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The Possibility of Cosmopolitan Philosophy: Integrating Ontologism and Phenomenological Hermeneutics Within a Post-Foundationalist Framework

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Abstract: This paper examines the intellectual crises of (post-)modern philosophy, proposing a cosmopolitan philosophy as a remedy for the philosophical fragmentation that has contributed to global intellectual and cultural disintegration. Drawing on the ontological framework of Semyon Frank and enriched by Henry Corbin's comparative philosophy and phenomenological hermeneutics, the paper establishes a new foundation for constructing a cosmopolitan philosophy within a post-foundationalist framework. Frank's concept of "All-Unity" offers a metaphysical basis that reconciles the universal with the particular, resolving the antinomies of universality versus singularity and historicity versus non-historicity as foundational conditions of the possibility for this philosophy. Corbin's focus on intuition and the imaginal realm further deepens this approach, enabling the integration of diverse intellectual traditions while honoring their unique and particular contributions. This paper argues that cosmopolitan philosophy can provide a coherent framework for engaging with the complexities of global thought and diverse intellectual traditions, offering a foundation for mutual understanding and addressing the existential crises of contemporary life.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism; comparative philosophy; ontologism; intuition; post-foundationalism; All-Unity; Semyon Frank

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, the world faces unprecedented global crises that are not only material but deeply intellectual. From environmental degradation and socio-political instability to cultural fragmentation and the erosion of communal values, these crises are rooted in a deeper philosophical problem: the fragmentation of thought and the breakdown of unified frameworks for understanding the human being and the world as an integrated whole and unified Being. The philosophical tradition that once offered a coherent worldview, capable of addressing both the metaphysical and practical concerns of human life, has splintered under the weight of modernity's emphasis on specialization, logical and formal purifications and critique, and individualism [1] (p. 9). The human world has undergone profound transformations, and the pace of these changes has drastically accelerated. However, our cognitive foundations and intellectual frameworks, including philosophy, have not evolved in accordance with this rapid scale and magnitude of change [2] (pp. 1–3). This crisis of philosophy has profound implications for contemporary life, as it leaves humanity without a solid intellectual foundation to address the challenges of an increasingly interconnected, indeterminate, and pluralistic world [3] (p. 43).

Modern philosophy, which emerged as a response to the perceived limitations of classical and medieval thought in Western Europe, sought to ground knowledge and ethics in (immanent and critical) reason and empirical observation, moving away from metaphysical speculation [4] (p. 17). The Enlightenment promised a universal, rational order, yet this project eventually led to a fragmentation of knowledge into isolated disciplines, each claiming its own domain of authority [5] (p. 94). This intellectual disintegration mirrors the social and political disintegration of our globalized world, where the lack of shared values and common goals makes collective understanding and action increasingly difficult [6] (p. 23). Today, the dominant intellectual currents of postmodernism, relativism, cultural and religious exceptionalism, and nihilism reflect a world in which universal truths have been abandoned, and philosophical inquiry seems incapable of offering coherent solutions to the crises we face [7] (p. 73).

The need for a new philosophical approach is urgent—one that can transcend the limitations of philosophy in both modernity and postmodernity and offer a coherent framework for addressing the complexities of a globalized, indeterminate, pluralistic world [8] (p. 27). This paper advocates for the development of a cosmopolitan philosophy rooted in the ontological framework of Russian philosopher Semyon Frank, whose metaphysical approach provides a means to reconcile the fragmentation of modern thought and reason [9] (p. 260). This framework is further enriched by the comparative philosophical approach and method of Henry Corbin, whose work offers a way of engaging with diverse intellectual traditions within a comparative and cosmopolitan context [10]. This articulation will also be situated within the framework of post-foundational philosophy, contributing to the construction of a cosmopolitan philosophy.

This paper argues that the conditions for a cosmopolitan philosophy can be established through the ontological framework of Semyon Frank, particularly his concept of "All-Unity", which provides a philosophical foundation capable of transcending the fragmentation inherent in modern intellectual constructs [11] (pp. 28–47), [12]. Frank's philosophy reasserts the importance of a coherent, unified reality that reconciles the universal with the particular, without reducing either to abstraction. This metaphysical grounding forms the basis for a cosmopolitan worldview that navigates the complexities of cultural pluralism and the interactions of diverse intellectual traditions in the current cosmopolitanized world. Complementing Frank's framework is the comparative philosophy of Henry Corbin, a scholar of Islamic mysticism, whose hermeneutic phenomenology emphasizes the role of intuition and spiritual insight in philosophical inquiry [10]. Corbin's methods facilitate engagement with diverse philosophical traditions, particularly those outside the Western canon, allowing for the construction of a cosmopolitan philosophy that respects cultural differences while grounding them in a shared ontological reality. Together, Frank's ontologism and Corbin's comparative philosophy, when situated within the context of post-foundational philosophy, can provide a robust and coherent framework for addressing the intellectual challenges posed by the increasingly complex global interactions and engagements between diverse intellectual traditions.

This paper begins by analyzing the intellectual crises of modernity and postmodernity, underscoring the urgent need for a cosmopolitan philosophy. It then philosophically frames the conditions for the possibility of such a cosmopolitan philosophy by introducing a series of antinomies and key philosophical challenges. Following this, Semyon Frank's ontologism, particularly his concept of "All-Unity", is explored as a potential foundation for cosmopolitan philosophy. The fourth Section examines Henry Corbin's comparative philosophy, phenomenological hermeneutics, and intuition, exploring their relevance to constructing a cosmopolitan philosophy. Corbin's distinctive conception of comparative philosophy is then integrated with Frank's ontologism to formulate an

integrated cosmopolitan philosophy. The paper concludes by outlining a methodology based on the idea of cosmopolitan philosophy, capable of engaging with diverse philosophical traditions and providing a pathway for future philosophical inquiry. Finally, this methodology is applied to the concept of the Perfect Human, analyzing it across various intellectual traditions.

2. Modernity and the Crisis of Philosophy

The intellectual history of modernity, from the Enlightenment onward, represents a dramatic departure from the classical and medieval traditions that once grounded philosophy in metaphysical inquiry and a unified conception of truth. Enlightenment philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Kant aimed to establish a new philosophical foundation, one based on reason and empirical observation rather than tradition, religious authority, or metaphysical speculation [4,13,14]. The Enlightenment project was animated by confidence in the power of human reason to uncover universal truths and create a rational order in both thought and society. However, this confidence in reason, which initially appeared as a promising liberation from the intellectual constraints of the past, eventually revealed its own limitations. As Leo Strauss argued, the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and scientific inquiry led to the erosion of the very metaphysical foundations that had sustained philosophical inquiry for millennia [1]. By detaching knowledge from its metaphysical roots, modern philosophy undermined the pursuit of wisdom in favor of specialized domains of inquiry, leading to a profound fragmentation of thought and rationality [5].

Strauss's critique of modernity focuses on how this shift led to the rise of historicism, the idea that all knowledge is historically contingent and that universal truths are unattainable [1]. Historicism, Strauss argues, marks the decisive break with the classical conception of philosophy, which sought to engage with eternal questions about the nature of being, the good, and the just. By contrast, modern philosophy, in its quest for certainty and method, shifted its focus from these ultimate questions to the problems of epistemology and methodology. The Enlightenment's universalism, which claimed to offer a rational foundation for knowledge and ethics, was ultimately deconstructed by the very tools of critique that it had helped to develop [5]. The rise of critical reason and skepticism, particularly in the works of thinkers like Hume and Nietzsche, revealed the internal contradictions of modern philosophy, as reason itself became the object of relentless critique [1,15,16]. Meanwhile, this immanent Enlightenment rationality, with its claim to universality, began to criticize and destroy other intellectual traditions—both within the West and non-Western philosophical, intellectual, and cultural traditions—labeling them as irrational, non-modern, or inhuman. In a totalitarian manner, it either eradicated or disciplined alternative perspectives and other capacities [2].

However, this trajectory was accompanied by a fragmentation and atomization of reason and philosophy itself. The fragmentation of philosophy, which Strauss saw as the culmination of modernity's intellectual trajectory, had profound consequences for the role of philosophy in public life. Once the unifying force behind cultural and moral order, philosophy became increasingly isolated from practical concerns and disconnected from the existential questions that animate human life. The rise of positivism in the 19th and 20th centuries, with its emphasis on empirical verification, analytical and logical purification, and the scientific method, further contributed to this disintegration by reducing philosophical inquiry to a series of technical, formal, and analytical problems divorced from metaphysical or ethical reflection [16]. In this context, philosophy lost its central role in guiding human action and became merely one among many specialized disciplines, incapable of addressing the broader crises of meaning and value that pervade modern life [17,18].

Even totalizing and universalist historicisms such as that of Hegel—which were essentially secularized and rationalized versions of Christian theological metaphysics and grounded in a particular conception of modern rationality claimed to be valid for all of humanity beyond its differences—also contributed decisively to the modern crisis of philosophy. In Hegel's system, history is not merely a sequence of contingent events but the dialectical unfolding of the Absolute Spirit (Geist) through a rational process of self-recognition and reconciliation [19]. This project, most fully articulated in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* [19] and *The Philosophy of History* [20], posits a metaphysical teleology in which cultural and philosophical differences are ultimately subsumed into a universal trajectory culminating in European modernity. While Hegel's speculative method aimed to reconcile subject and object, freedom and necessity, and particular and universal, it did so by imposing a structural hierarchy upon historical development that implicitly marginalized or instrumentalized non-Western traditions [19,20]. Non-European civilizations were either treated as precursors to Western rationality or excluded from history proper, a move that masked philosophical imperialism under the guise of metaphysical necessity. This internalization of universality into the logic of Spirit rendered true alterity unintelligible unless it could be dialectically mediated and resolved within Hegel's system [19]. In this sense, Hegel's universalism, far from offering a genuinely pluralistic account of reason or being, installed a totalizing metaphysical logic that continued the theological structure of Christian eschatology in secular form—one in which otherness was permitted only insofar as it was destined to be aufgehoben (sublated) [19]. This model of rational history not only flattened cultural difference but also foreclosed the possibility of genuinely dialogical philosophical pluralism. Rather than grounding intercultural intelligibility in shared metaphysical depth, Hegel's system represents a closure of metaphysics into historicist determinism, where freedom is real only to the extent that it conforms to the telos of Spirit [19,20]. As such, Hegelian historicism exemplifies the modern ambition to domesticate alterity and difference through an ostensibly rational, foundationalist, and universal philosophical architecture—an ambition that, as this paper argues, must be rethought from a post-foundational metaphysical standpoint. However, the main issue was that the very encounter with Enlightenment rationality—as seen in many philosophies rooted in Hegelian thought—and the critical responses to its universal, foundationalist, and ahistorical reading of historicism (i.e., the philosophical critiques of the Hegelian project), while further demystifying the metaphysical foundations and dynamism of Enlightenment philosophy, ultimately intensified the emergence of alternative philosophical currents that, in turn, increasingly contributed to the fragmentation of Enlightenment reason and the erosion of its efficacy.

The fragmentation of philosophy in the modern era culminated in what can be termed a "philosophical crisis"—a crisis that continues to shape contemporary thought. Central to this crisis is the breakdown of universal truth, which has given way to relativism, exceptionalism, nihilism, and the disintegration of coherent moral and intellectual frameworks [1,7,16]. The Enlightenment's project of grounding knowledge in reason was, as Strauss points out, inherently unstable. Its emphasis on critical reason led to a relentless questioning of all foundations, including the very idea of reason itself. Nietzsche's radical critique of Enlightenment rationality, with his proclamation of the "death of God", epitomized the crisis of modernity. By declaring the end of metaphysical certainties, Nietzsche exposed the underlying will to power that, in his view, drove the pursuit of knowledge and morality in the modern age [16]. His critique laid bare the nihilistic consequences of modernity's rejection of transcendent values, a theme that would be further explored by existentialist and postmodern thinkers [7].

This internal unraveling of Enlightenment rationality, already latent in Hegel's speculative totalism, was pushed to its most radical consequences by Nietzsche. Unlike Hegel,

whose system preserved the metaphysical scaffolding of history and reason, Nietzsche confronted modern philosophy with a devastating genealogical critique. As mentioned, he dismantled the Enlightenment's belief in the neutrality and autonomy of reason by revealing its concealed theological inheritance and its sublimated will to power. Enlightenment ideals—truth, progress, morality—were not, for Nietzsche, universal achievements of reason but reconstituted forms of Christian ressentiment, disguised as emancipatory discourse. In *The Gay Science* [16] and *On the Genealogy of Morality* [21], Nietzsche showed that the Enlightenment's repudiation of metaphysics had not eliminated value but had hollowed it out, leaving behind a moralized will to truth whose authority it could no longer justify. By exposing the Enlightenment's secular universals as historically contingent and psychologically reactive constructions, Nietzsche laid the groundwork for what he called the "death of God"—the collapse not only of religious metaphysics but of the entire structure of meaning, value, and knowledge rooted in transcendence [16]. In place of foundational certainties, Nietzsche left the abyss of nihilism: the recognition that all interpretive frameworks are perspectival and that no single claim to truth can be ontologically privileged [21]. The outcome, Nietzsche warned, was not progress but disintegration: a cultural exhaustion in which philosophy, having abolished its metaphysical bearings, collapsed into skepticism, irony, and ressentiment. It is precisely this diagnosis of meaning's disintegration, emerging from within the Enlightenment itself, that forces philosophy to confront its deepest crisis—one that could no longer be solved through epistemological adjustment, but demanded a radical rethinking of the metaphysical foundations of philosophical inquiry.

Postmodern philosophy, following Nietzsche, dismantled the very notion of stable meaning and truth. Thinkers like Derrida and Foucault deconstructed the metaphysical assumptions that underpin Western philosophy, arguing that truth is not something to be discovered but rather something constructed through language, power, and history [7,22]. In this intellectual climate, the pursuit of universal truths was replaced by a focus on contingency, difference, and plurality. The result was a proliferation of competing perspectives, none of which could claim ultimate authority. Relativism became the dominant ethos—not only in philosophy but also in broader cultural and political discourse—through various forms of post-ism. This relativism, while offering a critique of the totalizing tendencies of Enlightenment rationality, also led to a form of nihilism in which the very possibility of meaning, foundation, and coherence was called into question [23]. Strauss saw this as the inevitable outcome of modern philosophy's turn away from the classical tradition, which had sought to engage with the eternal questions of human existence through a rational inquiry into the nature of being and the good [1].

This philosophical crisis has profound implications for both individuals and societies. Without a stable foundation for knowledge or ethics, philosophy loses its ability to guide human life in a meaningful way. The collapse of universal truth leaves individuals adrift in a sea of competing values and perspectives, unable to find a coherent framework for making sense of the world [3]. At the societal level, the loss of shared values undermines the possibility of collective action and contributes to the fragmentation and disintegration of public life [24]. This is the intellectual landscape in which contemporary philosophy must operate, a landscape characterized by profound uncertainty, indeterminacy, and a deep sense of crisis.

One of the most significant contemporary manifestations of this relativism and the crisis of foundation is the emergence of new currents of exceptionalism in the modern world. This includes the reinvention—or, more accurately, the invention—of a new form of exceptionalism within Russian thought in the post-Soviet era, the global resurgence of far-right movements from Latin America to East Asia, and from Europe to North America, prominently exemplified by Trumpism and the slogan "Make America Great Again" in

the United States. Additionally, the revival of reactionary, ethnic, or religious nationalisms across Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East also symbolizes this profound philosophical crisis and reflects a form of aggressive and reactionary relativism in contemporary times. Contemporary humanity is living in a time when it faces global and transnational mega-challenges that profoundly threaten its existence; a time when, more than ever before, life and human relations have become fundamentally interconnected and enmeshed in a global entanglement; a time when national entities and states are no longer capable of confronting these threats and challenges; and a time when the imperative for global cooperation, solidarity, and mutual assistance is at its peak—yet paradoxically, greater emphasis than ever is placed on divisions, separations, and hostilities. Yes, the logic of progress in Enlightenment thought is rooted in deep competition, but the very advances of modernity and progress and Individual well-being—in economy, science, and technology—have also produced side effects that have now become globalized [25,26], confronting humanity with unprecedented challenges that transcend the boundaries of cultural particularities and nation-states—authoritarian constructs born from within Enlightenment rationality and Western European modernity—which have obliterated the rich indigenous diversity and pluralism of human societies, formed over centuries in coexistence with nature, in favor of artificial constructs enclosed within bounded domains and governed by a new totalizing logic of identity and difference [27,28].

The intellectual crises of modernity and postmodernity have significant implications for the development of a coherent cosmopolitan philosophy. Cosmopolitanism, by its very nature, seeks to balance universal principles with respect for cultural and historical particularities. However, the fragmentation of philosophy and the rise of relativism have made this balance increasingly difficult to achieve [6]. Without a firm philosophical foundation that can reconcile the diversity of perspectives with a universal framework, cosmopolitanism risks becoming either an abstract ideal with little practical relevance or a fragmented discourse that fails to address the global crises facing humanity [8].

Critique of modernity by scholars like Strauss underscores the difficulty of constructing a cosmopolitan philosophy in the absence of shared values and universal principles. In a world where relativism and exceptionalism reign, the very idea of a universal cosmopolitan ethos becomes problematic. If all values are historically contingent and culturally relative, then the possibility of developing a coherent cosmopolitan philosophy that can address the challenges of globalization and cultural pluralism seems remote [1]. Cosmopolitanism, in this context, risks devolving into a kind of moral and intellectual paralysis, unable to offer meaningful guidance in the face of global crises.

However, the need for a cosmopolitan philosophy has never been more urgent. The challenges of globalization, from environmental degradation to economic inequality, from reactionary resistance to regional and global wars and rivalries, demand a philosophical response capable of navigating the complexities of pluralism without succumbing to relativism. The task of contemporary philosophy, then, is to find a way to reconcile the universal and the particular, to construct a framework that can accommodate the diversity of human cultures and experiences while also providing a coherent vision of the common good [6]. In recent decades, numerous intellectual efforts have been made to construct a global philosophy, both to shape a philosophical framework suited to the newly globalized world and to facilitate dialog among diverse intellectual and philosophical traditions beyond the totalitarian nature of modern philosophy [8]. However, the crucial point is that designing a universal and global philosophy is, above all, a philosophical and logical challenge. In the next Section, the paper will critically review the existing efforts in this field and analytically explore the conditions for the possibility of a cosmopolitan

philosophy, addressing some of the key issues, predicaments, and antinomies involved in its construction.

3. The Condition of the Possibility of Cosmopolitan Philosophy

Cosmopolitan philosophy, at its core, addresses a fundamental philosophical issue: the possibility of constructing a framework that acknowledges and legitimizes the diverse intellectual, philosophical, and cultural traditions that characterize humanity, while simultaneously relating them to a universal foundation. This task is not merely about aggregating different philosophical perspectives but requires positioning them in relation to each other and to a higher ontological level that transcends their singularities. Therefore, cosmopolitanism, as understood in this context, is not simply a summation of particular traditions but rather a philosophical stance that seeks to encompass these traditions within a universal structure that respects their unique contributions while situating them within a broader, unified framework [6] (pp. 14–16).

Efforts to globalize philosophy through frameworks such as World Philosophy, Intercultural Philosophy, and Transnational Philosophy reveal deep conceptual tensions that often remain unexamined within their methodological architecture. World Philosophy, for instance, typically advances the ideal of a universal intellectual synthesis by juxtaposing philosophical systems from disparate cultural traditions. While this gesture appears inclusive, it frequently proceeds by abstracting from the metaphysical depth of these systems in order to render them comparable within a predefined schema of "rational discourse". In doing so, it risks instrumentalizing diversity under the guise of unity, reducing ontological alterity to epistemic compatibility. As Dussel warns, this form of synthetic universality often masks a subtle coloniality of knowledge, whereby non-Western philosophies are invited into dialog only insofar as they conform to the norms of modern philosophical reason [29] (p. 35). The result is less a true synthesis than a conceptual domestication—one that preserves hegemonic structures while gesturing toward pluralism.

Intercultural and Transnational Philosophies have emerged in part as correctives to the universalizing tendencies of World Philosophy, yet they each contain unresolved conceptual tensions that undermine their capacity to serve as fully coherent frameworks. Intercultural Philosophy, as articulated by Yousefi and Mall [30], rightly centers on the preservation of cultural specificity and epistemic diversity. Their notion of dialog as a bridge between philosophical traditions emphasizes respect for difference and pluralism. However, this emphasis often slides into a descriptive tolerance rather than a constructive metaphysical engagement. While they stress the need for cross-cultural understanding and the importance of resisting epistemic hegemony, their framework lacks the ontological infrastructure necessary to sustain such dialog beyond ethical goodwill. In particular, their model defers the challenge of philosophical incommensurability to a vague commitment to dialogical ethics without addressing how radically divergent metaphysical systems can be placed in relation without presupposing an empty proceduralism or thin moral universalism. Their notion of "intercultural competence" as a pedagogical and practical virtue, while valuable, remains epistemologically surface-level—it promotes the conditions of communication without supplying the metaphysical grammar that would make intercultural understanding philosophically rigorous. As a result, the dialogical structure they propose often appears normatively admirable but ontologically evasive, and thus susceptible to what could be called an ethical relativism wrapped in rhetorical universality [30] (pp. 102–107).

This conceptual deficiency becomes even more apparent when placed alongside Niels Weidtmann's [31] contribution to intercultural philosophy, specifically his model of polylogue and the phenomenology of the in-between (Zwischen). Weidtmann [31] (pp. 7–22)

aims to mediate between the extremes of universalist reductionism and relativist isolationism by introducing an open-ended, dialogical model grounded in the phenomenological experience of intercultural liminality. Yet this very openness—designed as a safeguard against hegemonic assimilation—ends up reinforcing a deeper epistemic and ontological indeterminacy. By suspending any appeal to shared metaphysical grounds, Weidtmann's [31] model risks becoming a philosophy of perpetual postponement: one that valorizes dialogical encounters while leaving unresolved the fundamental problem of how differing ontological worlds can meaningfully relate to one another. The "in-between" becomes not a generative metaphysical space, but a hermeneutic limbo, where traditions circulate in an interpretive orbit without existential contact. The problem here is not the absence of closure, but the absence of metaphysical relationality. Weidtmann's [31] reluctance to articulate a unifying ontological horizon, while rooted in an ethical commitment to pluralism, results in what might be called a paralytic pluralism: one in which difference is preserved but never integrated, affirmed but never transformed. His polylogue, intended to resist domination, instead becomes a theatre of disjunction—where philosophical voices speak past one another under the pretense of dialogical engagement. Moreover, his critique of rationalist universality inadvertently leads to a retreat into hermeneutic particularism, which lacks the conceptual resources to address ontological mutuality without collapsing into soft relativism. In this respect, Weidtmann [31], like Yousefi and Mall [30], leaves the central question of metaphysical universality unthought. What both frameworks evade—albeit for different reasons—is the deeper philosophical demand to reconceptualize universality non-hegemonically: not as a totalizing sameness, but as a metaphysical condition for the intelligibility of difference itself. Absent this horizon, both projects risk reducing intercultural philosophy to a descriptive anthropology of viewpoints, rather than advancing a truly integrative philosophical undertaking.

Within this line of inquiry in intercultural philosophy, Georg Stenger [32] introduces an alternative framework that emphasizes the experiential and phenomenological foundations of intercultural understanding. At first glance, Stenger's [32] contribution appears to mark a shift from mere dialogical openness to a more grounded engagement with what he terms "Grunderfahrung"—a foundational mode of experiencing world(s) across cultures. Unlike Weidtmann's [31] phenomenology of the "Zwischen", which privileges liminality without metaphysical cohesion, Stenger aims to ground intercultural dialog in a shared existential structure: the constitutive world-character of experience itself [32] (pp. 19–29). By emphasizing that all experience is already "world-forming", Stenger seeks to bypass both relativism and universalism by relocating their tension within the lived structures of intercultural encounters. However, this move is not without its problems. For although Stenger calls for a "plurality of worlds" rooted in the phenomenology of culturally situated Grunderfahrung, he does not offer a robust account of how these phenomenological worlds might relate ontologically. The emphasis remains on world-formation as a subjective horizon rather than a metaphysical condition. Consequently, his proposal risks lapsing into what might be termed an "existential particularism": the reduction of interculturality to co-experiencing rather than co-being—a phenomenological coexistence without ontological integration. Moreover, Stenger's critique of the universalism/relativism binary [32]—while incisive in its diagnosis of their mutual presuppositions—ultimately fails to supply a viable alternative for metaphysical synthesis. He rightly observes that both positions implicitly rely on the other: that relativism presupposes universal intelligibility, and that universalism requires the particularity it seeks to subsume. Yet instead of working toward a reformulation of metaphysical universality that might honor this relational entanglement, Stenger retreats into a pluralist rhetoric of "fruitful difference" and "intermundaneity" [32] This vocabulary gestures toward a deeper metaphysical logic of mutual constitution, but

never explicitly develops it. His model remains committed to phenomenological experience as the site of intercultural meaning, but fails to transcend the hermeneutic horizon of interpretation. What is lacking is a philosophical grammar capable of moving from experience to ontology—from the phenomenology of world-formation to the metaphysics of world-relation. Without this, his vision [32]—like that of Weidtmann [31] and Yousefi and Mall [30]—ultimately stalls at the threshold of metaphysical encounter, leaving the task of philosophical integration unmet. Stenger's valuable insights into the "world-character of experience" and the dialogical nature of "intermundaneity" remain bound within an epistemological frame, insufficient for the ontological labor required to articulate a rigorous and coherent account of intercultural philosophy. His approach critiques existing dichotomies, but stops short of providing a non-reductive metaphysical framework within which intercultural differences can be both respected and related.

Meanwhile, Transnational Philosophy, as examined by Ma and Van Brakel [33], attempts to circumvent both relativism and universalism by focusing on philosophical concerns that transcend national and cultural boundaries—such as justice, personhood, or ecology. However, its emphasis on thematic convergence and socio-political urgency often leads to a flattening of the ontological depth that grounds traditions in their symbolic, spiritual, and metaphysical life-worlds. The transnational approach, in prioritizing inter-contextual relevance, frequently sidelines the very ontological irreducibility that gives each tradition its philosophical power. In this way, it risks constructing a pragmatic but metaphysically thin framework that is unfit to sustain the profound existential and epistemological pluralism it seeks to honor [33] (pp. 300–311).

Even within the Enlightenment, diverse projects with varying conceptions of cosmopolitanism sought to develop a distinct philosophical framework grounded in the idea of the cosmopolitan. The most prominent of these is the cosmopolitanism formulated by Immanuel Kant. Kant's notion of Weltbürgerrecht (cosmopolitan right), developed in *Perpetual Peace* [34] and grounded in the moral universalism of the categorical imperative, constructs cosmopolitanism as an extension of juridical rationality—an ideal of peaceful coexistence predicated on the regulative principles of reason. While visionary in its advocacy for global legal norms and universal human dignity, Kant's framework ultimately remains tethered to a transcendental conception of reason that is both historically abstract and epistemologically exclusionary. The Kantian subject—autonomous, rational, and morally self-legislating—is not only a normative ideal but also a culturally saturated construct, implicitly modeled on a European conception of reason and political subjectivity. As such, Kant's cosmopolitanism universalizes a particular epistemic form while excluding the ontological and historical alterity of non-Western traditions. This paradox is evident in his anthropological writings, where non-European peoples are often rendered as "not yet" rational or cosmopolitan, thereby positioning them as philosophical others in need of development or tutelage [35] (pp. 62–96). In this way, Kant's cosmopolitan ideal—though nominally inclusive—reproduces a civilizational hierarchy that mirrors the very metaphysical absolutism it seeks to transcend. The deeper philosophical issue, however, lies in the structure of Kant's moral metaphysics itself: its abstraction from lived historical conditions and its refusal to acknowledge the plurality of ontological worldviews as legitimate sources of cosmopolitan reason.

However, the primary challenge for cosmopolitan philosophy is to move beyond these intellectual predicaments and confront the deeper philosophical problem: Can a framework be developed that both acknowledges the singularity of individual traditions and integrates them into a universal structure without reducing them to mere historical or cultural artifacts? This question brings us to the epistemological challenges inherent in cosmopolitan philosophy, particularly the antinomies that have shaped philosophical

discourse on the possibility of such a philosophy. In this sense, it becomes clear that the very formulation of a cosmopolitan philosophy is itself a philosophical endeavor—a point that has often been overlooked in many of the efforts mentioned above.

From the horizon of the condition of the possibility, the construction of cosmopolitan philosophy must engage with and ultimately overcome two central philosophical antinomies: universality versus singularity and historicity versus non-historicity. These antinomies represent the fundamental tensions that any cosmopolitan philosophy must address if it is to offer a coherent and comprehensive framework.

The first antinomy, universality versus singularity, grapples with the tension between the aspiration for universal truths and foundations that apply to all of humanity and the recognition that philosophical traditions are often deeply embedded in specific cultural, historical, and intellectual contexts [2] (pp. 5–8). In the modern era, with the rise of modern reason, philosophy sought to establish a universal foundation for knowledge based on immanent reason, which claimed to offer an objective and rational basis for understanding the world [36] (pp. 150, 230–235). However, this universalism often operated by excluding other forms of knowledge—such as religious, mystical, or non-Western traditions—labeling them as irrational, non-modern, or unscientific [37] (pp. 4–6, 23). This exclusionary form of universalism imposed a particular conception of reason that marginalized alternative epistemologies and created a narrow definition of what constitutes valid knowledge.

In response to this narrow universalism, various forms of historicism, singularism, culturalism, and exceptionalism emerged, challenging the very notion of universal truth. These critiques often led to non-foundationalist and anti-foundationalist (in the sense of rejecting any foundation for knowledge and truth) approaches, which rejected the possibility of universal principles altogether [38] (pp. 32, 89–92). In these perspectives, philosophical traditions are seen as historically contingent and culturally specific, with no overarching framework and foundation to integrate them. This extreme historicism suspends the idea of a universal philosophy, leading to a fragmented intellectual landscape where multiple and singular truths coexist without any means of reconciling them, which subsequently leads to a radical relativism and nihilism of abyss and groundlessness.

The second antinomy, historicity versus non-historicity, further complicates the philosophical terrain. Historicism asserts that all ideas and philosophies are products of their specific historical and cultural contexts, thereby undermining the possibility of trans-historical truths [2] (p. 5). According to this view, philosophical traditions cannot be meaningfully compared or integrated because they are incommensurable, each bound to its own historical moment [23] (pp. 41, 65–68). On the other hand, rejecting historicity in favor of a purely non-historical, abstract conception of philosophy risks detaching philosophical inquiry from the lived realities of human experience, rendering it irrelevant to the cultural and historical contexts that shape thought and human culture.

Cosmopolitan philosophy must navigate these antinomies by finding a way to integrate the particularities of diverse traditions within a universal framework that does not erase their distinctiveness. In modern epistemology, one way to approach these two antinomies is to reinterpret them through the lens of the problem of foundation in epistemic constructs and to elevate them into the more fundamental antinomy between foundationalism and anti- (or non-) foundationalism. The problem of foundation concerns whether truth requires a solid, external, and fully established foundation, or whether it ultimately lacks any stable and universal foundation [2,27]. In foundationalism, a pre-given and fully formed foundation is presumed to exist beyond epistemic constructs, serving as the basis for both knowledge and the truthfulness of those constructs. This foundation is understood as trans-historical and universal, and grasping it is considered a necessary precondition for understanding whether epistemic constructs are true or false. Throughout the history of

philosophy, a variety of such trans-historical foundations have been proposed—including reason (in its various interpretations), the sacred, the transcendental ego, logic, metaphysics, history (often in its Hegelian sense), labor, the economy, and many others—all of which have served as the epistemic grounding for investigating and evaluating knowledge claims [2,39].

In contrast to foundationalism, a range of philosophical approaches—collectively categorized as anti-foundationalism—have emerged with the central aim of critiquing and rejecting the very idea of such foundations, on which many philosophical systems have historically been built. Alongside these, there are also philosophical efforts—which can be referred to as non-foundationalism—that, while suspending the assumption of any universal, trans-historical foundation, seek either to demonstrate the impossibility of any foundation whatsoever or to argue for singular, radically historical, temporal, and incommensurable foundations that, in practice, are indistinguishable from the absence of foundation itself. Both anti-foundationalism and non-foundationalism oppose the essentialism, universalism, and trans-historicism that underlie foundationalism. Ultimately, they argue in favor of a kind of groundlessness that tends to collapse into a form of epistemic nihilism [2,27]. The problem of foundation, framed as the dualism between foundationalism and anti- (or non-) foundationalism, offers an epistemic framework for re-engaging with and reconstructing the two antinomies mentioned earlier. It also provides a pathway for overcoming them. This is because foundationalism underpins many epistemic systems built on essentialist and ahistorical foundations, while anti-foundationalism underlies many particularist, singular, and historicist philosophies. Resolving this antinomy could, therefore, open a way to transcend the other two antinomies. This paper argues for overcoming the foundationalism vs. anti-/non-foundationalism antinomy in favor of a post-foundationalist philosophy. The following discussion will examine post-foundationalism and its underlying logic as a means of transcending this binary, while also considering how it can help address the two previously mentioned antinomies and lay the groundwork for a cosmopolitan philosophy.

Post-Foundationalism and Cosmopolitan Philosophy

Post-foundationalism acknowledges the existence of universal principles while recognizing that our understanding of these principles is always partial, contingent, and evolving. In this philosophical framework, the existence of a given and fully completed foundation or ground is neither assumed nor entirely rejected—nor is the problem of foundation approached as a static issue. Within post-foundationalism, the process of grounding takes precedence over the state of having a foundation. This means that a foundation for epistemic constructs is presumed, but what is accessible and understandable are only temporary and partial actualizations of these foundations—contingent foundations that are historically situated and shaped within a particular moment in time. In this context, understanding any foundation depends first and foremost on understanding the conditions of possibility that allow for its temporary realization—conditions that simultaneously define the impossibility of several other alternative foundations. Crucially, it is the partial and unfinished nature of these foundations that serves as the basis for the emergence and intelligibility of epistemic constructs and configurations. Therefore, epistemic constructs, including philosophical systems, are understood as temporary configurations that emerge within specific historical moments through contingent processes of grounding, shaped by a constellation of both historical and non-historical relations and parameters [2,27]. As such, post-foundationalism neither assumes the existence of a fully completed, given, and trans-historical foundation (as foundationalism does), nor does it embrace the groundlessness or epistemic nihilism associated with anti-foundationalism or non-foundationalism.

Instead, it affirms the contingency, incompleteness, historicity, particularity, and plurality of foundations, while still presupposing the existence of a foundation. By offering a pathway beyond the foundationalism/anti-(non-)foundationalism binary, post-foundationalism also provides a way to transcend two central antinomies within cosmopolitan philosophy—at least in the specific interpretation presented in this paper—namely, the antinomies between trans(non-)historicism and historicism, and between singularism and universalism [2].

In the post-foundationalist framework [2,39], the antinomy between universalism and singularism ceases to be an inescapable dichotomy and is instead re-situated within a logic of relational contingency, wherein any epistemic or ontological foundation is neither purely universal nor irreducibly singular, but always emerges at the level of the particular-in-relation. That is, foundations are neither self-sufficient nor purely localizable, but are contingent mediations between universality and singularity, suspended within a broader ontological horizon that neither collapses into homogeneous universality nor dissolves into incommensurable singularities. This post-foundationalist reconfiguration displaces the very terms of the antinomy: universalism, understood as the possibility of trans-traditional intelligibility, becomes accessible only through historically sedimented, particular epistemic formations, while singularity, understood as the irreducibility of any specific tradition, is no longer construed as radical epistemic isolation but as a provisional differentiation within the broader relational fabric of the plural world. Each particular philosophical tradition, cosmological vision, or ontological project is thus a particularized instantiation of contingent grounding, which simultaneously bears traces of universal intelligibility through its relational co-constitution with other traditions. What post-foundationalism thus makes thinkable—and what is indispensable for any cosmopolitan philosophy—is that the very condition for the intelligibility of the singular is its relational participation in the partially shared ontological and epistemic horizon, while the possibility of the universal exists only as a horizon disclosed through the contingent interaction of singularities. This logic of contingent relationality is neither a weak relativism nor a homogenizing universalism, but a philosophical topology in which every epistemic or cultural formation is a node within an evolving field of interdependent yet non-identical traditions. A cosmopolitan philosophy rooted in post-foundationalism thus overcomes the antinomy not by harmonizing universalism and singularism into a synthetic middle ground, but by reconfiguring them as co-constitutive poles within the ongoing, historically situated process of plural grounding itself.

In the post-foundationalist horizon [2], the historicity and trans(non-)historicity of foundations themselves are no longer conceived as opposing or mutually exclusive attributes but are re-situated within the processual logic of contingent grounding. Every epistemic, ontological, or cultural foundation is necessarily historical—it emerges through concrete historical conditions, shaped by specific social, linguistic, and conceptual constellations. Yet, post-foundationalism does not collapse foundations into mere historical constructs or relativized cultural products. Rather, the very historical becoming of foundations, as contingent responses to situated conditions of intelligibility, points beyond themselves, disclosing the traces of a trans-historical horizon that is never fully present yet always implicated. This means that foundations are at once historically emergent and trans-historically open, since their intelligibility depends not only on the specific conditions of their emergence but also on their participation in a broader field of possible cross-historical and cross-cultural resonance. In cosmopolitan philosophy, this post-foundationalist insight overcomes the antinomy between historicity and trans-historicity by showing that historicity itself is the very site where the trans-historical becomes thinkable—not as a timeless universal outside of history, but as a dynamically evolving horizon of potential intelligibility that becomes accessible only through the historical particularities of multiple

traditions placed into reflexive relationality. Thus, cosmopolitan philosophy, grounded in post-foundationalism, neither treats traditions as epistemically sealed historical monads nor reduces trans-historical claims to timeless abstractions detached from context. Instead, it conceptualizes the trans-historical as an emergent, fragmentary horizon, disclosed through historically plural processes of self-grounding and cross-cultural dialog, in which each tradition's historical reflexivity contributes to the ongoing articulation of a shared, but incomplete, horizon of intelligibility. In this way, post-foundationalism makes possible a cosmopolitan temporality: one in which traditions and epistemic formations neither exhaust nor are exhausted by their historical moment, but instead remain partially open to both the residues of past horizons and the anticipatory pull of possible future configurations, thus preserving the ontological dignity of historicity without closing off the reflective desire for trans-historical resonance.

Therefore, post-foundationalism can provide a philosophical basis for enabling the conditions of possibility for a cosmopolitan philosophy. As demonstrated, this approach can suspend the binary opposition between historicity and non-historicity by recognizing that philosophical systems are both historically situated and capable of engaging with trans-historical truths. By integrating historical particularities within a broader metaphysical context, cosmopolitan philosophy can navigate the tensions between the singular and the universal, creating a framework that respects the diversity of human thought while seeking to engage with universal principles [9] (pp. 20–33). In this approach, each philosophical tradition is a specific, particular (something between the universal and the singular), temporary, and historical configuration, shaped by temporal and spatial contexts, and brought into actuality through a constellation of relationships and factors. However, the key point is that this actualization is temporary and based on uncompleted foundations [40,41] (pp. 321–349). Moreover, this particular actualization does not preclude the existence of other actualizations or the potential for alternative foundations. Therefore, these intellectual traditions represent actualizations at specific times and places, continuously involved in a process of grounding. This is where the concept of the universal becomes significant for post-foundationalism and cosmopolitan philosophy [2].

This paper argues that Frank's unique conception of philosophy, along with his ontologism, combined with Henry Corbin's idea of comparative philosophy and his phenomenological–hermeneutic method centered on the concept of intuition, can lay the philosophical groundwork for enabling the conditions of possibility for a cosmopolitan philosophy grounded in post-foundationalism. It will be shown that this integrated philosophical approach has the potential to confront, engage with, and ultimately suspend these epistemological antinomies and predicaments, thereby providing a foundation for the construction of a cosmopolitan philosophy. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that this integrated approach not only offers a conceptual foundation but also provides a practical method for cosmopolitan philosophy in the form of comparative philosophy. The paper will proceed by exploring Frank's philosophy and ontologism, focusing on how his philosophical approach responds to the central antinomies within cosmopolitan philosophy.

4. Semyon Frank's Ontologism, Institution, and Post-Foundationalist Metaphysics

4.1. The Metaphysical Preconditions of Cosmopolitan Philosophy: Russian Ontologism, All-Unity, and the Spinozist Substrate in Semyon Frank

The philosophical project of Semyon Frank must be situated at the intersection of three traditions: the Russian metaphysical lineage of *vseedinstvo* (All-Unity), Western rational metaphysics, and Jewish–German cosmopolitan universalism. Far from being isolated or reactionary, Frank's thought emerges as a synthesizing response to the crisis of

modern philosophy—a crisis he saw rooted in the epistemic fragmentation and nihilism of both Enlightenment rationalism and postmodern relativism [42] (pp. 455–462). Within this context, Frank formulates an ontological system with the explicit aim of recovering universal foundations for human meaning and civilizational thought. His system, built upon the concept of All-Unity, establishes the necessary metaphysical architecture for a cosmopolitan philosophy: one that transcends parochialism without dissolving plurality.

This aspiration is grounded not merely in abstract speculation, but in a conscious methodological and philosophical shift. As Frank stated in his 1910 reply to V.F. Ern in their debates on the quiddity of Russian philosophy, their disagreement represented not a personal quarrel but "an argument between philosophical Slavophilism [(as a particular philosophy)] and the philosophical universalism of V. Soloviev" [43]. From this standpoint, Frank elevated universalism as both a license and a necessity: a mandate to draw on Western philosophical resources—especially German idealism, Spinozist monism, and Leibnizian rationalism—within the Russian mystical–intuitive tradition [42] (pp. 457–458). For Frank, rational and intuitive modes of thought are not antagonistic but complementary; Western philosophy enables the conceptual clarification of spiritual truths latent in Eastern traditions.

The metaphysical tradition of Russian religious philosophy, in which Frank's work is embedded, is characterized by its pursuit of integral wisdom (*tselostnoye znanie*) and a vision of being as internally unified. Central to this lineage is the doctrine of vseedinstvo, or All-Unity—a term used by Soloviev, Florensky, Bulgakov, Karsavin, and later Frank himself [42] (p. 447). Unlike Western dualisms that separate Creator and creation, Russian metaphysics posits that all beings are ontologically and existentially grounded in the Absolute. But Frank radicalizes this intuition through a precise ontological framework: he describes reality as a dynamic unity of *being-in-itself* (absolute being-for-self) and *being-for-others* (manifest relationality). This dialectic anticipates the post-foundationalist suspension of metaphysical binaries and grounds a pluralist–universalist philosophy—what we might call cosmopolitan ontology [44].

A critical, and often underrecognized, dimension of Frank's metaphysics is the profound influence of Baruch Spinoza, whom Frank described as a central intellectual inspiration since his youth. As Dominic Rubin notes, Frank remained fascinated throughout his career by Spinoza's pantheistic worldview and his rigorous system of substance monism, wherein God or Nature (Deus sive Natura) is the single infinite substance of which all finite things are modes [42] (pp. 465–466). While Frank did not adopt Spinoza's metaphysics uncritically, he re-thematized its core impulse: the refusal to posit metaphysical dualism and the insistence that all finite beings are expressions of a single ontological ground. This conceptual heritage is unmistakable in Frank's treatment of *All-Unity* as an ontological field in which the Absolute permeates, grounds, and transcends all phenomena [9].

Frank's divergence from Spinoza lies precisely in his refusal to flatten this unity into determinism. Whereas Spinoza's God is a necessity, Frank's Absolute is creative freedom—not arbitrary will, but a metaphysical structure where actuality and potentiality, transcendence and immanence, and unity and differentiation coexist. His metaphysics thus transforms Spinozist monism into what scholars such as Obolevitch [45] and Hartshorne [46] have called a Christianized panentheism: God is not *exhausted* by the world, but the world is *entirely grounded* in God. "Reality", Frank writes, "is the indivisible unity of being and becoming, of completed actuality and infinite potentiality" [47] (pp. 171–172). This reworking of substance ontology into a living, relational metaphysics becomes the philosophical scaffolding for cosmopolitan thought.

Indeed, Frank's retrieval and re-interpretation of Spinoza should be read not as an isolated gesture but as part of a broader cosmopolitan methodological stance. It reflects

his commitment to building a metaphysical architecture that could accommodate diverse traditions without subordinating them to a hegemonic center. In this sense, Frank's All-Unity is structurally universal but phenomenologically open. Like Spinoza's substance, it is the transcendental condition of all particularities—but unlike Spinoza's system, it does not foreclose history, difference, or subjectivity. The Absolute is not only what grounds thought, but also what makes dialogical comparison and cross-cultural encounter possible [42,44].

This ontological grounding—combining Russian metaphysical intuitionism, German systematic rigor, and Spinozist monism—furnishes the deepest conditions of possibility for a cosmopolitan philosophy: one that is not merely comparative or eclectic but anchored in a non-reductive, metaphysically unified conception of reality.

4.2. Semyon Frank's Ontologism, Intuition, and Cosmopolitan Philosophy

Semyon Frank's philosophical project is best understood as a metaphysical reclamation of philosophy's original vocation: the integrated comprehension of reality as a living unity—beyond the fragmentation imposed by modern epistemological and disciplinary boundaries [40]. His work emerges not simply as a nostalgic retrieval of a premodern worldview but as a radical response to the twin crises of reductionist scientism and relativist historicism. For Frank, philosophy is not reducible to analytic argument or scientific discourse; it is a holistic endeavor to render explicit the spiritual structure of reality, which he names All-Unity (*vseedinstvo*) [9,12]. This concept serves not only as a metaphysical postulate but as the ontological ground for what may be called a cosmopolitan philosophy of being.

Frank's All-Unity draws upon Russian religious metaphysics (particularly Soloviev, Florensky, and Bulgakov), German idealism, and mystical intuitionism, and it reaches toward a panentheistic metaphysics in which God, the Absolute, is both transcendent and immanent, infinite yet manifest in finitude. Frank's own formulation, as Teresa Obolevitch [45] (p. 111) highlights, is panentheistic in a precise sense: the world is rooted in God's creative power and pervaded by divine energy, but God is not exhausted by the world. "God", Frank [9] (p. 31) writes, "is not ens a se"—not self-contained being in the Scholastic sense—but a relational ground of all being, known not in isolation but through its relation to creation itself.

This rejection of aseity is central to Frank's revision of Western metaphysical theology. Reality is not a mere juxtaposition of God and the world; it is an organic structure of being in which the Absolute serves as the ontological background, epistemic condition, and existential source of all that is [48]. Thus, Frank's All-Unity is not a fusion or conflation of parts but a structurally differentiated unity, encompassing both being-in-itself (absolute being-for-self) and being-for-others (relational manifestations of the Absolute) [44].

Frank's metaphysical architecture echoes what Charles Hartshorne called the "integral vision of reality" [46] (pp. 64–65). As Hartshorne noted, Russian religious thinkers like Soloviev and Frank refused to speak of creation as merely added to God, instead asserting a third ontological level—a unifying "togetherness" that cannot itself be a derivative property but must itself be real and indivisible [46] (p. 67). Hence, Frank's All-Unity is not a metaphysical aggregate but a panentheistic ground, a mode of being that affirms total immanence without collapsing transcendence.

Indeed, Frank's understanding of God as a relational being culminates in a view of the Absolute as simultaneously ground and partner, source and other. In *The Unknowable*, he insists that even God cannot be conceived outside relation: "God is not ens a se. Precisely because He is conceived as the 'Primordial Ground'. . . He is not conceivable outside of a relation to His 'creation'" [9] (p. 31). This renders the metaphysical notion of relation not a secondary trait of being, but a constitutive structure of ontology itself, echoing themes from

British Hegelianism (Bradley, Bosanquet) while avoiding their impersonal idealism [45] (p. 113).

Nevertheless, Frank's notion of relationality differs fundamentally from Hartshorne's process-relational metaphysics. While Hartshorne understands God's nature as dynamic, dipolar, and temporally constituted—a "society of actual entities"—Frank maintains a vertical metaphysical orientation [45,46]. God is not a temporal synthesis of becoming, but the eternal source of all potentiality and actuality. In *Reality and Man*, Frank writes: "Reality is the unity and coincidence of actuality and potentiality. . . God is freedom itself—not arbitrariness, but eternal self-realization and self-creation" [47] (pp. 171–172).

Here, we glimpse one of Frank's most radical philosophical moves: his fusion of classical metaphysical categories (form, actus purus) with dynamic intuitions of self-generating being. God is not pure actuality, as in Aristotle or Aquinas, but a synthesis of creative dynamism and absolute presence. This creative metaphysics not only reconfigures classical theology but also provides the ontological foundation for cosmopolitanism: a framework in which plurality, difference, and cultural particularity emerge as necessary expressions of a deeper ontological unity [45] (p. 114).

Frank's ontology therefore confronts, and consciously suspends, the foundational antinomies of modern philosophical thought: universality versus singularity, and historicity versus trans-historicity. These antinomies are not secondary problems to be solved within logic; they are essential, structural features of reality itself, and must be approached with an adequate and different metaphysical and epistemological method. For Frank, the Absolute is both transcendent and immanent, both the ground of being and its creative unfolding. Consequently, knowledge of the Absolute can never be purely conceptual or discursive. It must emerge, as Frank writes in *The Unknowable*, from a mode of knowing "beyond all rational philosophy" [9] (p. 96)—what he calls docta ignorantia, or "learned ignorance".

This apophatic dimension of Frank's metaphysics is not merely a concession to mystical tradition; it is structurally necessary given the antinomic nature of reality. Truth, for Frank, cannot be captured without contradiction, because the Absolute itself is the coincidence of opposites (coincidentia oppositorum) [45] (p. 118). As he writes: "The element of ignorance is expressed in the antinomian content of the affirmation, and the element of knowing is expressed in the fact that this knowledge is nonetheless in the form of judgment—namely, the form of two mutually contradictory judgements" [9] (p. 94). Philosophy, then, does not dissolve contradiction but learns to bear it as an epistemic reflection of metaphysical depth.

It is precisely through this lens that Frank reconfigures natural theology. Rather than offering a traditional ontological proof, he emphasizes that God's essence "surpasses all being"—not because God is unreal, but because He is ontologically prior to existence as we conceive it [9] (p. 94). "God does not 'exist'," Frank writes, "not in the sense that He is an illusion and must be excluded from genuine being, but only in the sense that His reality. . . surpasses all being" [9] (pp. 94, 213). This leads to a paradoxical affirmation: not that God is less than being, but more than it—being and more-than-being, actuality and possibility, and presence and mystery.

Hartshorne [46], in his reading of Frank, recognized the profound metaphysical ambition of this position but challenged its implications. In particular, he questioned whether Frank's antinomic theology truly avoided the pitfalls of abstraction. For Hartshorne, God is not the unknowable Absolute, but the supremely knowable actuality—the most concrete, dynamic unity of experience and becoming. He argued that the mystery of God lies not in essence but in actuality: "The mystery of God. . . is not in the mere concept or essence of 'divinity,' but in God as an actuality" [49] (p. 119).

Moreover, Hartshorne criticized Frank's inference from the fragmentary nature of experience to the existence of an all-embracing ground. "They wish to have a total-unity", he remarked of Russian thinkers, "which is somehow both the original power creating all things and the final achievement of the creative process" [46] (p. 76). For Hartshorne, this model remains too close to metaphysical monism and insufficiently articulates the individuality and temporality of entities.

Yet Frank, while rejecting process metaphysics, anticipates some of its dynamism through his ontological formulation of God as creative freedom. In *Reality and Man*, he states: "The ultimate basis and primary source of reality—God—is not only actus purus… but the unity and coincidence of actuality and potentiality… of finality and creative dynamism" [47] (pp. 171–172). Reality is not a completed fact but a self-creating process, in which the Absolute is not exhausted in its manifestations but is actively realizing itself through them.

This concept of ontological creativity permeates Frank's later reflections, including his wartime writings on the "uninterrupted creation" of the organic world [45] (p. 115). Here, Frank posits that there is no fixed boundary between the organic and inorganic, and that the dynamic, creative character of being pervades all levels of reality. Thus, even if Frank does not adopt Hartshorne's dipolar theism or fully endorse process philosophy, he shares its underlying intuition: that reality is not static, but self-transcending, relational, and eternally becoming.

Crucially, Frank maintains that this cosmological structure can only be accessed through intuition, a form of non-conceptual knowing grounded in lived, participatory contact with the Absolute. Rationality, he argues, is a derivative mode of consciousness that necessarily fragments being; intuition, by contrast, discloses its unified depth. In *The Unknowable*, Frank contends that this kind of non-discursive knowledge is a "philosophical overcoming of all rational philosophy", and is necessary because "the Absolute as such is not a rationally defined object" [9] (pp. 94–96). Intuition, in this sense, is not anti-rational but trans-rational—a direct grasp of being that philosophy must integrate if it is to remain metaphysically adequate.

In terms of the ontological condition for a cosmopolitan philosophy, Frank's metaphysical schema of All-Unity provides more than a conceptual hypothesis; it grounds a distinctive mode of philosophical engagement. For Frank, philosophy must reclaim its original role as a unified worldview—one that is at once speculative, integrative, and existential. This reclamation, however, does not return to static metaphysical systems but demands a new orientation toward being: one that begins from the ontological structure of the Absolute and unfolds epistemologically through its manifestations.

Accordingly, Frank attributes a dual function to philosophy as a cosmopolitan enterprise. On the one hand, philosophy must scrutinize and compare diverse bodies of knowledge, intellectual traditions, and scientific systems, evaluating their premises and inner logic in relation to each other, to the world, and to human life as a totality [50] (pp. 28–47). On the other hand, and more radically, philosophy must locate these formations within the deeper ontological horizon of All-Unity—that is, within a transcendent, unknowable Absolute that grounds all epistemic formations while transcending them. This dual function ensures that philosophy retains both critical reflexivity and ontological anchoring.

In his interpretation, as mentioned earlier, this ontological ground "All-Unity" (*vseedinstvo*) possesses two mutually implicative dimensions: absolute being-for-self (the ontological, self-sufficient Absolute) and absolute being-for-others (its relational, manifest dimension) [44]. These two aspects are not opposites but modalities of the same ultimate reality. As Frank explains in *Reality and Man*, "the Absolute is existentially independent of all beings, yet embedded in them as their inner support and condition" [47] (p. 332). In this

way, All-Unity is not only the ontological basis of reality but also the epistemic possibility for interpreting plurality within a unified metaphysical field.

Importantly, these two dimensions—being-for-self and being-for-others—map directly onto Frank's understanding of cosmopolitan metaphysical pluralism. All epistemic and cultural configurations are partial articulations of the Absolute in its being-for-others mode; each is historically and ontologically real but ultimately non-self-sufficient. This structure allows Frank to maintain the integrity of particular traditions while re-situating them within a metaphysical coherence that neither flattens difference nor sacralizes fragmentation. As he insists in *The Unknowable*, "every empirical manifold depends upon the absolute divine unity which permeates it" [9] (p. 31).

It is on this ontological basis that Frank's philosophy articulates a vision for a cosmopolitan philosophy—one that does not merely juxtapose cultural traditions, but integrates them within a deeper, spiritual synthesis. This philosophy resists both historicist relativism and extreme abstract universalism. Instead, it proposes a non-reductive metaphysical universalism, in which diverse perspectives are understood as concrete instantiations of a shared ontological ground. "Philosophy", Frank writes, "must preserve the irreducible individuality of cultures and yet disclose their deeper unity" [51] (p. 41).

In light of this vision, ontologism reconfigures the task of comparative philosophy. This philosophy distinguishes two essential operations:

(1) To retrieve and critically reconstruct epistemic configurations from different traditions and historical epochs;
(2) To transcend their immanence by locating them in relation to the Absolute as their ontological source and eschatological horizon [47] (p. 162).

This method makes comparative philosophy not simply historical or sociological, but ontologically directed. Traditions are not merely "texts" or "practices", but fragments of a larger metaphysical truth—each bearing witness to the Absolute in a partial but meaningful way. As such, philosophy must cultivate an ontological receptivity: an ability to see each tradition not as alien or incommensurable, but as an expression of the divine ground in its epistemic multiplicity.

This transcendence, however, cannot be achieved through rational discourse alone. Frank is insistent: the limitations of rationality are not merely psychological but structural. Rational analysis, by its very nature, abstracts, fragments, and reifies; it can describe relations but not grasp the relationality of being. What is required is a different mode of knowing—intuition, in its highest philosophical sense. As Frank explains, intuition is a direct, non-discursive apprehension of the Absolute that does not "represent" being but participates in it. "Rational analysis", he writes in *Reality and Man*, "remains incomplete and imperfect without this intuitive dimension" [47] (p. 338).

Intuition thus becomes the epistemological correlate of All-Unity. Just as All-Unity affirms the inseparability of difference and unity, intuition bridges the conceptual and the pre-conceptual, the discursive and the ineffable. In *The Unknowable*, Frank links this intuitive cognition to the mystical tradition of apophatic theology, claiming that ultimate knowledge is possible only as docta ignorantia, "a knowledge through paradox" [9] (p. 94). The Absolute, being beyond all finite categories, reveals itself only when philosophy embraces its own epistemic limits.

By placing intuition at the heart of the cosmopolitan method, Frank reorients comparative philosophy from cataloging "others" to encountering the Absolute across differences. The philosophical task becomes one of existential receptivity, metaphysical openness, and dialogical generosity—qualities that are ontologically grounded in the structure of All-Unity itself.

This ontological method enables Frank to engage directly with what he identifies as the two central antinomic tensions in cosmopolitan philosophy: universality versus singularity, and historicity versus non-historicity.

The first, the antinomy of universality and singularity, centers on the tension between the aspiration to formulate universal philosophical principles and the reality that traditions are always articulated within singular cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts. Frank's philosophy does not resolve this tension by choosing one pole over the other; instead, it ontologically suspends the dichotomy by re-grounding both in the metaphysical structure of the Absolute. He writes that "the Absolute is existentially independent of all other beings, yet it is embedded within and pervasive throughout them" [47] (p. 332). Thus, singular philosophical formations—what Frank terms epistemologies of being-for-others—are themselves real, but only insofar as they express and participate in the deeper absolute being-for-self.

In this framework, particular cultural and intellectual traditions are neither subordinated to a hegemonic universalism nor left isolated in relativistic incommensurability. Instead, each represents a manifestation of the universal, situated within the broader architecture of All-Unity. As Frank puts it in *The Unknowable*, "being is an all-embracing unity, in which every particular thing is and is conceivable only through its relation to something else" [9] (p. 31). There is no universality apart from singularity—each is a mode of the other. This relational structure renders Frank's ontology uniquely suited for cosmopolitan thought: it unifies without homogenizing, grounds without totalizing, and integrates without erasing difference.

The second antinomy—historicity versus non-historicity—addresses the concern that philosophical systems are mere products of their temporal and cultural milieu, and thus cannot aspire to trans-historical or universal significance. Against this historicist reductionism, Frank insists that the historical is itself a mode of the Absolute. He writes in *God With Us* that "our experience, in its 'relativity' and dependence, involves an 'absolute' or 'ground', and in its 'fragmentariness' involves something 'all-embracing'" [51] (p. 41). In this sense, history is not opposed to eternity, but is one of its expressions. Philosophical traditions may be culturally situated, but they are simultaneously oriented toward and grounded in a metaphysical unity that transcends history.

Rather than collapsing into an abstract a-historicism, Frank's ontology affirms the dialectical interplay between temporal specificity and metaphysical depth. The Absolute manifests itself through the particular, the fragmentary, and the historically conditioned, but is not exhausted by them. In this way, history becomes a medium of metaphysical disclosure, not merely the site of conceptual contingency.

In synthesizing these antinomies, Frank's ontology of All-Unity offers an alternative to the dominant frameworks of both universalist rationalism and cultural relativism. As he affirms in *The Unknowable*, "the element of knowing is expressed in the fact that this knowledge is nonetheless in the form of judgment—namely, the form of two mutually contradictory judgements" [9] (pp. 94–95). Philosophical knowledge, in this scheme, is inherently antinomical: it must bear contradiction as a structural reflection of being itself.

Thus, Frank's engagement with these foundational dichotomies establishes the deepest ontological and methodological conditions for a cosmopolitan philosophy. A truly cosmopolitan system must not only accommodate plural perspectives but must be capable of situating them within a metaphysical totality that affirms their difference while pointing toward their unity. This is the promise of Frank's vision of All-Unity—a metaphysics that suspends, reframes, and integrates philosophical oppositions within the living dynamism of the Absolute.

4.3. Post-Foundationalism and Intuition in Frank's Cosmopolitan Philosophy

The resolution of the core antinomies at the heart of cosmopolitan thought—universality versus singularity and historicity versus non-historicity—demands a philosophical strategy that neither reverts to static foundationalism nor succumbs to relativistic anti-foundationalism. Semyon Frank offers such a strategy in the form of what may be described as post-foundationalist metaphysics. This approach does not negate the existence of an ontological foundation; instead, it redefines the nature of foundationality in dynamic, pluralistic, and participatory terms.

Unlike classical foundationalism, which posits immutable epistemic or metaphysical grounds, and unlike postmodern non(anti)-foundationalism, which rejects all such grounds as culturally contingent or illusory, Frank's post-foundationalism affirms the Absolute as the ultimate metaphysical source—but one that is inherently unknowable, non-finalized, and inexhaustible [9]. It is not a rigid bedrock but a living ground: a source of truth that unfolds historically, reveals itself pluralistically, and can never be fully encompassed by rational or discursive thought.

In *Reality and Man*, Frank writes that the Absolute "cannot be an object of definitive knowledge, for its essence transcends all finite categories" [47] (p. 328). This epistemic humility is the hallmark of his post-foundationalism: the Absolute is not absent, but it is also never simply present. It is always already beyond, always calling philosophy beyond its own limits. Consequently, all philosophical systems—including Frank's own—remain provisional articulations of an inexhaustible metaphysical ground.

This metaphysical humility is not an abdication of truth but a condition for its cosmopolitan articulation. Because the Absolute—understood as All-Unity—manifests itself through a diversity of cultural, historical, and intellectual forms, no single tradition can claim exhaustive access to it. All-Unity thus becomes the ontological condition of cosmopolitanism: a universal metaphysical framework that simultaneously grounds and relativizes particular perspectives. As Frank states, "all philosophical constructions are epistemologies formulated in varying relations to the Absolute" [47] (p. 160). Each tradition becomes a fragmentary epiphany of the Absolute, and comparative philosophy becomes the art of recognizing, reconstructing, and interrelating these fragments.

Within this architecture, the antinomy of universality and singularity is not resolved but suspended. Frank does not attempt to synthesize difference into a higher unity or to subordinate particularity to the universal. Instead, he affirms that all singularities—whether intellectual, cultural, or historical—participate in and are sustained by the same ontological source. The Absolute is One, but it expresses itself as many, not in a reductive pluralism, but in a metaphysical economy of emanation and relationality. Hence, difference is neither dissolved nor sacralized—it is ontologically honored.

The same logic applies to the antinomy of historicity and non-historicity. Rather than opposing history to metaphysics, Frank asserts that history is the very medium through which the Absolute discloses itself. In *God With Us*, he writes that our temporal, fragmentary experience "involves something all-embracing" [51] (p. 41). History is not merely the background of philosophical thought; it is one of its dimensions—the temporal unfolding of metaphysical intelligibility. Each tradition, while historically conditioned, carries within it an orientation toward the trans-historical. Thus, the Absolute is not opposed to history but revealed through it, even as it remains beyond its limits.

Frank's post-foundational metaphysics is made possible by a unique epistemological device: intuition. For Frank, as discussed earlier, intuition is not a mere feeling or mystical insight; it is a non-conceptual, participatory mode of knowing, one that opens the subject to the presence of being beyond rational categories. In *The Unknowable*, Frank calls this mode of knowledge docta ignorantia—"learned ignorance"—and insists that it is "the only

true philosophy deserving the name" [9] (p. 96). Rational thought is not abandoned but re-situated as secondary to intuition, which alone can disclose the relational, antinomic, and transcendent structure of the Absolute.

In this context, intuition becomes the bridge between the universal and the singular, the historical and the eternal. It allows philosophy to transcend the abstractions of modern reason without retreating into irrationalism. As Teresa Obolevitch [44,45] (p. 119) notes, Frank's intuitionism shares an affinity with mystical and apophatic traditions but is integrated into a rigorous metaphysical framework. The Absolute, Frank insists, is not an object to be grasped but a presence to be lived: "Let an atheist be right. . . that 'God does not exist'. But Thou, my God, Thou art!" [9] (p. 230). The metaphysical truth of the Absolute cannot be verified externally; it must be confirmed internally, through the transformation of the knower.

This ontological and epistemological framework reconfigures the task of comparative philosophy. Rather than merely juxtaposing diverse traditions, Frank envisions a comparative method that is ontologically grounded and intuitively guided. As he writes in *Reality and Man*, the goal is twofold: (1) to retrieve and reconstruct traditions in their own integrity, and (2) to re-situate them within the Absolute as "existentially grounded manifestations" [47] (p. 162). In this way, comparative philosophy becomes a dialog of fragments within the horizon of the whole—a cosmopolitan exercise rooted not in abstract universalism but in lived metaphysical unity.

Such a vision radically decenters the dominance of Western modern philosophy, which, under the guise of rational inclusivity, has excluded vast domains of human thought—religion, mysticism, Indigenous wisdom, and non-discursive knowledge systems. Frank's ontologism calls into question this hegemonic rationality, proposing instead an alternative modernity grounded in metaphysical humility and spiritual receptivity. The Absolute provides not only a universal ground for integration, but also a criterion of hospitality: a space in which all traditions may appear as partial disclosures of a shared ontological truth.

Yet it must be acknowledged that Frank's concept of intuition, while powerful, remains underdeveloped as a formal method. Though he insists on its necessity, he does not fully articulate its phenomenological structure, epistemic modalities, or comparative applicability. To advance this dimension of cosmopolitan philosophy, it becomes necessary to draw on thinkers like Henry Corbin, whose hermeneutic phenomenology offers a more fully elaborated account of intuitive knowing. As the next Section will explore, Corbin's concept of the mundus imaginalis and his vision of symbolic perception extend and deepen Frank's project, providing the missing methodological link between ontology and comparative praxis in cosmopolitan philosophy.

5. Comparative Philosophy, Phenomenological Hermeneutics, and Intuition in Henry Corbin's Philosophy

In developing a cosmopolitan philosophy, Semyon Frank laid the foundation for a metaphysical system that integrates diverse intellectual and cultural traditions within the framework of All-Unity. However, as discussed, Frank's philosophy remains incomplete without a fully developed account of intuition and comparative philosophy. This is where Henry Corbin's work becomes essential. Corbin's phenomenological hermeneutics, particularly his emphasis on Wesenschau—the intuitive perception of essences—provides the necessary philosophical tools to complement and extend Frank's vision of a cosmopolitan philosophy grounded in metaphysics and intuition [10] (p. 5).

Corbin's phenomenological hermeneutics is more than a method for interpreting texts; it is a spiritual discipline—a "theophanic philosophy"—oriented toward unveiling the

hidden metaphysical dimensions of reality [10,52]. Unlike conventional hermeneutics, which often focuses on the historical and cultural context of texts, Corbin's approach is concerned with the trans-historical and transcendent truths that underlie all forms of knowledge [10]. At the heart of this method is Wesenschau—a concept borrowed from Husserlian phenomenology but radically reoriented in Corbin's work. Through this intuition of "the metaphysic of essences", one accesses realities beyond empirical cognition [10] (p. 10). Drawing on the Islamic concept of kashf al-maḥjūb (unveiling the concealed), Corbin contends that genuine philosophical inquiry must go beyond rational discourse to engage directly with the bāṭin (inner reality) beneath the ẓāhir (outer appearance) [10] (p. 7).

Corbin's phenomenology, therefore, operates as a metaphysical unveiling (tajallī) in which the intuition becomes the first principle of knowing. This mode of inquiry is not merely descriptive or analytic, it is existential and transformative. The philosopher becomes a mystic interpreter, whose task is not only to interpret but to encounter the spiritual dimensions of being. Through this metaphysical hermeneutics, the philosopher reinterprets symbols and images as manifestations of trans-historical archetypes [10] (p. 9). Here, the symbol does not signify something abstract; rather, Corbin argues, it reveals a reality accessible only to the organ of the active imagination [52] (pp. 252, 263).

Here, phenomenology and hermeneutics are simultaneously at work. In phenomenology (*kashf al-maḥjūb*), the philosopher moves from the veil of appearances (*ẓāhir*) to inner truth (*bāṭin*), encountering phenomena as multi-layered epiphanies. Yet these phenomena, on a deeper register, are not merely empirical objects but expressions of hierarchies of being—manifestations of metaphysical archetypes actualized through sacred history. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology uncovers the essence hidden in multiplicity, mirroring Corbin's interpretation of the Qurʾān as a continuous process of spiritual exegesis (*taʾwīl*), revealing the vertical transcendence of truth within the horizontal flow of time [10,52].

This structure finds remarkable resonance with Semyon Frank's doctrine of All-Unity, especially in the dialectic between the Absolute's ontological selfhood (absolute being-for-itself) and its manifest relationality (absolute being-for-others). Corbin's hermeneutics transposes this schema into a spiritual phenomenology: the absolute being-for-itself corresponds to the trans-historical divine essence (*dhāt al-Haqq*) [52] (p. 200), while the being-for-others finds its analog in symbolic appearances, which are accessible only through metaphysical unveiling and interpretation (*taʾwīl*). In both systems, reality is internally differentiated yet grounded in an indivisible ontological unity.

Corbin's notion of intuition is pivotal in this framework. Far from being a vague or supplementary faculty, intuition (dhawq, or "tasting" in Sufi terms) is a gnoseological organ capable of accessing the mundus imaginalis—a metaphysical realm that bridges the sensible and the intelligible [52]. In *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ʿArabī* [52], Corbin explores this domain as the ontological space of spiritual realities: a real world, not reducible to psychological fantasy, where archetypes take form as visionary presences. The imaginal realm (ʿālam al-mithāl) is not a fictional projection but a metaphysical necessity: "It is a world ontologically situated between the empirical world and the pure intelligibles... accessible only through the organ of the imaginative perception" [52] (pp. 10–11). Crucially, this realm is not subject to the dualism of physical versus conceptual; it requires a transformation in the mode of being of the subject—a process in which the soul becomes capable of "seeing" with the inner eye of the heart (ʿayn al-qalb), facilitated by intuitive perception.

This imaginative perception (mushāhadah) is central to Corbin's comparative method [52] (p. 186). By relying on intuitive insight, the philosopher can directly encounter the spiritual substratum of different traditions. This allows one to discern not merely historical analogies, but the shared metaphysical syntax underlying diverse cultures. As Corbin insists, comparative philosophy must not remain at the level of superficial juxta-

position or external analogy. Rather, it must aim toward the Wesenschau—the unveiling of essence that transcends both historicism and relativism. As he remarks in *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, "to be a comparative philosopher is first of all to renounce the positivist dogma which confines philosophy to the logic of discursive reason. . . and to accept the adventure of the imaginal" [10] (p. 11). This "adventure" implies a philosophical itinerary guided not by abstract systems, but by inner illumination—a journey wherein intuitive unveiling discloses the trans-historical essences that animate religious, philosophical, and mystical traditions.

The metaphysical architecture underlying Corbin's phenomenology is profoundly indebted to the Islamic mystical philosopher Ibn ʿArabī. In *Creative Imagination* [52], Corbin makes it clear that the very possibility of comparative philosophy—conceived as spiritual hermeneutics—requires the full ontological rehabilitation of imagination (khayāl) as a mode of being and knowing. Ibn ʿArabī's radical insight, as interpreted by Corbin, is that the imagination is not a faculty of fabrication or illusion, but an ontological bridge.

But this is not a mere metaphor. Ibn ʿArabī situates imagination at the heart of reality: the ʿālam al-mithāl is a world as real as the sensory or intelligible domains, with its own rules, logic, and forms of presence. This world mediates between the Absolute and its manifestations—between the divine being-for-itself and its being-for-others. It is, in Corbin's terms, the place of meaning (maʿnā) as appearance, where the archetypes of the divine Names unfold into symbolic forms perceptible only to the eyes of the heart. Hence, intuition and imagination are ontological modes of access to the transcendent, not psychological projections [52].

Corbin connects this ontological imagination directly to his hermeneutic method: the task of the comparative philosopher is not to analyze texts as historical artifacts but to enter the imaginal world from which they emerge [10] (p. 19). Interpretation, then, becomes an act of taʾwīl—not in the reductive sense of allegory, but as an esoteric unveiling that allows access to the inner truth (bāṭin) behind the outer expression (ẓāhir). It is here that Corbin's alignment with Frank becomes most vivid. Like Frank's All-Unity, in which epistemic pluralism is grounded in a deeper ontological unity, Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics reveals a world in which diversity is not the negation of unity but its expression: Each being is a face of God and the imaginal world is the theatre in which this diversity of faces is unveiled [52].

Furthermore, Corbin emphasizes that imaginative vision (mushāhadah) is never passive. It requires the transformation of the self through ascetic and meditative practices—what he calls spiritual hermeneutics. This internal transformation allows the philosopher to become receptive to theophanies—the divine self-manifestations that occur in and through the imaginal world [52] (pp. 243, 310). Only through this transformation can the philosopher move beyond mere conceptual comparison and enter into a dialogical relation with the truths embedded within other traditions. In this way, Corbin's vision of comparative philosophy is not only methodological but also existential: it involves the becoming of the philosopher into a visionary, a witness of essences [10] (pp. 19–21).

In this context, Corbin's retrieval of Ibn ʿArabī also critiques the rationalism of Western modernity. Just as Frank challenged the totalitarian logic of Western epistemology by positing the necessity of intuitive contact with the Absolute, Corbin exposes the limitations of modern philosophy's refusal to grant ontological dignity to the imaginal. For Corbin [52], the refusal of imagination is the refusal of metaphysics itself. The result of this refusal is not greater realism, but metaphysical impoverishment—a blindness to the spiritual structures that sustain plural worlds of meaning.

Thus, Corbin and Ibn ʿArabī converge in their commitment to an ontology of relationality, a hermeneutics of unveiling, and an epistemology of imaginative intuition. These commitments extend Frank's metaphysical project in essential ways. Where Frank gestures

toward intuition as the necessary but underdeveloped counterpart to rational philosophy, Corbin builds an entire methodology—and indeed an ontology—on its foundation. The imaginal thus becomes the epistemic and metaphysical bridge that unites Frank's All-Unity with a living, comparative praxis of interpretation. And where Frank posits the Absolute as the ontological ground of all traditions, Corbin provides a method for encountering and interpreting this ground through intuitive and symbolic cognition [10,52]. Here, also, the mundus imaginalis constructs the site where metaphysical truths are made present—not as abstract universals but as visionary forms accessible through inner transfiguration [52]. Intuition thus becomes the bridge between universality and singularity, the eternal and the temporal.

Through the integration of Corbin's imaginative hermeneutics and Ibn ʿArabī's ontological vision of imagination, Frank's cosmopolitan philosophy acquires a more comprehensive structure—one in which intuition is not merely supplementary, but foundational. This fusion of ontologism and visionary epistemology allows for a comparative philosophy that is simultaneously spiritual, metaphysical, and pluralist: a truly cosmopolitan method capable of responding to the fragmentation of modernity by unveiling the hidden unity that underlies the world's philosophical traditions.

This approach dramatically reorients comparative philosophy itself. For Corbin, the comparison is not about influence, historical borrowing, or doctrinal convergence. It is about seeing through to the metaphysical realities that structure traditions from within. This is why he describes his task not as a philosophy of religion, but as philosophical religion: a discipline grounded in being, not just in discourse [52]. Accordingly, each tradition becomes a theophanic manifestation of the Divine, which must be approached not only intellectually but spiritually.

This redefinition has profound implications for the possibility of cosmopolitan philosophy. Just as Frank's All-Unity suspends the binaries of universality/singularity and historicity/non-historicity, Corbin's hermeneutics suspends the binaries of rationalism versus mysticism, and literalism versus esotericism. By accessing the imaginal essence of traditions, comparative philosophy is able to preserve cultural specificity while revealing shared ontological depths. For Corbin [52], each faith creates its own God-image in the mundus imaginalis, yet all these images are rays refracted from the same invisible Sun.

In this integrated model, comparative philosophy becomes a metaphysical practice that reveals the divine grammar of pluralism. It accepts that each tradition offers a partial glimpse of the Absolute, and that these glimpses must be interpreted through the taʾwīl of intuition. This is where Frank and Corbin converge most deeply: both posit an unknowable Absolute that manifests in history through symbolic forms, and both call for a philosophy that is as much existential transformation as it is theoretical knowledge.

Thus, by synthesizing Frank's ontological architecture with Corbin's phenomenological hermeneutics and imaginal epistemology, we gain a cosmopolitan method that is spiritually grounded, epistemologically robust, and philosophically integrative. Comparative philosophy, in this vision, becomes a sacred science of interpretation: a trans-historical practice of unveiling the divine within the plural, the eternal within the temporal, and the One within the many.

6. Toward a Cosmopolitan Philosophy

6.1. Methodology for Building a Cosmopolitan Philosophy

The construction of cosmopolitan philosophy requires a methodology that not only reconciles diverse philosophical traditions but also addresses the deep ontological and epistemological challenges posed by the integration of universal principles with singular cultural and intellectual particularities. The task is not simply one of comparative analysis,

but of constructing a metaphysical framework capable of engaging with the plurality of human thought without succumbing to relativism or reducing traditions to mere artifacts of history. The following methodology is grounded in the ideas of Semyon Frank and Henry Corbin, and it is designed to offer a rigorous and sophisticated approach to cosmopolitan philosophy:

- Metaphysical Hermeneutics Beyond Historicism: While hermeneutic analysis typically involves interpreting texts and traditions within their historical and cultural contexts, the approach in cosmopolitan philosophy transcends mere historicism [10]. Here, hermeneutics is not just about understanding the past or situating ideas within their context but involves uncovering the trans-historical metaphysical structures that persist across traditions. This hermeneutics engages with the ontological essence of traditions, seeking to reveal the permanent metaphysical realities that underlie their historical expressions. By focusing on this deeper metaphysical layer, cosmopolitan philosophy avoids the pitfalls of historicism, which reduces traditions to their temporal and cultural conditions, and instead emphasizes their universal and enduring aspects [9].
- Comparative Metaphysical Integration: Traditional comparative philosophy often remains at the level of identifying similarities and differences between traditions. However, cosmopolitan philosophy considers a more profound integration, one that not only compares but also synthesizes diverse metaphysical insights [10]. This methodology demands a dialectical process that brings different traditions into the dialog, not to merge them into a homogenous whole but to uncover the underlying metaphysical commonalities that allow for their integration. The goal is to establish a higher-order synthesis that respects the singularity of each tradition while positioning them within a shared ontological framework. This comparative metaphysical integration involves a constant interplay between the universal and the singular, using the tension between them as a productive force for philosophical innovation [9].
- Epistemic Pluralism with Ontological Unity: One of the central challenges in cosmopolitan philosophy is navigating the tension between epistemic pluralism and ontological unity. The methodology accounts for the diversity of epistemic systems—each with its own logic, language, and modes of understanding—while grounding them in a unified metaphysical reality [11]. This approach highlights an epistemological flexibility that allows for the coexistence of multiple ways of knowing, from rational discourse to intuitive insight, while maintaining a commitment to a shared ontological foundation. This approach does not merely tolerate diversity but actively engages with it, seeing epistemic pluralism as essential to the richness of cosmopolitan philosophy. The integration of diverse epistemologies into a coherent whole is achieved through their grounding in the metaphysical reality of the Absolute, as articulated by Frank [9].
- Intuition as a Metaphysical Bridge: In this methodology, intuition is elevated to a central role as the means by which philosophical traditions can access the trans-historical truths that connect them [10]. Unlike rational discourse, which is constrained by the limitations of language and conceptual thought, intuition provides a direct, non-discursive apprehension of the metaphysical reality that underlies all traditions. Intuition serves as a bridge between the singular and the universal, allowing for the recognition of shared metaphysical structures across different traditions. This methodological step is crucial for moving beyond surface-level comparisons and engaging with the deeper ontological realities that cosmopolitan philosophy seeks to integrate [9].

- Phenomenological-Imaginal Synthesis: Corbin's emphasis on the imaginal realm, the mundus imaginalis, offers a unique methodological tool for cosmopolitan philosophy [10]. The imaginal realm is neither purely abstract nor empirical but occupies an intermediate space where diverse metaphysical realities can interact. A phenomenological exploration of the imaginal allows for the synthesis of seemingly disparate traditions by revealing their underlying spiritual and metaphysical connections. This synthesis does not seek to erase the differences between traditions but to situate them within a shared imaginal space where they can be understood in relation to one another. The phenomenological–imaginal synthesis thus becomes a key component of cosmopolitan methodology, enabling the integration of multiple philosophical systems while respecting their unique contributions [10].

This methodology is distinct from other frameworks in that it combines rigorous metaphysical analysis with an openness to epistemic and ontological plurality. It is capable of engaging with the complexities of global philosophy in a way that is both philosophically sound and practically applicable. The creative synthesis of hermeneutics, comparative metaphysics, intuition, and phenomenological imagination offers a dynamic and flexible approach to cosmopolitan philosophy that is well suited to the issues and challenges of contemporary global thought.

6.2. The Concept of the Perfect Human (al-Insān al-Kāmil) Across Traditions, an Example of Cosmopolitan Philosophy

The concept of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) or an analogous idea of spiritual perfection exists across multiple religious and philosophical traditions. This example offers an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how cosmopolitan philosophy can engage with diverse traditions through a rigorous methodological framework. The methodology outlined earlier—metaphysical hermeneutics, comparative metaphysical integration, epistemic pluralism, intuition, and phenomenological-imaginal synthesis—can reveal the shared metaphysical structures that unite these diverse interpretations.

6.2.1. Metaphysical Hermeneutics Beyond Historicism

By engaging with metaphysical hermeneutics, we move beyond the historical and cultural contingencies of each tradition to uncover the trans-historical metaphysical reality of the Perfect Human.

- Islamic Philosophy (Sufism): In Sufism, al-Insān al-Kāmil represents the ideal human being who reflects divine attributes and achieves unity with God. This concept transcends specific Sufi orders and historical contexts, pointing toward a universal spiritual archetype [53,54].
- Christianity: The *Imago Dei* and the concept of Christ as the embodiment of divine perfection serve as metaphysical ideals that transcend historical Christianity, representing the potential for divine–human unity in all human beings [55,56].
- Russian Philosophy: The *Bogochelovek* (God-Man), articulated by Solovyov, also points toward a universal metaphysical principle where humanity and divinity meet, transcending Russian historical and theological concerns to represent a broader ideal of human perfection [46,49,57].
- Neoplatonism: In Neoplatonic thought, the Perfect Human is akin to the soul's return to the divine source, the One. Plotinus describes the ascent of the soul toward unity with the divine intellect (*Nous*), which represents the ultimate state of perfection [58,59].
- Hinduism: The Brahman-realized being, who attains *moksha* (liberation) by recognizing their identity with Brahman, represents the Hindu equivalent of the Perfect

Human. This metaphysical reality transcends the particularities of Hindu rituals and practices, pointing toward a universal ideal of spiritual liberation and unity with the ultimate reality [60,61].

- Buddhism: The Bodhisattva, who attains enlightenment but remains in the world to guide others, represents the ideal of spiritual perfection in Buddhism. The Bodhisattva's commitment to compassion and wisdom transcends the particularities of Buddhist schools, pointing toward a universal archetype of spiritual responsibility and selflessness [62,63].

6.2.2. Comparative Metaphysical Integration

The task of cosmopolitan philosophy is not merely to compare these concepts but to integrate them into a shared ontological framework that respects their uniqueness while revealing their underlying unity.

- Integration of Traditions: The concepts of al-Insān al-Kāmil, *Imago Dei*, *Bogochelovek*, the Neoplatonic ascent to the One, the Brahman-realized being, and the Bodhisattva all share a common metaphysical structure: they each represent the human being's potential to embody divine or ultimate principles. While each tradition emphasizes different aspects of this potential (e.g., divine reflection in Sufism and Christianity, metaphysical unity in Neoplatonism and Hinduism, and compassionate wisdom in Buddhism), they are united by a shared commitment to spiritual perfection and the realization of the ultimate in human form [9,10].
- Dialectical Tension and Synthesis: The differences between these traditions (e.g., the focus on divine attributes in Sufism versus the realization of non-duality in Hinduism) create a productive dialectical tension that cosmopolitan philosophy can use to generate new philosophical insights. Instead of collapsing these differences into a single narrative, cosmopolitan philosophy recognizes the distinctiveness of each tradition while synthesizing them into a higher-order metaphysical framework that honors their unique contributions [9,10].

6.2.3. Epistemic Pluralism with Ontological Unity

Cosmopolitan philosophy must navigate the diversity of epistemic approaches to the concept of the Perfect Human, recognizing the plurality of ways in which knowledge of this ideal can be attained, while grounding them in a unified metaphysical reality.

- Islamic Epistemology: In Sufism, knowledge of the Perfect Human is attained through mystical insight, direct experiential knowledge, and spiritual practice, bypassing discursive reasoning to achieve a deeper unity with the divine [64].
- Christian Epistemology: In Christian mysticism, particularly in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, theosis involves a combination of rational theological reflection and intuitive participation in the divine. The knowledge of the Perfect Human is both rational and experiential, pointing to an epistemic pluralism within Christianity itself [55].
- Russian Orthodox Epistemology: Russian religious philosophy blends mystical experience with philosophical reasoning, using both to grasp the idea of the *Bogochelovek* as a lived reality that unites the divine and human in Christ [57].
- Neoplatonic Epistemology: In Neoplatonism, the knowledge of the Perfect Human is attained through intellectual contemplation and the soul's ascent toward the divine *Nous*. This epistemic approach is both rational and contemplative, emphasizing the unity of intellect and being [58].
- Hindu Epistemology: In Hinduism, the knowledge of the Brahman-realized being comes through a combination of meditative practice (*dhyana*), scriptural study (*jnana*), and direct intuitive insight into the non-dual nature of reality. The epistemic frame-

work here is one that integrates rational understanding with direct, non-conceptual realization [60].

- Buddhist Epistemology: In Buddhism, the Bodhisattva's knowledge is rooted in both rational understanding (*prajna*) and compassionate action (*karuna*), combining wisdom with ethical practice. The Bodhisattva embodies an epistemic pluralism that integrates conceptual understanding with intuitive insight and moral engagement [63].

By recognizing and integrating these diverse epistemic approaches, cosmopolitan philosophy allows for a rich plurality of ways of knowing, while grounding them in the shared metaphysical reality of the Perfect Human as the ultimate ideal of human potential.

6.2.4. Intuition as a Metaphysical Bridge

Intuition serves as a bridge that connects the particular epistemic systems of each tradition to their shared metaphysical foundations. It provides the means by which these traditions can access the trans-historical truths that connect them.

- Islamic Intuition: In Sufism, intuition (*kashf*) allows the Sufi to directly apprehend the divine within themselves, realizing their potential as al-Insān al-Kāmil. This intuitive knowledge transcends rational thought and provides direct access to the metaphysical reality of divine perfection [53].
- Christian Intuition: Theosis in Eastern Orthodox Christianity involves an intuitive participation in the divine, where the believer comes to embody the divine image through contemplative prayer and mystical experience. This intuitive process is central to realizing the Perfect Human in Christian thought [55].
- Russian Intuition: In Russian religious philosophy, intuition plays a crucial role in grasping the idea of the *Bogochelovek* as both a metaphysical ideal and a lived reality. This mystical intuition allows for the apprehension of the divine–human unity that lies at the heart of Russian philosophical thought [57].
- Neoplatonic Intuition: In Neoplatonism, intuition (*noesis*) is the means by which the soul ascends to the divine intellect, achieving unity with the One. This intuitive knowledge transcends discursive reasoning and allows for a direct apprehension of the ultimate reality [58].
- Hindu Intuition: In Advaita Vedanta, intuition (*aparoksha anubhuti*) is the non-conceptual realization of one's identity with Brahman, the ultimate reality. This intuitive insight is central to the realization of the Brahman-realized being, transcending the limitations of rational thought [60].
- Buddhist Intuition: In Mahayana Buddhism, the Bodhisattva's wisdom (*prajna*) is often described as a direct, non-conceptual understanding of the true nature of reality. This intuitive insight allows the Bodhisattva to navigate the complexities of *samsara* while maintaining a commitment to the ultimate goal of liberation for all beings [62].

Intuition thus serves as the metaphysical bridge that connects the diverse epistemic approaches of these traditions to their shared metaphysical foundations, allowing for a deeper integration of their spiritual ideals.

6.2.5. Phenomenological–Imaginal Synthesis

The imaginal realm, as articulated by Henry Corbin, offers a space where the metaphysical realities of different traditions can intersect and interact. Through phenomenological exploration of the imaginal realm, cosmopolitan philosophy synthesizes the diverse spiritual and metaphysical concepts of the Perfect Human into a shared imaginal space.

- Imaginal Realm in Sufism: In Sufism, the imaginal world (*alam al-mithal*) is where the Perfect Human exists as an archetypal reality. This realm allows for the direct

perception of the divine within the self, enabling the Sufi to embody the attributes of al-Insān al-Kāmil [54].

- Imaginal Participation in Christianity: In Christian mysticism, the imaginal realm is encountered through visions, icons, and mystical experiences that allow the believer to participate in the divine life. This realm provides a space where the Perfect Human can be apprehended as a living reality, guiding the believer toward spiritual perfection [55].
- Imaginal Synthesis in Russian Philosophy: For Russian religious philosophers, the imaginal realm is where the divine and human can unite, where the *Bogochelovek* becomes a lived reality that transcends conceptual thought. This realm allows for the direct experience of the divine–human unity that is central to Russian metaphysical thought [57].
- Imaginal Space in Neoplatonism: In Neoplatonism, the imaginal realm is where the soul encounters the divine forms and ascends toward the One. This space allows for the direct apprehension of the metaphysical realities that structure the cosmos, leading the soul toward unity with the divine intellect [58].
- Imaginal Realm in Hinduism: In Hinduism, the imaginal space is where the meditator encounters the divine forms of gods and goddesses, as well as their own higher self (*Atman*). This realm serves as a bridge between the material world and the ultimate reality of Brahman, allowing for the realization of spiritual perfection [60].
- Imaginal Synthesis in Buddhism: In Buddhism, the imaginal realm can be found in the visualization practices of Vajrayana Buddhism, where the meditator envisions themselves as a Buddha or Bodhisattva, embodying the qualities of enlightenment. This space allows for the direct experience of spiritual perfection and the realization of the Bodhisattva ideal [63].

By engaging with the imaginal realm, cosmopolitan philosophy creates a shared space where the diverse metaphysical realities of different traditions can interact and be synthesized into a coherent whole. This synthesis does not erase the differences between traditions but situates them within a shared metaphysical framework that allows for their integration.

Through the application of cosmopolitan methodology, the concept of the Perfect Human across multiple traditions demonstrates how this approach can engage with the complexities of global thought while respecting the singularity of each tradition. By employing metaphysical hermeneutics, comparative metaphysical integration, epistemic pluralism, intuition, and phenomenological–imaginal synthesis, cosmopolitan philosophy creates a dynamic and flexible framework capable of addressing the most pressing philosophical questions of our time.

7. Conclusions

The concluding Section of this paper draws together the complex philosophical arguments developed throughout, focusing on the need for a cosmopolitan philosophy that transcends the fragmentation of modern thought while integrating diverse intellectual traditions. Semyon Frank's ontologism, with its emphasis on All-Unity, provides a robust metaphysical foundation for such a philosophy, offering a way to reconcile the universal with the singular, and the historical with the trans-historical. This ontological framework, however, cannot stand alone; it requires a methodological approach that can engage with the specificities of different philosophical traditions without losing sight of their shared metaphysical foundations. The integration of Henry Corbin's phenomenological hermeneutics and his emphasis on intuition as a method of engaging with deeper metaphysical realities enriches this framework, offering a means of accessing the trans-historical truths that connect diverse traditions.

By synthesizing Frank's ontologism with Corbin's comparative philosophy, this paper has developed a cosmopolitan methodology capable of addressing the philosophical challenges of globalization and cultural pluralism. This methodology, which combines metaphysical hermeneutics, comparative metaphysical integration, epistemic pluralism, intuition, and phenomenological–imaginal synthesis, provides a dynamic and flexible approach to cosmopolitan philosophy. The analysis of the concept of the Perfect Human across multiple religious and philosophical traditions demonstrates the practical applicability of this methodology, showing how it can engage with complex metaphysical ideas while respecting the particularities of each tradition.

Ultimately, the cosmopolitan philosophy articulated in this paper offers a way forward for contemporary philosophical inquiry. It provides a coherent framework for engaging with the intellectual and existential crises of the modern world, addressing the need for a unified yet pluralistic philosophical system capable of navigating the complexities of global thought. By grounding this cosmopolitan philosophy in a post-foundationalist approach that acknowledges the limitations of both foundationalism and non-foundationalism, it opens up new possibilities for philosophical dialog and mutual understanding across cultures, traditions, and intellectual landscapes.

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