kantianism, even in his most Kantian work, was not independent and to no less extent it was Fichteanism, because “the last step (the elimination of the very concept of absolute and transcendental reality) that was not (or was not sufficiently resolutely) taken by Kant ... was partially performed by Fichte and completed only nowadays in the teaching of the so-called immanent philosophy” (215-216). This motif had appeared in Frank’s works earlier, in 1902, when he wrote that “Fichte brought out much that is true to Kant: first of all, that every non-Self emerges from the Self” (569) then, in 1905, when he wrote that “Fichte carried out a critical purification of Kant’s system from the elements of naive realism that remained in it and thus laid the foundations for consistent critical idealism” (310).

In Frank’s other works of that period, Kant appears only in passing and, indeed relying on them, it is possible to call Frank a Kantian only by a long stretch of the imagination. He already refused to reissue *On Critical Idealism* in 1911 (Swoboda, 1992: 378), and at the end of his life in 1935, Frank confessed that he was not a supporter of Kantianism, saying that even at that time “Kantianism was not his cup of tea” (Frank, 1986: 121). In 1909, Frank wrote that “a rigorous examination of past thinking proves that ... Kant ... can no longer be our leader” (2020: 183).

*Lebensphilosophie* had taken Kant’s place in Frank’s thought in the years of 1908-1910 (Aliaiev, 2017: 52). This development can be observed in his philosophy of culture and theoretical philosophy. Frank’s philosophy of culture was born from *Ethics of Nihilism* (1909), which was devoted to the “criticism of the philistine (bourgeois) culture” (Porus, 201: 352). Both Marxism and Nietzscheanism served as the instruments to this criticism (Ibid.), but while his Marxist criticism had a socio-economic nature, the Nietzschean criticism was philosophical.

Frank set out on his philosophical journey with Nietzscheanism in *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Ethics of ‘Love of the Distant’* (1902). In this book, he fused the ethics of Nietzsche with political and ethical radicalism and (illegally) Kant’s ethics (2018: 632). In 1935, Frank said that after reading Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (in the winter of 1901-02), he “became an idealist, not in the Kantian sense, but an idealist-metaphysician, a bearer of some kind of spiritual experience that provided access to the invisible inner reality of being” (1986: 121). In *Nietzsche and the Ethics of ‘Love of the Distant’* (1902), Frank presents Nietzsche as Kant’s successor (2019: 490). *On Critical Idealism* (1903), as well as Simmel before him, reproaches Nietzsche for an insufficient understanding of Kant (2019: 232). Later, he contrasted *Lebensphilosophie* to Kant’s ‘morality of the categorical imperative’ which was a torment for a living human being, and embraced Fichtean and Nietzschean ‘humanistic individualism’ against universalist morality of Hegel and Schelling (310).

At the same time, Nietzsche, who provided the initial impetus to Frank’s philosophy, was rather a source of questions, but not answers. In Frank’s later philosophy, Nietzsche acted as an antagonist due to his “proclamation of bestialism” (Porus, 2012: 357), that is, the fight against God.

Frank's philosophy of culture (cultural criticism) was most vividly manifested in four works: *Ethics of Nihilism* (Vekhi, 1909), *De Profundis* (*De Profundis*, 1918), *The Crisis of Western Culture* (*Oswald Spengler and the Decline of West*, 1922), and *The Downfall of Idols* (1923).

The target of his initial criticism was the Russian intelligentsia. Their moral worldview, according to Frank, was a nihilistic moralism, the paradoxical denial of absolute (objective) values perceived as an absolute value. The Creed of a Russian *intelligent* person is "the good of the people, the satisfaction of the needs of the *majority*", absolutely hostile to theoretical, aesthetic and religious values. (Frank, 2020: 193). Frank sees the solution to this problem in the transition to *culture-creating religious humanism* (220).

The warning that Frank issued together with other *Vekhi* authors was not heard, as noted by Struve in his preface to *De Profundis* collection dedicated to the Russian revolution of 1917 (Sapov, 2009: 635). In *De Profundis*, Frank promoted his thesis of the opposition between nihilistic and religious humanism (887).

In *The Crisis of Western Culture*, Frank no longer focused his attention on the Russian intelligentsia; the object of his criticism was now the entire Western culture. By using Spengler's terminology, he contrasts the living religious principle of culture with a depressing impact of civilization (Stepun, 1923: 45). Here, he resonates with Fyodor Stepun (24) and Nikolay Berdyaev (56), his co-authors of *Oswald Spengler and the Decline of West*.

*The Downfall of the Idols* (1923), one of Frank's most significant works in general, closes this theme. Here, he talks about the fall of four idols: the idol of revolution, the idol of politics, the idol of culture, and the idol of ideas and moral idealism.

Although Frank was not greatly influenced by the first of his idols, allowing him to think but not to act radically, he nevertheless believed that "the existing political form seemed the only source of all evil" (1990: 116). Thus, he was under the influence of the idol of revolution in a much lesser degree than under the influence of the idol of politics, the belief in the possibility of evolution towards a millenarian political ideal. He was already under the influence of the idol of politics in 1905 (Frank-Norman, 1996: 438), while the idol of the revolution had fallen before him by 1896 (Frank, 1986: 111). Frank wrote that both of these idols "collapsed in our souls that were impressed by the Russian revolution" (132), while the idol of culture was destroyed by the First World War. This war proved the great European culture to be only an illusion, for the idea of unconditional progress had become a thing of the past. Frank considers culture to be not the cause of spiritual life, but its 'residue' (143).

These three idols serve as a special case for the fourth idol of ideas and moral idealism, the main idol of modern mankind (146). Frank was not a nihilist: he does not deny ideas, and he opposes a *dead* idea to a *living* God.

Frank's *Lebensphilosophie* in the context of philosophy of culture is reborn into the philosophy of religious humanism. This idea will remain relevant to Frank's thought until the end of his life. At the same time, Frank's use of religion appears not as a formal relativistic concept (for which he reproached Simmel (Frank, 2022: 100)), but as an intrinsically

valuable concept. Frank has not divided Simmel's work into periods; Simmel remained a Kantian for him (329). He calls subjectivism and relativism as borrowed from Kant as the only solid content of Simmel's mindset. He considers Goethe's spirit as absolutely alien and even hostile to Simmel. This view of Simmel has its reasons, but it should be noted that Frank oversimplifies Simmel by perceiving his philosophy exclusively through his sociological heritage while ignoring their mutual irreducibility.

The development of the theoretical *Lebensphilosophie* can be observed in the trilogy of *The Object of Knowledge* (1915), *The Human Soul* (1917), and *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* (1930). The works of the trilogy differed thematically (*The Object of Knowledge* is his epistemology, *the Human Soul* is philosophical psychology, while *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* is social philosophy).

According to Nikolay Losskiy, a prominent figure in Russian philosophical intuitionism, metaphysics can be epistemologically justified after Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* only by justifying intuitionism, which is what *The Object of Knowledge* is devoted to (1977: 161). Even the book's title is immediately opposed to Rickert's *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* and Cohens's *Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (Aliaiev, 2008: 35). In this anti-Neo-Kantian impulse, Frank finds an ally in Bergson's philosophy since Bergson attracted Frank with his non-systematic and humanistic philosophizing (Antonov, 2021: 575, 758). He also follows Bergson in solving the problem of cognitive dualism between subject and object; Gajdenko writes that "For both Bergson and Frank, intuition is a higher type of knowledge different from what the former calls analysis and the latter — abstract [rational] thinking. Both philosophers emphasize that intuition is a penetration into an object as a whole. It is experiencing it as a kind of unity in a multiplicity, merging with the object 'from the inside', rather than seeing it 'from without'" (2001: 253).

Yet, Bergson's philosophy itself repulsed Frank, who, unlike Simmel, not only noted the irrational nature of Bergson's concept of life but believed that Bergson's struggle against intellectualism led rather along the path of asserting the irrational than over-rational forces. Frank's over-rational epistemological intuitionism is assumed as a kind of third option instead of an opposition between rationality or irrationality.

*The Human Soul* is dedicated to philosophical psychology, but Frank considered this discipline to be impossible if the existence of human soul is denied. He wrote that the task of philosophical psychology is precisely the nature of a human soul as a relationship between the conscious and the subconscious and its relationship to some supra-individual being (1995: 419-420).

Frank believes that it is the irrational subconscious that is primary in mental life (480), but he does not oppose consciousness and subconsciousness. Although they can suppress each other since the mere consciousness removes 'feeling' and 'living knowledge', while the mere subconsciousness gives rise to passions and mental weakness in the highest areas of our life (i.e., spiritual life) harmony between them is possible (493-495). The subconscious could gradually pass from formless chaos to the formative power of spiritual unity (558).

Frank wrote that "Leibniz understood this best of all: the psychic life or, as he said, the inner world of the monad embraces the entire universe and even God, but reflects

or “represents” this infinity only vaguely” (507). However, unlike Leibniz, Frank does not rationalize the subconscious, and, like Goethe (Sickel, 1920: 10), criticizes Leibniz’s view that isolates monads from each other (Frank, 1995: 577-578). Social life, according to Frank, is “an expression of trans-subjectivity of experience” — a supra-individual life. The whole of spiritual life of a person is built on communication (594). Frank presented the solution of *The Human Soul* in *The Spiritual Foundations of Society*. However, the book’s intended purpose, “to raise the spiritual level of our culture” (420), became irrelevant after the fall of the idol of culture.

*The Spiritual Foundations of Society* is the distinctive part of the trilogy. It was conceived 10 years earlier, and some ideas of this book appeared in 1902-1913, before *The Object of Knowledge*, when Frank was creating his social psychology. Materials on social psychology (published by Aliaiev and Rezvykh) are incomplete since they provide only a synopsis of the system and scattered records from different years. Only one article, *The Problem of Authority* (1905), can be attributed to the completed works in this field. Here Frank, following Simmel as well as Tarde and Marx (Frank, 2019: 257), enters the realm of the philosophy of law asking the question ‘How is authority possible?’ This text is also adjoined by *The Essence of Sociology* (1909), containing a review of Simmel’s *Sociology* (1908). In general, Frank was enthusiastic about Simmel’s book calling it “The only philosophical work of idealism devoted to public life” (2020: 285). However Frank criticizes Simmel for distinguishing sociology from other social sciences and at the same time failing to differentiate inside the sociology itself (2019: 288-290). Simmel partly solved these problems later, through the introduction of the distinction between general and philosophical sociology.

Frank’s renewed interest in social issues was manifested in his social philosophy, exposed in his *Essay on the Methodology of Social Sciences* (1922), *Religious Foundations of Society* (1925), “I” and “We” (1925) (Aliaiev, 2017: 113), and *On the Phenomenology of a Social Phenomenon* (1928). The most interesting case, though, is *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* (1930).

Here, Frank borrows his ideas from Simmel’s *Sociology* (1908), contrasting them with those of Durkheim (1930a: 63-64). He proceeds from the realist attitude (characteristic of Simmel’s *Lebensphilosophie*), criticizing Kant’s practical philosophy from the same positions asserted by Simmel in *The View of Life* and earlier philosophical works (25-27). Then, Frank does what Simmel himself did not dare to, that is, combining Simmel’s sociology with his *Lebensphilosophie* in some way.

The object of Frank’s social philosophy remains the same as in Simmel’s sociology<sup>1</sup>, that is, society is not a substance, but a form of interaction between people. Here, Frank does not proceed from the nominalist point of view characteristic of Simmel’s sociology,

1. Frank’s complex relationship with Simmel is definitely felt in the theme of social psychologism. If, in 1902, Frank defined his system as social psychologism (Frank, 2006: 43) and reproached Simmel for paying little attention to a specific psychological causality of communication process (Frank, 2020, 293). Then, by 1922, according to Aliaiev and Rezvykh, Frank admits that he no longer follows the main tendency of psychologism, characteristic of his early articles (Kolerov, 2019: 393). In 1928, according to Nazarova, he reproaches Simmel for psychological relativism (Ibid.: 284). In 1930, Frank again criticizes psychologism, but referring to Simmel (Frank, 1930a: 67).



but from the realist POV. According to Frank, sociology, having found some pattern in people's interaction such as a social life, posits it but does not explain it, while the condition of this pattern is real. "Society is, therefore, a true integral reality, and not a derivative association of separate individuals; moreover, it is the only reality where a man is given to us in his concrete form" (1930a: 96).

For Frank (as well as for Simmel as a sociologist), "You" is no less obvious than "I" (and even Me is a predicate of Not-Me (You) (which will be relevant in his later works) (1990: 348), but like Simmel in his philosophy of life, Frank wished to avoid the violence of philosophy over life and focused his attention not on the formal nature of Kant's ethics, but on its own content of Kantian ethics. Unlike Simmel, Frank brings an imperative sense with concrete ethical content to his social philosophy (1930a: 104). For Frank, the source of this ethical content lies in religious faith.

Of course, such a decision by Frank is far from Kant's philosophy, from *Lebensphilosophie*, and from Simmel himself, but the main problem for *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* with this decision was that its entire content was reduced to a religious faith while the book itself was precisely philosophical and not theological in its form. Without faith, social philosophy in *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* deviates towards sociology, the philosophy of history, and the philosophy of law (the thing Frank was consciously planning to avoid in this book), and does not solve the problem posed by Frank himself. Perhaps this is the reason why later, as A. Filonenko noted, Frank particularly disliked this text; it was not supposed to be republished due to having been overcome by his later work (Frank, 2003: 12).

The task of the book, borrowed from *The Human Soul*, that is, spiritual and social renewal, was solved by Frank using the same methods that were relevant before the fall of his idols — by some faith in the progress of humanity. Therefore, *Spiritual Foundations of Society* was thematically left by Frank to the past. Moreover, it was left already in 1929 since it was written "to earn some money, while the *First Philosophy* [the first sketches for the future *Incomprehensible*] was started as a labor of love" (Kolerov, 2017: 8-10).

The trilogy is not characteristic of Frank's philosophy, not only because of its internal problem. Frank wrote "The Russian tragedy [revolution], which is violating the harmony of this plan" (1930a: 6), but also because even the first and most significant part of it is "more than the first section of Frank's philosophical trilogy, but also the first version of his integral system, which in subsequent works was subject to correction, clarification, detailing, extension" (Motroshilova, 2007: 327). This *integral system* exists in three books: *The Subject of Knowledge* (1915), the *Incomprehensible* (1939), and *Reality and Man* (1956).

Every question of the trilogy of *The Object of Knowledge* (1915), *The Human Soul* (1917), and *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* (1930) will be resolved in the philosophy of religion, *Incomprehensible*, which has no necessary basis in Frank's previous philosophical work (Antonov, 2015: 22). Although these previous works help to see the genesis of Frank's ideas (Evlampiev, 2000: 337), they have a subordinate status in the research literature, so they can be considered to be secondary branches of his philosophy.

Frank's philosophy of culture and theoretical philosophy in *Lebensphilosophie* suppressed his Kantianism as well as his Neo-Kantianism, but despite this, *Lebensphilosophie* as a tradition cannot be regarded as the final point in Frank's philosophical development.

Although *Lebensphilosophie*, along with neo-Kantianism, could be regarded as the basis for a system of pan-unity (*vseedinstvo*), the highest tradition which Frank was following in all three books was an integral Neo-platonic system of Nicolaus Cusanus and Plotinus. As P. Gajdenko points out, although Frank probably learned about the former while studying in Marburg (Porus, 2012: 114), Platonism in Frank's system is needed to suppress other philosophical systems and traditions, including neo-Kantianism and the philosophy of life.

Frank explains his over-rational solution by using two approaches, those of the internal and external.

The internal approach manifested in three negative definitions of his Platonic system of pan-unity can be found throughout all three books. The first is that pan-unity; by becoming a topic for comprehension, it "obviously must be available and attainable to us in some form" (1995: 80). Frank seeks to resolve the antinomy, and opposes his notion of Incomprehensible to Kant's things-in-themselves. The second is that pan-unity cannot be explained rationally (in the manner of Hegel or Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism). Such an artificial total unity was unacceptable for Frank (415). The third is that pan-unity cannot be explained irrationally (in the manner of Bergson) (305).

Frank therefore constantly uses the language of the authors with whom he argues. (Swoboda, 1992: 14). The comprehension of Frank's philosophy as a combination of neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* quite accurately describes his system in its first version, which was in Kantian form with *Lebensphilosophie* content. Later, Frank shifted his emphasis; the system started to seem like a deviation in the direction of Bergson and irrationalism. However, despite the fact that Frank Bergson became a new spokesman of Plotinus' and Cusanus' ideas (Frank, 1995: 205; 629), this version of Platonism could not neutralize the deviation of Frank's philosophy towards irrationalism and Bergson. Thus, despite the declared dissociation from Bergson's "irrationalism", Frank's philosophy had an obvious bias in this direction (Gajdenko, 1987: 96-113).

One way or another, any philosophical (including platonic) decision will experience a pull like this. Therefore, his Kantianism (and neo-Kantianism too) along with his *Lebensphilosophie* are Platonic (Frank, 1995: 40; 2014: 515-516). Frank overcomes this gravitation with the external solution which levels out rationalism and irrationalism not through negation, but through the negation of negation, i.e., including them in the over-rational.

Frank's trans-rational (external) solution was developed within the system of his *antinomystic monodualism*. *Monodualism* is a problem, and *antinomystic* is its solution. In any of his lifetime editions, Frank uses precisely the term *antinomystic*, not the *antinomic*, but researchers mistakenly use *antinomic* in author's contemporary editions. However, Frank's antinomy is related not to Protestant antinomianism, but is a play on words *antinomic* and *mystical*. Antinomy is the problem, and the mystical is the solution.

This mysticism apparently only brings Frank closer to Bergson and irrationalism, as well as to *Lebensphilosophie* as a system since it dwells in this mysticism in its purest and deepest sense, namely what Goethe probably had in mind.

To a greater extent, for Frank, Bergson becomes a new spokesman for Goethe (Netercott, 2008: 226). Frank brought *Personality and Thing* (1908) to completion with the phrase: “The works of William Stern, Bergson, and some other signs indicate that at present a new, still few in number, but already rich in strength army is being assembled, the general plan of which may most likely be an expressed desire for the spiritual universality of Goethe” (2020: 134). In 1910, Frank added that a single Goethe’s aphorism contains the whole of Bergson’s ‘philosophy of action’ (436).

It is worth it to note that Frank concluded his ‘most Kantian work’ (1904) with almost the same words: “Goethe put forward the requirement that everyone should consider their life as a work of art (das Leben — ein Kunstwerk) ... and it is this principle that suggests itself as a general inference from the philosophy of critical idealism outlined by us” (2018: 250). Already in his most Kantian work, Frank departs from Kant to Goethe. A little later, Frank countered Schiller’s Kantian-Fichtean philosophy (in the spirit of Windelband’s *Aus Goethes Philosophie*) with Goethe’s Spinozian objectivism in favor of the latter (2019: 300-303).

For Frank, Goethe’s thought, and, to a significant extent, Goethe himself, was the essence of his *Lebensphilosophie* as pan-unity; Simmel would write that “... That mysterious oneness of all existence which philosophy has forever been trying to come close to” (2007: 186). Here Frank coincided with Simmel (1932: 82). Goethe, having become the main event of Frank’s intellectual life in 1908 (2001: 456) “helped to realize his basic philosophical intuition” (Elen, 2012: 22). This intuition remained relevant for him until the end of his life.

Frank’s mystical decision makes his system not only purely philosophical but theological as well. It emerges in *Incomprehensible* and gains momentum in *Reality and Man*. Therefore, Frank criticized *The Object of Knowledge* in 1944 for being excessively systematic (Antonov, 2021: 713). This a-systemic mystical motive eventually led him to Vladimir Solovyov (Frank, 2009: 5), whom he previously considered to be rather a theologian than a philosopher (1930b: 112).

Although both solutions are present in all three books, the system has gravitated more towards an external solution over the years. In this external solution, Frank’s system suppressed Kantianism and approached *Lebensphilosophie* in its a-systemic version. This is a rejection of formalism in philosophy in favor of philosophy itself and of the pursuit of wisdom.

The fate of Frank’s legacy is reminiscent of that of Leibniz: he translated his system into various philosophical languages to explain it. While these translations helped him to write his system into a general research field, it de-hierarchized his legacy. He felt the danger from such a perception of his thought and began to move away from the system.

## V

Simmel and Frank, as the seminal thinkers of Europe in the first half of the 20th century, acutely felt the crisis of philosophy and culture in trying to overcome it.

The Kantian turn brought about by Simmel did not only have an intrinsic value. It not only became the starting point of formal sociology but also stimulated one of the most important projects in the history of sociology, that of Max Weber. Frank's philosophical system, albeit not immediately, became one of the most important works in the history of Russian religious philosophy, an unattainable synthesis of Russian religious thought (in the footsteps of the great Russian writers Dostoevsky and Tolstoy) with the centuries-old traditions of European philosophy.

Realizing the significance of their achievements, Simmel and Frank turned these pages of their lives and moved from the abstractions of science to *Lebensphilosophie*. This step was not evidence of cowardice or fatigue, but, on the contrary, of a deep understanding of comprehensible human crisis along with the desire to overcome it by giving its deepest substantial content back to philosophy, that is, wisdom itself as a unity without which philosophy would turn into empty formalism.

Simmel and Frank (like many other *Lebensphilosophen*) found one of the causes for the decline of the West in systematic philosophy in general, and particularly in Kant. However, to a greater extent, the opposition of *Lebensphilosophie* to the Kantianism philosophy was caused not by Kant's philosophy itself, but by the view of it as a system that violates life, and promoted by *Lebensphilosophen*. Although Kant immediately touched upon the concept of *Leben* in *The Critique of Judgment*, he was far from understanding life as an inert matter (Molina, 2010: 24).

The whole of Kant's critical philosophy is not very suitable to be defined as the systematic philosophy that the *Lebensphilosophen* have outlined for us. Kant's system is metaphysics-destroying formalism; the declared goal of all three *Critiques* was to narrow the boundaries of knowledge to adequate ones, to those that can really be known.

This absence of claims as to what is not subject to knowledge brings Kant's philosophy closer to *Lebensphilosophie*.

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## Георг Зиммель и Семен Франк: от Канта к философии жизни Беграмбеков Александр

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Наследие Георга Зиммеля четко дифференцируется на социологические и философские произведения, поэтому исследователи практически не пересекаются со своими коллегами, занимающимися другой сферой интересов. Однако и сам Зиммель в этих дисциплинах проявлял себя по-разному. Это особенно ощущается в контексте его отношения к Канту. Его социология, более актуальная до 1908 года, ведет к Канту, а его философия (философия жизни), которая получила развитие после 1908 года, противопоставляется Канту. Наше исследование направлено на объяснение этой дихотомии.

Многие мыслители ушли от Канта к философии жизни. Таковым был и Семен Франк, ученик Зиммеля, судьба которого во многом схожа с судьбой учителя. Франк слушал его лекции в 1898 году, переводил и рецензировал его произведения, писал о нем в собственных очерках, так что среди зарубежных современников Франка сложно найти фигуру, оказавшую на него более значительное влияние, чем Зиммель.

Во многих отношениях Франк был русским двойником Зиммеля: оба крещеные евреи в христианских странах; оба прошли через школу противоречивых мнений, во многом фатальных для их судьбы; оба были изгнанниками; несмотря на их научную плодовитость и значимость их трудов, обладали неустойчивым академическим статусом, впрочем, высоко ценились коллегами.

Франк — хорошо известная фигура в русской религиозной философии, но его философия в контексте пути от кантианства к философии жизни изучена недостаточно. Это исследование также направлено на восполнение этого пробела и открытие Франка читателям Зиммеля.

*Ключевые слова:* Зиммель, Франк, кантианство, философия жизни, Гете, Россия