

Esoteric Overtones of the Psychology of Russian Cosmists

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Abstract

The article discusses two main topics: what is Russian cosmism and the attitude towards it of Svetlana Semenova, who wrote an introductory article to the book "Russian Cosmism". Interesting considerations are given regarding the Russian cosmism of the philosopher A.P. Ogurtsova. The author problematizes the statements of Semenova, who both distances herself from the views of the cosmists and shares these views. He sees a similar ambivalent attitude in I. Kant's polemic with the eminent scientist and esotericist of the 18th century, Emanuel Swedenborg. An analysis of the esoteric Christian teaching and the personality of the latter shows that Swedenborg simultaneously accepted two realities - spirit and nature, removing contradictions, bringing them into line with each other; at the same time, his psyche changed under the influence of work that confirmed the new picture of the world he had built. The author suggests that, like Swedenborg, the cosmists and Semyonov built a reality in which their dreams, intentions and actions received a place and meaning. He believes that for a correct understanding of creativity of this type, a turn is needed - to the problems and aspirations of the individual, to the constructed reality in which these problems are resolved (albeit on a virtual plane for now), to the historical tradition of thinking. In his opinion, the cosmists continue to move in line with the Russian tradition outlined by Chaadaev, Dostoevsky and Russian religious philosophers. Another tradition characteristic of the work of these thinkers is the esoteric one, which allows you to create realities, omitting the problems of implementation, following one thing - constructing the world for your own personality.

Keywords: *Cosmism; Utopia; Esotericism; Reality; Thinking; Realization; Tradition; Nature; Spirit; Consciousness*

There are not so many and not few supporters of the "Russian cosmism" movement, so far. Some of them are quite influential people both in science and in politics. From a psychological point of view, the worldview of Russian cosmists is not much different from the worldview of esotericists. This is what I want to show, and at the same time project this teaching onto some ideas-searches of Russian thinkers in the past and today.

The article by Semenova (she is a researcher and publisher of the legacy of N.F. Fedorov, a specialist in Russian cosmism) opens an interesting book with the same name "Russian Cosmism" [11]. Semenova interprets cosmism as a purely Russian phenomenon. It is significant, she writes, "that it is in Russia, which has become the birthplace of the scientific doctrine of the biosphere and its transition to the noosphere and has opened a real way into space, since the middle of the last century, a unique cosmic direction of scientific and philosophical thought has been maturing, which was widely developed in the 20th century. Among him are such philosophers and scientists

as N. F. Fedorov, A. V. Sukhovo-Kobylin, N. A. Umov, K. E. Tsiolkovsky, V. I. Vernadsky, A. L. Chizhevsky, V. N. Muraviev, A. K. Gorsky, N. A. Setnitsky, N. G. Kholodny, V. F. Kuprevich, A. K. Maneev. In the philosophical heritage of the thinkers of the Russian religious revival - V. S. Solovyov, P. A. Florensky, S. N. Bulgakov, N. A. Berdyaev - there is also a line that is close to the pathos of the ideas of Russian cosmism" [11, p. 1].

However, the famous philosopher A.S. Ogurtsov does not agree with this understanding of cosmism. Unfortunately, "he seems to argue with Semyonova", the idea that Russian cosmism is a unique phenomenon in the Russian worldview has acquired the character of prejudice. Moreover, it is seen as a radical futurology, which is "imbued with the desire for the highest perfection, according to the call of Christ". Russian cosmism is seen as an alternative to Western civilization... Two assessments of "Russian cosmism" are firmly established in the post-Soviet consciousness: firstly, that this trend is unique and represents a specifically Russian phenomenon, and secondly, its ideas are alternative to any foreign ideologies – from consumer to post-industrial society. I want to say right away that these assessments are not correct: there are also foreign versions of space philosophy... So that cosmism is by no means only a Russian phenomenon" [6].

Another difficulty that occurred to me when reading Semenova's article is related to her interpretation of cosmism as a doctrine: on the one hand, she tries to evaluate it reflexively, as a dream and ideals of the cosmists, as if not identifying herself with their convictions, for example, regarding the possibility of achieving immortality or the resurrection of the fathers, but on the other hand, when setting out the views of the cosmists, Semenova does not comment on them in any way and, moreover, it is clear that she fully accepts them. As a result, the conclusion with which Semenova ends is no longer surprising: "The course of Russian cosmism has a universal meaning: it provides a deep theory, amazing anticipations, looking not only into modern, but also into much more distant times" [11, p. 41].

Finally, while reading Semenova, I was struck by the similarity of the arguments and discourse of her article, firstly, with the historical tradition coming from Chaadaev and Dostoevsky, in which her followers believed that it was Russia that would show the way to the West, and secondly, with the views of such modern ideologists of the renewal of Russia like A. Dugin or Y. Gromyko. In a letter to Turgenev (1835), Chaadaev writes: "We are called upon to teach Europe many things that it cannot understand without it. Do not laugh, you know - this is my deep conviction. The day will come when we will become the mental center of Europe... this will be the logical result of our long loneliness... our universal mission has already begun" (quoted from [4]).

In the Writer's Diaries for 1880, Dostoevsky writes the following. "The main thing I outlined is that our aspiration to Europe, even with all its hobbies and extremes, was not only legal and reasonable, in its basis, but also popular, coincided completely with the aspirations of the very spirit of the people, and in the end, undoubtedly has and the highest goal... Our impoverished, unsettled land, except for its upper layer, is all as one person. All eighty million of its population represent such a spiritual unity, which, of course, is not found anywhere in Europe and cannot be, and, therefore, by this alone it cannot be said that our earth is disordered, even in the strict sense it cannot be said that beggar. On the contrary, in Europe, in this Europe, where so much wealth has been accumulated, the entire civic foundation of all European nations has been undermined and, perhaps, tomorrow it will collapse without a trace for all eternity..." (quoted from [3, p. 419-420]).

In advertising on You Tube of his new book *Russia - Noah's Ark of Mankind: Philosophical-Religious and Methodological Aspects of the State Ideology of the Future Russia* (2019), Gromyko says: "The main idea of this book is to try to formulate the ideology of Russia's breakthrough into the future. The author Yuri Vasilyevich Krupnov and I are absolutely convinced that it is Russia, Russia's unique experience, imperial experience, socialist experience that is the basis for the people themselves to offer the society of Russia, as well as the whole world, a unique ideology associated with a breakthrough and development... Creative breakthrough technology based on the criteria of brotherhood, mutual understanding, non-capitalist mode of movement is the basis to break into the future" [1].

I see the similarity of these narratives with Semenova's discourse in three points: both here and there a forecast of the future is offered, the leading role in the world, even the saving role of Russia is affirmed, strange (today we would say "hybrid") arguments are formulated - simultaneously, from science and from faith. "The term "Russian cosmism", notes Ogurtsov, "combines completely heterogeneous currents from openly fideistic to atheistic, from the philosophy of All-Unity to projective ideology, from theocratic religious and philosophical currents to global evolutionism. In some currents of Russian cosmism, mystical insights are combined with futurological foresights built on completely rationalistic foundations, theosophy is combined with the depth of natural philosophical thought... This motley typology reflects the fact that we are dealing with a very heterogeneous stream of thought, in which contradictory and often alternative currents merge (in a not very clear way). But what unites them? If something unites... We would like to immediately emphasize that none of these currents has died in the national culture" [6].

What else puzzled me. Semenova accurately sets out the basic postulates and beliefs of the cosmists, but does not discuss at all how this is possible, if we keep in mind modern science. Probably, she herself shares (accepts) these postulates and beliefs, which at present look not just like utopias, but unbridled fantasies. For example, retelling the views of Sukhovo-Kobylin, Fedorov, Tsiolkovsky, she writes. "Now humanity, Sukhovo-Kobylin believed, is in its earthly (telluric) stage of development. He will have to go through, conquer with his own efforts two more: solar (solar), when earthlings will settle in the near-solar space, and sidereal (stellar), involving penetration into the depths of space and their development. This will be the World, "universal humanity" - "the whole totality of worlds inhabited by humanity in the entire infinity of the Universe"... "Technical man" will be replaced by "flying man": "higher, i.e. solar, man will enlighten his body to the specific gravity of air... "for this he will work out his body into a tubular body, i.e. air, moreover, into an ethereal, i.e. the lightest body." As a result of a transformative action directed at one's own nature, a person, as it were, will throw off his current heavy burden body shell and turn into an immortal spiritual being. This is a radical rethinking of the Hegelian "absolute spirit", which here turned into real humanity in its future cosmic destiny" [11, p. 11-12].

"Technization, according to Fedorov, can only be temporary and lateral, and not the main branch of development. It is necessary that a person apply the same power of mind, invention, calculation, insight not to artificial attachments to his organs, but to the organs themselves, their improvement, development and radical transformation (so, say, that a person himself can fly, see far and deep etc). "All celestial spaces, all celestial worlds will be available to a person only when he recreates himself from the most original substances, atoms, molecules, because only then will he be able to live in all environments, take on all forms" <...>

In Russian cosmism, starting with Fedorov, the conviction is firmly established: humanity, complacently mired in lower freedom, the freedom to rush about in all directions, to explore all the trials, all the possibilities of its natural circle of existence, will never be able to gain the highest freedom of the good choice of the ideal of the noosphere (or the Kingdom Heavenly), if it does not begin to purposefully transform its very present physical nature, so that it gradually becomes capable of realizing this highest ideal, noospheric (or active-Christian). The lasting moral improvement of a person is possible only after and together with his physical transformation, liberation from those natural qualities that make him devour, displace, kill and die himself <...>

Konstantin Eduardovich imagined the Universe as a single material body, through which atoms endlessly travel, having left decayed mortal bodies, atoms, which are indestructible "primitive citizens", primitive "I". A real blissful life for them begins in the brain of the highest, immortal beings of the cosmos, despite the fact that the huge intervals of "non-existence", being in a lower material form, as if they do not exist at all. The guarantee of achieving immortal bliss for brain atoms is the destruction on the scale of the Earth and space of imperfect life forms subject to suffering, where these atoms could get" [11, p.8, 18, 35].

Well, why doesn't Semenova explain how a person's life is possible without technology, how a person can become a solar being and fly, why she identifies the noosphere (a purely rational concept) and the Kingdom of Heaven, why only fathers need to be resurrected (what

bad did mothers and children who passed on to the next world do?) and many other strange, from the point of view of modern rational and scientific thinking, provisions? The only explanation is that this is how evolution will go. "This is an idea", writes Semenova, "active evolution, that is, the need for a new conscious stage in the development of the world, when humanity directs it in the direction in which reason and moral sense dictate it, takes, so to speak, the helm of evolution into its own hands. Therefore, it may be more accurate to define this direction not so much as cosmic, but as active-evolutionary. Man for active-evolutionary thinkers is still an intermediate being, in the process of growth, far from being perfect, but at the same time consciously creative, called to transform not only the external world, but also his own nature. It is essentially about expanding the rights of conscious-spiritual forces, about controlling the spirit of matter, about the spiritualization of the world and man. Space expansion is one part of this grandiose program. Cosmists managed to combine concern for the big whole - the Earth, the biosphere, space with the deepest demands of the highest value - a specific person. It is not for nothing that such an important place is occupied by problems related to overcoming illness and death and achieving immortality. Humanism is one of the most striking features of this wonderful galaxy of thinkers and scientists, but this humanism is not beautiful-hearted and dreamy - it is based on deep knowledge, follows from the goals and objectives of the most natural, cosmic evolution" [11, p.2].

What is a "grand program" (let's agree, utopian) or "deep knowledge" ("deep theory, amazing anticipations", i.e. development forecast)? And why does Semyonova think that evolution is going in the direction indicated by the Russian cosmists? Modern evolutionary theories tell a completely different story: nothing resembles the path they predicted: technology is developing at an ever faster pace, the noosphere does not add up, the mind does not win, selfishness grows, immortality is not achieved, humanity is rapidly approaching the fatal line. I listened to a couple of speeches by Semenova and the second compiler of the book, Anastasia Gacheva: very interesting and reasonable speakers, and at the same time extremely naive, or not naive, but completely sharing the faith of cosmists both in their understanding of evolution and in the possibility of physical transformation, the resurrection of the fathers, immortality and other amazing things?

I can only compare my bewilderment with criticism, or rather almost rude denial by I. Kant of the esoteric

doctrines of his contemporary Emanuel Swedenborg. The latter also claimed the immortality of man (according to his teachings, every person is a spirit, and when his earthly cycle of existence ends, he either rises to heaven as an angel or descends to hell as a demon), according to Swedenborg's words, he met Christ and communicated with angels, insisted that the Lord consists of angelic communities and nevertheless has the appearance of a man, that He maintains a balance between heaven and hell, and angels serve the Lord and continue to love in heaven the one whom they loved like people on earth. In the article *Dreams of a Spiritualist Explained by the Dreams of Metaphysics*, Kant writes: "Therefore, I will not in the least condemn the reader if, instead of considering the ghost-seers as half belonging to another world, he immediately writes them down as candidates for treatment in the hospital and thus saves himself from any further research... in the work of Swedenborg I find that very bizarre a game of imagination that many others dreamers found in the play of nature, when they drew a holy family in the outlines of spotted marble or monks, fonts and church organs in stalactite formations...I am tired of citing the wild ravings of the worst of all science fiction writers or continuing them right up to his description of the state after death" [5, p. 327, 340, 347].

Kant denies the teachings of Swedenborg on the basis of the conviction that such a reality, which Swedenborg talks about, objectively does not exist. But it clearly existed for Swedenborg himself, just as the reality of the cosmists objectively exists for Semyonova and Gacheva. In the book "The Demarcation of Science and Religion: An Analysis of the Teachings and Works of Emanuel Swedenborg", I have reconstructed how the latter came to believe in a reality strongly denied by Kant. The fact is that Swedenborg, on the one hand, believed in God from childhood and never doubted the existence of a divine ("spiritual") reality, on the other hand, being the greatest scientist and engineer of the first half of the 18th century, he did not doubt the existence of nature with her laws. On many of his quite secular scientific, engineering and philosophical manuscripts, at the bottom of many pages, is the following instruction to himself:

1. Read the word of God often and meditate on it.
2. Submit yourself in everything to the will of God's providence.
3. Observe true decency in all actions and always keep an impeccable conscience.
4. To fulfill honestly and truthfully the duties of one's rank and duty of service, and to try to make oneself in every respect a useful member of society" [12, p. 4].

And here is evidence of Swedenborg's faith in two immediate realities simultaneously (Spirit and nature); the whole order of nature is conditioned by the order of the Spirit, but the latter is itself an order coinciding with the natural. "Let's say in advance", writes Swedenborg, "what correspondence is: the entire natural world corresponds to the spiritual world not only in general, but even in every particular; therefore, everything that is in the natural exists as a result of the spiritual world, is called correspondence... nature was created only to clothe the spiritual and accordingly depict it in the last degree of order <...> The Lord never does anything contrary to order, because he himself is order. Divine truth emanating from the Lord forms an order, and divine truths are the laws of this order, according to which the Lord leads a person" [12, p. 48, 53, 284].

So, Swedenborg lived simultaneously in two immediate realities - Spirit and nature. As a scientist, a naturalist, looking at the first reality from the second, he could not but see the reality of the Spirit of contradictions. Judging by his works, the central contradictions, completely intolerable for Swedenborg as a scientist and Christian, were the following: God as a trinity, from the point of view of Aristotelian logic, is a striking contradiction, the death of a person and the resurrection from nothing at the Last Judgment, contradicted the laws of physics, the impossibility of salvation for someone who lived righteously, but for some reason was not baptized - did not fit in Swedenborg's head.

And so Swedenborg, accustomed to building consistent scientific theories and solving engineering problems, does the same in this case: he proves that God is not a trinity, but one, that man as a spirit is immortal, that anyone can be saved if he lived righteously. In other words, Swedenborg brings the reality of the spirit in line with the reality of nature, by the way, and vice versa, proving that the processes of nature are determined not only by the laws of nature, but also spiritually. This new understanding of both realities is anchored by Swedenborg's "correspondence principle". From the point of view of faith, the problem was solved and there was no need to substantiate a new picture of the world (immediate reality), but, from the point of view of science, such a justification suggested itself (for example, to answer the criticism of opponents like Kant). How could it be possible to convince rationally minded opponents (and there were many of them) of a new reality, which, moreover, diverged significantly from the canonical Christian faith?

Here it should be taken into account that Swedenborg understood the justification of the consistent reality he built "as the knowledge of spiritual reality in the spirit of the latest natural science for his time. The latter, however, required facts and experiment, which, however, did not exist. The situation for Swedenborg was quite dramatic. The new spiritual reality has practically already taken the place of the canonical one, it was perceived as the true state of affairs, but it came into conflict with both the religious dogmas of the church and Swedenborg's own scientific methodological guidelines, according to which this reality needed to be confirmed by experience.

In this situation, Swedenborg's psyche comes to the rescue, which began to produce spontaneous dream-like plots, on the one hand, filling in the missing elements of scientific thinking and reality, on the other hand, "drawing" such a picture in which Swedenborg received sanction from above for a new way of cognition and thinking. In this case, we are talking about the meeting of Swedenborg with Christ and communication with angels. "Now," writes Swedenborg, "let us turn to experience. That angels have a human image, that is, that they are the same people, I have seen this up to a thousand times: I talked to them like a person to a person, sometimes to one, sometimes to many together, and I have never seen their external image than - any different from the human; sometimes I marveled at this; but in order

not to be attributed to the deception of the senses or imagination, it was given to me to see them in reality, with full consciousness of the senses and in a state of clear comprehension" [7, p. 42].

In my works on psychology and esoteric teachings, I analyze a special group of mental phenomena that are "dream-like states", ranging from a direct breakdown of dreams during wakefulness (hallucinations), ending with various cases of combining dreams and wakefulness. The latter include the so-called "waking dream" and esoteric "dreams". In a waking dream, our dreams, which we did not have time to realize in the period of sleep, adjust to the images and thematisms of the waking consciousness. Indeed, how often, without getting enough sleep, we can't concentrate on the events of our current life; our thoughts float somewhere to the side, interrupted by some memories, fantasies, images. In fact, these uncontrollable and seemingly outside stories are our dreams, smuggled out under the guise of waking themes, intertwined with waking perceptions.

Esoteric "dreams" do not develop by themselves and not immediately. They are preceded by several processes: the formation of an esoteric personality, the suppression of realities that do not meet the esoteric worldview, the increased pressure of blocked desires, the implementation of which should ensure that the esoteric personality achieves true reality, and the development of the mechanisms of dream-like states. When all these prerequisites can be formed, the conditions for esoteric "dreams" are formed: in fact, this is the realization in the waking period of dreams that ensure the realization of events related to true reality. In this regard, what the esotericist sees and experiences here is created by the work of his psyche, previously formed by the esoteric life and personality (see for more details (actually, on the other hand, "the awn of essentially converging with the canonical Christian faith, for example, Kant's criticism). ten reports [8]).

Is it not possible to assume that the spiritual world of Swedenborg is also esoteric dreams on the themes of Holy Scripture?

As I show in my research, entering the consciousness of dream-like realities involves comprehension and work of thinking, creating interpretations, formulating new approaches, and even rethinking one's position in the world. All this we find in the life of Swedenborg. First, he outlines new principles of scientific knowledge: he interprets nature as subordinate to the spiritual world, formulates the relationship of correspondence and the procedure for identifying correspondences associated with it, considers the statements of angels and his own spiritual experience as facts and scientific experience. Secondly, he claims that the Church inadequately expounds the Holy Scripture, and to him, Swedenborg, the Lord revealed the mysteries and the true meaning of the Word. Thirdly, as we remember, Swedenborg declares himself the messenger of the Lord, the messiah, called to reveal to Christians the true meaning of the Word and the knowledge of reality, since the end times are coming. "Such direct revelation is now taking place because it is the same that is meant by the coming of the Lord" [7]. These three innovations can be considered the Swedenborgian turn, which opened the way for many esotericists coming later from science or philosophy.

Here, of course, one can object by saying that the justification proposed by Swedenborg is not much different from the fantasies of a sick imagination attributed to Swedenborg in Kant's article. But in this way we can reach the assertion that any philosophical constructions are the fruit of a sick imagination. No, the reality built by Swedenborg has the same right to exist as, for example, the ideas of Plato, the God of St. Augustine, Kant's reason or Hegel's absolute spirit. All these realities are the result, on the one hand, of the realization of the personality of these philosophers, on the other hand, of understanding the problems and challenges of the time to which they responded, and on the third hand, following a certain tradition of thinking. But let us return to the cosmists and Semyonova, projecting the logic of the reconstruction of Swedenborg's construction (discovery) of immediate reality onto their personality and creativity.

It is not worthwhile, as Kant did, to consider the cosmists and Semenova not quite healthy mentally and scientifically ignorant. They were completely normal and fairly educated people (for example, Svetlana Semenova is a Russian philosopher, literary critic, historian

of Russian thought and literature, Doctor of Philology, member of the Writers' Union of Russia, researcher and publisher of the heritage of N. F. Fedorova, specialist in Russian cosmism). The point is different. These were bright personalities who dreamed that Russia would take its rightful place in world history and culture, who believed in the power of science and at the same time in Orthodoxy, who thought rationally and sacredly at the same time, confident that evolution would go in such a direction that would solve the main problems and the contradictions that humanity faces, believing that their efforts and creativity will bring the desired development of events closer. So, for example, thought the composer Scriabin, who was ideologically close to the cosmists.

““The Mystery of Scriabin,” writes B. F. Schlozer, “was to become the fulfillment, the realization of ecstasy, death and transformation of the Universe”. Realization, and not reproduction, and the universal, supra-personal character of this action - these are the two points that determined the development of the Mystery. In miniature, the plan of Scriabin’s Mystery is the history of mankind as a process of division and immersion of spirit into matter, acceptance of nature into Spirit, victory over heaviness, inertia, fragmentation of the natural world and a reverse return to unity. “In Scriabin’s notes, the goal and result of historical and cosmic evolution is ecstasy, the experience of which leads to a complete transformation of the cosmos and humanity in it. He states: “Ecstasy is the peak, there is the last moment, which... understands the whole history of mankind. Absolute being is realized... at the moment of the completion of Divine creation, at the moment of ecstasy”. “L. L. Sabaneev writes, reproducing the picture that Scriabin repeatedly painted to his friends: “He imagined the very secret action of the Mystery, the very procedural nature of its course, as a sequence of experiences by all participants in themselves of the whole history of the process of the fall of the Spirit into matter”... The word and forms, music and all incoming artistic essences had to symbolize the successive vicissitudes of the consciousness of the Spirit” (quoted from [8, p. 323]).

Conclusion

Like Swedenborg, the cosmists and Semenov built a reality in which all the moments listed here (dreams, intentions and actions) received a place and meaning. If you do not understand how such a reality arose and was created, but look for an explanation of these constructions within the framework of ordinary logic, then it turns out that there is no logic and meaningful discourse in the narratives of the cosmists and Semenova. But it is there, only for understanding it needs a turn - to the problems and aspirations of the individual, to the built reality in which these problems get their resolution (albeit on a virtual plane for now), to the historical tradition of thinking. The analysis shows that the cosmists, Semenova and some modern ideologists such as Dugin or Gromyko continue to move in line with the Russian tradition outlined by Chaadaev, Dostoevsky, Russian religious philosophers, Konstantin Leontiev, Solzhenitsyn [9]. Another tradition characteristic of the work of all the thinkers listed here is esoteric, which allows you to create realities, omitting the problems of implementation, following only one thing - constructing the world for your own personality [10]. “In the June section of the Writer’s Diaries,” Dostoevsky writes: “European culture has always been hated by the Russian soul; became fighters against Europe... Russia is not Europe... has long been in Russia in embryo and in possibility, but not in a revolutionary form, but in the form in which these ideas of universal human renewal should appear: in the form of divine truth, in the form of Christ’s truth, which someday will be realized on earth and which is completely preserved in Orthodoxy” <...> “The bourgeoisie will end and a Renewed humanity will come. It will divide the land into communities and begin to live in the Garden” (quoted from [9]). What is this if not a utopian and esoteric attitude?

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