

Spiritual and Ecological Civilization

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*The Essence and Mechanisms
of Formation*

By

Andrey Vladimirovich Ivanov,
Irina Valerjevna Fotieva
and Michail Yurjevich Shishin

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Irina Valerjevna Fotieva and Michail Yurjevich Shishin

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the latest in a series of works devoted to the grounding of the earth community's transition from a *technogenic and consumer* civilization to a new *spiritual and ecological*,¹ or *noospheric* civilization.

The first book in the series, entitled *Spiritual and Ecological Civilization: Foundations and Perspectives*, was published in 2001. But its ideas had been born earlier, during a series of international conferences, "Altai — Cosmos — Microcosm," where the organizers were the authors of the book. Begun in 1993 in Barnaul, in the Altai Mountains, these conferences continued up until 2000. All of those involved noted their peculiarities — firstly, the very high academic and intellectual level of most of the papers, and secondly, the rare unanimity of the majority of the participants. That unanimity manifested itself in the intimacy of the worldview that quickly established and preserved academic and human contacts for many years.² Our first book was developed from the discussions and heated debates at these conferences and the concept of a 'spiritual and ecological civilization' emerged at that time.

We published the next work, *Tablets of Metahistory: Creators and Stages of Spiritual and Ecological Civilization*, in 2006. First, referencing concrete historical examples, we tried to show that the ideal of social order was not utopian, not least because it had been realized more than once in human history, albeit only partially and for a short time. And, second, remarkable individuals, distinguished by their human and moral qualities, and possessing a high sense of belonging to the world, were responsible for the realization of such ideal social orders. Their energy and dedication spread to other people turning the wheel of history. Our main idea was that

¹ Spirituality means the highest level of personality development in the Russian language. The highest level of this development presupposes higher values: first of all, moral and selfless knowledge, creative work and an active social position. The higher values prevail over gain, material comfort, success, power, etc. Their philosophical interpretation (materialistic, idealistic, and religious) does not play a primary role here. Describing a new type of civilization, the authors define it not as spiritual, but spiritual and ecological, stressing the importance of a moral, rather than pragmatic attitude to wildlife, one that has been lost by Western civilization.

² The main core of participants was the same throughout the series of conferences, which took place between 1993 and 2000 in the Altai Mountains.

such people, and not ordinary people, pursuing only their own interests, embodied the human ideal and the human *norm* to which we should all strive if we wanted to have a future.

Another idea, expressed and grounded in the monograph of 2014, *Towards a New Civilization (Essays on a Spiritual and Ecological Worldview)*, was that the main wealth of any country was its untouched nature, spiritual values and the cultural traditions of its inhabitants. They were the main factors favoring the transition to a new civilization. In that book we showed the effect of those factors using the example of multinational Eurasia, which we understand to be a vast world stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean; particular emphasis was placed on the role of Siberia as a territory of huge, but yet to be realized possibilities.

Today, special responsibility and special efforts are needed from those countries with such enormous potential to preserve and increase their natural and cultural riches and come to a better understanding of their global significance. Perhaps the historical fate of all mankind depends on this in the new millennium.

In this monograph, we shall not only generalize and develop these ideas but put a new emphasis on the understanding of nature and the formative mechanisms of such a spiritual and ecological civilization.

CHAPTER ONE

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND PROBLEMS OF TECHNOGENIC AND CONSUMER CIVILIZATION

We may describe the current historical situation as the peak of the *anthropogenic*, i.e., man-made *chaos*. This has affected everything: the system of international law and the global economy together with finance; the basis of the family, culture, and education; both the physical and spiritual world of man. We began our first book on spiritual and ecological civilization with a short analysis of the global crisis, a consequence of modern technogenic and consumer civilization. Almost twenty years have passed, and all of our estimates have unfortunately turned out to be correct; moreover, the crisis has only worsened.

We enumerate **the main characteristics of the modern type of civilization, its values and worldview foundations** briefly:

- a focus on so-called liberal values (democracy, market, state of the law) as on the values of universal human nature;
- worship of scientific and technical progress;
- being in linear social time, practically ignoring biospheric and cosmic cycles, rhythms, and dependence;
- a focus on nature as a commonplace environment, subject to development, change and subordination to the interests of man;
- the individualism of civil society, only partially restrained by democratic legal institutions;
- a mercantilist cult of abstract productive labor for profit and money as a universal measure of economic efficiency and production;
- wealth and social career as the criteria of success in life;
- the industrial bourgeoisie and the financial oligarchy as the dominant social strata;
- the priority of indirect relationships (legal and economic), before direct ones (family, friendship, love, spiritual) between people.

These statements, which form the basis of all spheres of modern life, have created a number of serious and deepening problems. We shall remind ourselves of the most widely recognized ones.

- The discrepancy in living standards is continuing to grow between developed and underdeveloped countries.
- The global environmental crisis is deepening despite all of the measures taken and the resources invested in the protection of the environment.
- Destabilization of the biosphere is resulting in a steady increase in the number and strength of natural disasters and human losses.
- The number and magnitude of armed inter-state conflicts have reached unprecedented levels after World War II. There is a tendency to increase the number of victims and the degree of sophistication of the means of destruction. The civilian population of war-torn countries is especially vulnerable.
- An obvious degradation of the spiritual culture of mankind is taking place. Children are able to operate a computer skillfully and surf the Internet, but they are best known for moral infantilism, underdevelopment of the skills of verbal and logical thinking and a general lack of culture, especially in the sphere of the social sciences and the humanities.
- Religious extremism and fanaticism are growing together with militant atheism and irreligion, as well as nationalism and cosmopolitanism simultaneously. These dead-end ideological extremes feed off each other and destroy the spiritual foundations of society, where tolerance of other people's views, the breadth of thinking and the will to good are the basic values of human co-existence.
- The territories of the Earth, producing the most important life sources (air, water, and food), i.e., mountainous and agricultural regions are in the worst social and economic situation; while technogenic megacities and especially financial and political world centers are in the best situation.

So, it is quite natural that technogenic and consumer civilization, despite its undoubted achievements, is moving toward complete collapse. Many thinkers have warned us about this, keenly feeling the first signs of the decay. The outstanding German and American psychologist and philosopher Erich Fromm wrote with bitter irony in his work *To Have or to Be*:

“The Great Promise of Unlimited Progress — the promise of the domination of nature, of material abundance, of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, and of unimpeded personal freedom — has sustained the hopes and faith of generations since the beginning of the industrial age...We could feel that we were on our way to unlimited production and, hence, unlimited consumption; that technique made us omnipotent; that science made us omniscient. We were on our way to becoming gods, supreme beings who could create a second world, using the natural world only as building blocks for our new creation...The achievement of wealth and comfort for all was supposed to result in unrestricted happiness for all”.³

But the industrial age as Fromm continues,

“... has indeed failed to fulfill its Great Promise, and ever-growing numbers of people are becoming aware of the following things.

- Unrestricted satisfaction of all desires is not conducive to well-being, nor is it the way to happiness or even to maximum pleasure.
- The dream of being independent masters of our lives ended when we began awakening to the fact that we have all become cogs in the bureaucratic machine, with our thoughts, feelings, and tastes manipulated by government and industry and the mass communications that they control.
- Economic progress has remained restricted to the rich nations, and the gap between rich and poor nations has ever widened.
- Technical progress itself has created ecological dangers and the dangers of nuclear war, either or both of which may put an end to all civilization and possibly to all life.”⁴

The general conclusion is obvious: technogenic and consumer development strategies, based on the unlimited growth of material needs and the domination of market ideology, together with unrestrained technoeconomic expansion and social competition, have, in the end, led humanity to the brink of a global catastrophe.

“Order of Being”: Border between the Two Perspectives

We emphasize that the collapse of the technogenic and consumer model is primarily a collapse of its *basic ideas and values*. These values determine the development of all spheres of life ranging, directly or indirectly, from science, education, art, to economics and politics. And

³ Fromm, E. *To Have or to Be?* Moscow, 1990. p.10.

⁴ Ibid.

although many analysts are still searching for the causes of global problems in the imperfection of specific models and mechanisms of social order, these, in fact, are merely secondary. The *roots* of what is happening can be found in the fundamental change of true⁵ ideas and values into false and destructive ones. In short, **the oblivion of the spiritual ‘vertical’ hierarchy of being, and the absolute priority of the ‘horizontal,’ ‘physical’ dimensions of the world.**

Here, of course, the question arises: how we can understand this spiritual ‘vertical’ hierarchy? Indeed, the very notion of spirituality is itself extremely difficult to comprehend. Without entering into a philosophical analysis of its nature, we note only one of the most important aspects of spirituality: the recognition of the **objective “order of being.”**

By this objective order of being we mean the following: 1) the world is *united* at all levels: natural, cosmic, social, and spiritual. This means that all of us are connected with each other, with nature and with God⁶ through a complex and universal network; 2) this unity is ‘built’ in a certain way (has a structure): there are *measure, organization, and harmony* in the world, as opposed to disharmony and chaos.

The world order is clearly seen in nature;⁷ and this world order *is reflected* in the form of ***moral principles and the laws of mind***⁸ in human consciousness, albeit in a complicated way. These laws, unlike nature, do not force, but direct,⁹ thus putting into place a spiritual ‘vertical’ existence. We may imagine figuratively that *the good, truth, and beauty* are at its ‘upper end’; *evil, lies, and ugliness* are at the ‘lower end.’ It is known to be the most ancient philosophical and religious idea, and which becomes known again today, something we shall talk of later. Hence, the basic¹⁰ ***philosophical and ethical principles*** naturally follow:

⁵ We use this conservative term deliberately.

⁶ It is not important how we understand this notion. It may be a Supra-person, Absolute, Tao or a set of ideals bringing into being the spirit of Plato’s world of ideas.

⁷ The negation of laws of nature from the perspective of radical constructivism (the interpretation of these laws as constructs of the mind) is theoretically controversial and does not agree with practice. Critics have indicated this disagreement many times.

⁸ The word mind is similar to reason here, both of the words refer to one word in Russian. Here the authors mean the organized conscious and unconscious adaptive mental activity of a human being.

⁹ In other words, it is not direct determination, as in nature, but an indirect one.

¹⁰ In our opinion, concrete historical moral codes can be considered by analogy with scientific hypotheses. Humanity goes the hard way, often making mistakes or falling back, not only in the cognition of laws of nature, but also in the cognition of

- *the ministry of the Supreme* that is beyond my individual existence and brings to life its purpose and meaning (the service of God, science, art, humanity);
- the recognition and assumption of the *value of an other's being*, both physical and spiritual, (beginning with the commandments “thou shalt not kill,”¹¹ “thou shalt not steal,” and ending in the approval of the spiritual value of another personality, his or her freedom, dignity, and rights). Hence, the refusal of selfishness and individualism and the approval of a conciliatory life follow within these parameters;
- the responsibility for our own being, primarily for *self-development*, the realization of our own human potential.

And we should accept two universal principles: first, *hard work* in all of its forms, which we use to build our environment and ourselves; and second, *duty and self-discipline*.

Man, endowed with free will and the right to choose, may either seek to know the world order of being (in the world, in society and in him or herself) and follow it, harmonizing himself or herself and his or her surroundings. Or man may break the world order of being, bringing the above-mentioned anthropogenic chaos and disharmony.

People have understood the world order differently¹² for a very long historical period, but they did not doubt that it existed. But the situation began to change radically in the nineteenth century. A number of thinkers, such as Dostoevsky, felt the coming of a fateful turn. Dostoevsky defined it as the loss of “the connecting thought.” One of his characters tells the medieval story about the man who had committed a series of crimes against the church in the novel “The Idiot”:

moral laws. But all the same, the ‘core’ of knowledge gradually increases and this knowledge is not debatable.

¹¹ This commandment, as we know, has always been the subject of debate and different interpretations, for example, concerning the scope of its application. How far should this commandment be spread, for example, to the enemies of the homeland? Is it possible to kill those who encroach upon someone else’s life? In our opinion, there is: a) a *context* for the principle application, b) the moral demand for an active protection of good from evil. For example, resisting assault, we *defend the principle ‘thou shalt not kill’ from the attacks of the anti-principle to ‘kill’*. The difference is not only that ‘we did not start first’, but that we *aim not to kill, but to stop evil*. If you have the opportunity to confront the other’s methods, we should use them. If not, and the enemy dies, it is a sad necessity, not a goal.

¹² Especially its source: Tao, Logos, Brahman, Nous, personal God, etc.

“The criminal ends up by going and informing on himself to the clergy...Who made him go and inform on himself? Thus, there was something stronger than fires and lights and even a twenty-year habit! Thus, there was the strongest thought *over* all disasters, crop failures, torture, plague, leprosy, and all that hell, that mankind would never have stood without that **connecting, directing the heart and life-fertilizing thought** [emphasis added]! Show me anything similar to such force in our century...Show me the thought connecting mankind now with at least half the force as in those centuries... More wealth, but less strength; the connecting thought has failed”.¹³

Dostoevsky’s idea is clear: people used to believe that there was still a higher order above human evil, and hence there was a chance of salvation. Later, the outstanding Russian philosopher V. S. Solovyov said, in his second speech “In Memory of Dostoevsky,” that the essence of faith was the belief that there was an invisible force of the world’s good over and above the visible power of the world’s evil. That light was even glimmering in the heart of hearts of many criminals as the “connecting thought,” as a reflection of that spiritual vertical, connecting the whole world, from God to a blade of grass in the living Whole. As soon as that “connecting thought” was lost, as soon as the true faith began to disintegrate, the decay of the individual and society began.

How did that process start? It started when the world order ceased to be connected with the Absolute/God, i.e., the higher, spiritual reality. Religious faith was replaced by a faith in a rational order, in the human mind, fueled by a faith in “the natural order” of nature. And those beliefs ultimately failed, being attacked from two sides in the twentieth century.

Firstly, the faith in progress and in the ‘man of sense’¹⁴ was shattered, especially after the madness of two world wars and the onset of a political “new order” in the form of colonialism, imperialism, and the manipulation of mass consciousness. Obviously, such a violent pseudo-order invited legitimate protest. But the protest itself suffered an alarming reversal, accentuating the chaos and irrational ‘underground’ of the human soul, and introducing this into philosophy and art. Consequently, to an increasing degree, the very idea of order **was subject to denial**. This denial reached its peak in the postmodern philosophy of the second half of the twentieth century. At that time, reason¹⁵, morality, education, and

¹³ Dostoevsky, F. M. *The Idiot*. In: Dostoevsky, F. M. Complete Works in 15 volumes, Vol. 6. Leningrad, 1989, p. 381.

¹⁴ The authors mean man’s conscious awareness or rationality.

¹⁵ The ability to think and behave in a reasonable way and to make good decisions, peculiar to common sense is meant here.

upbringing were declared 'repressive,' all suppressing human freedom. Moreover, the very concept of personality lost its ontological center and was split into 'micro-texts,' social roles, etc. Integral, social and morally responsible personality was replaced by decentered play and, of course, irresponsibility.

Secondly, the simple and clear scientific worldview of the nineteenth century passed into oblivion. The success of natural science has discovered the frightening complexity of the world order, especially when studying the structure of matter and infinity of the Universe. Reason and common sense failed to gain knowledge of our Universe. New directions in gnoseology put an end to the proud claims of man as being "the king of nature," able to cognize the world. It was concluded that we did not actually know the world, but only 'designed' it, and therefore had no right to claim that there was an objective order in nature; in fact, it is our mind that imposes order on an unknowable reality: creating nothing more than an image¹⁶.

This process was accompanied by the pragmatism of scientific and technical projects aimed at the creation of bodily comfort, and the maintenance of all kinds of human desires, including perverse ones.

Summarizing, we may say that **Dostoevsky's prophecy came true by the end of the 20th century: if there is no God, everything is permitted**, and the scope of what was 'permitted' far surpassed the fears of the great writer.

But the new 21st century has brought new 'achievements'. A massive attack has begun on the last bulwarks of order: on the family and the upbringing of children; on the normal relations between the sexes. Moreover, massive attacks have been launched against the functional laws of the living organism (including the human) and, finally, on man as such. The apologists of transhumanism affirm that 'cyborg-man,' devoid of all humanity, is now entering the stage. We give a few examples for illustrative purposes.

"... They teach from school-days onwards in Norway that the notion of a 'traditional family' is hopelessly out of date, and even a special Center, under the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, has been set

¹⁶ But although constructivism, mentioned above, contains a significant moment of truth, consisting of its recognition of the influence of many factors on the learning process, and the 'overgrowing' of the received image by a mass of subjective 'makeweights', in the activity of the cognizing subject, it is mistaken when its extremes are falsely absolutized. We are close to the viewpoint of the famous Russian philosopher V. A. Lektorsky, which he called 'constructive realism'.

up to run educational programs that aim to cultivate children's attitude to sodomy as the norm... Those, who protest against the involvement of minors in the perverts' action, are accused of 'lack of tolerance'".¹⁷

"...The French authorities have announced that they intend to disband the religious communities whose 'members are showing signs of fanaticism,' traditional Roman Catholics, in particular... The reasons are obvious. In the opinion of the EU's leadership, Christianity is a threat to the ideas of European integration because it conflicts with the new 'European values,' such as same-sex 'marriages' or the system of total control".¹⁸

"The legalization of incest is seriously being discussed in the EU. European politicians present incest as a European 'gender norm' in the press and on TV. Thus, it is suggested to introduce the notion of 'incest phobia' by analogy with 'homophobia' and to punish expressions of 'incest phobia'... Sexual relationships between a father and a daughter, a mother and a son, a brother and a sister, and all the relatives, including blood relatives are proposed to be 'gender norms'".¹⁹

"Institutions of the juvenile judiciary control the behavior of parents and children fully. The main thesis of the authorities is that biological parents must not have priority in the education of their own children... It is legally forbidden to cry in Norway; tears are a sign of emotional instability. A Mother's tears, having lost her children due to the juvenile judiciary, will be evidence in court that she is unstable or crazy, and will only aggravate the 'guilt'".²⁰

"The Belgian Parliament has approved euthanasia for minors by 86 votes to 44... Belgium became the second country in the world after the Netherlands to allow children to commit suicide".²¹

The most important thing is that these phenomena are not random and isolated. This is a deliberate, organized attack on the foundations of human

¹⁷ Chechulesky, A. They organize gay parades for kids in the first form in Scandinavia. — URL: <http://www.1tv.ru/news/social/215116>

¹⁸ France as the cradle of the revolution... — URL: http://communitarian.ru/novosti/v-mire/vo-francii-oficialno-obyavili-o-nachale-goneniy-na-hristian-31102013/?bitrix_include_areas=Y

¹⁹ Incest legalization has been widely discussed in Western Europe. — URL: <http://file-rf.ru/news/13808>.

²⁰ They want to cancel the family in Norway. — URL: <http://www.pravda.ru/society/family/upbringing/09-02-2012/1107475-Norway-0/>

²¹ The Belgian Parliament adopted a Child Euthanasia Act. — URL: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/news/68494.htm>

existence, approved and authorized by the state. **For the first time ever there is official legalization of anti-moral and anti-rational ‘norms’ reduced to total absurdity in a number of countries.**

We do not dwell on the problem: “To whose profit?” This topic has been studied by many authors, and the main perpetrators of manipulation were named long ago: big business, the military, and political elites.²² And the technology is also known; for example, the “Overton window.” According to Overton’s model, it is possible to create a “window of opportunities” for each idea in society. An idea is perceived as “unbelievable, impossible” (‘black’) on one border, while being considered “normal and legal” (‘white’) on the other. In order to legalize the idea, it is gradually ‘moved’ from one end to the other, creating the staging area: ‘gray.’

“Step 1. From Unthinkable to Radical. A person, a group of people or an organization suggest discussing a completely taboo topic, for example, pedophilia in academic circles. Step 2. From Radical to Acceptable: A party of pedophiles enters the discussion, and the mass media transmit the news. The taboo is lifted. They begin to compare pedophiles with other radicals, for example, neo-Nazis. The gradation of the gray appears. Pedophiles are scary, but they have become a reality. They are already a part of society. The main thing at this stage is the euphemism, it is necessary to introduce a new politically correct term. They are not sodomites, but ‘gays,’ they are not cannibals, but ‘anthropophagites,’ they are not pedophiles, but ‘child-loving people.’ Step 3. From Acceptable to Reasonable: the topic of love is raised. ‘You do love your children, why can’t others love your children? Well, is this love mutual? People should have the right to happiness. Is it reasonable for them to fight for their rights? Of course, Yes!’ Step 4. From Reasonable to Popular: Interviews, open talks, talk shows on pedophilia. ‘And do you know that so-and-so writer/musician/famous public figure was a pedophile? You need to accept these people as they are. Do you like their works?’ Step 5. From Popular to Politics/norm: ‘Look, so many famous people have been ‘child-loving.’ It’s a part of the culture in Norway. Why should we deprive people of the right to be happy? Let’s legalize this relationship, formalizing them in legislation!’”²³

²² As well as a variety of ‘black lodges’ that play, apparently, a much more hidden role than the majority of modern intellectuals consider, they shy away from this topic contemptuously and consider its discussion to be in ‘bad taste’. But, as it was said long ago, the main success of the devil was in the fact that he was able to convince people that he did not exist.

²³ Postolov, I. *Overton Window of Opportunities and the Legalization of the Sin* — URL: // <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/67684.htm>

In addition, many authors emphasize correctly that,

“...described by Overton, the window of opportunities is the easiest way to move in a tolerant society. It is such a society that has no ideals and, consequently, no clear division between good and evil.”²⁴

However, it is necessary to remember that pessimism and fatalism are also the result of manipulation in this matter. We have made an attempt to justify the opposite thesis in our book *Tablets of Metahistory*²⁵: there is the *history of the spirit*²⁶ over the ‘profane’ history of political turmoil, wars and the distribution of resources. This *true history* is made by those who are conveyors and defenders of the higher goals and values of the human being, who **actively serve the higher**, that is to say, *not* politicians or bankers. Therefore, the aim of our book is not to offer a philosophy of power or an analysis of the dark global backdrop, but to help people gain confidence in the good and a firm grasp of the truth, a confidence in one’s own deep Self and, consequently, to help form an immunity to evil while fostering the will to do good.

Modern Irrationalism

It is ironic that the destruction of the idea of order today coexists with constant arguments about rationality. But, in reality, if we look carefully, we can see **the growing irrationalism** in all the spheres of human activity and thought. A lot of major projects and major decisions are made arbitrarily, not only without a systematic analysis or consideration of all the consequences but impulsively, for example, under the influence of the changing political situation (without speaking of the personal interests of certain circles).²⁷ Scientific and technological progress, as has already been mentioned, lead to the destruction of both the physical and mental

²⁴ URL: http://www.za-nauku.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=8004&Itemid=35

²⁵Ivanov, A.V., Fotieva, I. V., Shishin, M. Yu. *Tablets of Metahistory: Creators and Stages of Spiritual and Ecological Civilization*. Barnaul, 2006.

²⁶ The immaterial intelligent or sentient history here.

²⁷ So, the President of the USA, D. Trump has taken a number of openly anti-environmental decisions: the refusal of the climate agreement, the abolition of all barriers to the extraction of oil and gas, etc. It is obvious that these solutions are completely irrational when viewed against the background of a deepening global environmental crisis.

health of people and the surrounding environment. But this irrationality is itself manifested in three superficially different, but deeply related forms.

Extra-scientific irrationalism. Historically, this is connected with the church and a dogmatic position where the truths of religious revelation are contrasted to the truths of science and philosophy too abruptly and unreasonably. Today it manifests itself in the intolerance to any dissidence, including religious dissidence; in the uncritical and irrational conviction of the masses that their religion is better than other religions, and that they have the right to forcibly impose their views on those who think or believe otherwise. This could be explained by the political and other interests of the church understood as a social institution, but it is significant that many religious people actively support the asserted opposition of faith and reason: the ‘sanctification’ of a blind, unreasoning faith (the phenomenon of ISIS is a very good example). Such beliefs are commonly associated with ‘humility,’ and ‘humility’ is most often an indicator of the desire to absolve oneself of responsibility, shifting this to a ‘higher’ authority. There are, apparently, deep emotional fissures, lack of self-trust, fatigue with the chaos of modern life, and a desire to gain at least the illusion of inner support and a purely sectarian and artificial unity with other people at any price. This shows again how the very foundations of life are shattered in today’s world, how soft man feels the ground on which he stands. But it should be added, that not only ordinary believers but also many religious philosophers, even outstanding ones, have always been tempted by such irrationalism. Here S. Kierkegaard comes to mind, and in Russia, for example, L. Shestov, and even N. Berdyaev, who contrasted ‘truth’ (including scientific truth) and ‘freedom’:

“I have thought a lot during my whole life about the problem of freedom ... In school philosophy... freedom was thought of as freedom of choice, as an opportunity to turn right or left. The choice between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ implies that a person is set before a norm that distinguishes between good and evil...For me, freedom always meant something completely different. Freedom is my independence and the determinateness of my personality from within, and freedom is my creative power, not the choice between the good and evil set before me, and my *creation* of good and evil...Opponents of freedom like to oppose freedom to the truth that they impose and force to recognize. But there is no truth as an object imposed on me, as a reality falling on me from above. Truth is also the way and life...The truth imposed on me, required to renounce freedom, is not the truth at all, but is a devil’s temptation”.²⁸

²⁸ Berdyaev, N.A. *Self-knowledge*. Moscow, 1991, pp. 61-62.

But this position quite naturally leads to a situation of deadlock, even in the sphere of personal self-determination. In order to talk about the ‘creation’ of good and evil, it is necessary to have *a priori* ideas about their existence, and about the criteria for the difference. In order to “determine one’s personality from within,” one must already have something with which this self-determination can be correlated. Otherwise, it turns out not to be creation or self-determination, but a pure random impulse, not free, but conditioned by any external influences. At the same time, the ‘free’ person actually appears as a “cork man” on the water — as the criteria and goals of choice and self-determination disappear. This is a logical result of the position of irrationalism.

In addition to religious irrationalism, a more dangerous kind of extra-scientific irrationalism is widely in evidence today. It is expressed in the unprecedented recurrence of magic and pseudo-occult teachings²⁹. Magicism is manifested in openly aggressive sectarianism, lack of respect for science and rationality, the denial of the truths and values of traditional religions in the most primitive form. The Shinrikyo sect and the so-called ‘Dianetics’ of R. Hubbard are good examples. But there are more complex manifestations of magicism, in which a significant number of modern-day intellectuals, dissatisfied with pointless materialism, are interested in today. They admit non-material (‘ideal’) reality, but at the same time deny a clear spiritual hierarchy, e.g., a clear division of good and evil. In the end, the extracts of magical knowledge and practices³⁰ are subordinated to strictly-selfish purposes. These objectives can be quite mundane, i.e., power, money,³¹ fame, but there may be more subtle, *quasi-spiritual*, objectives, for example, achieving unusual states of consciousness, vivid excitements, self-assertion, a sense of superiority over the ‘crowd.’ Selfish goals are the first and most important sign of the difference between such magicism and the religious way, or, indeed, any true way of personal spiritual ascension. The second sign is the artificiality of all magical practices, attempts at violence against nature, including a state of mind and consciousness, i.e., again, against “the order of being.” Today magicism is

²⁹ We are talking about modern and amateurish pseudo-occultism, as occult teachings in their unadulterated form are a complex and interesting phenomenon, requiring a serious analysis.

³⁰ These are extracts presented by a modern ‘guru’. But the danger, however, is great: all such practices are based on working with the mind and consciousness. Ignorant ‘magical’ interventions in this area lead to mental disorders that the authors of the book witnessed on many occasions.

³¹ Including the cases when the newly-minted ‘guru’ takes the money for his or her ‘instructions’. However, here we do not confront magic but, rather, quackery.

active and is being introduced in psychotherapy under different names (e.g., neurolinguistic programming) and political technologies, and even science itself where it can always be revealed in the following: *violence, artificiality, egoistically-mundane purposes.*

Scientific irrationalism. This is also expressed in two main forms. Firstly, it is the negation of all kinds of knowledge, except recognized knowledge in modern science, and the negation of the very possibility of *super-rational* forms of knowledge, i.e., *transcendental (mystical) experience.* The fact is ignored that not only religious practices, but many traditions of philosophy (both eastern and western) are based on transcendental (mystical) experience³². More than that, this experience is the basis for all great scientific discoveries and flashes of intuition. In the end, science is focused on the narrow, available only to the “average person”, level of material reality. It is not surprising that proven facts, which cannot be explained by traditional scientific concepts, are as a rule ignored or falsely denied in formal scientific circles. This aggressive protection of narrow prejudice, even under the banner of science, is irrationalism in its purest form. Here is a vivid example: several years ago, the Commission for Combating Pseudoscience and the Falsification of Scientific Research under the Russian Academy of Sciences was established and is actively operating. The very problem of the appearance and rapid development of pseudoscience in all its forms is, of course, important: unfortunately, today the “pluralism of opinions,” in its worst form, has penetrated scientific research and many of the studies and conclusions of the Commission deserve our attention. But, unfortunately, its members sharply reject not only outright charlatantry but everything that at least partially does not coincide with the rigid principles of scientific knowledge, although these principles have long required revision. We will return to this topic later, but will now illustrate the work of the

³² We call these philosophical traditions the *metaphysics of unitotality.* It is the tradition of Russian religious philosophy at the end of the 19th — at the beginning of the first half of 20th century. It was a new stage in the development of the line in the philosophy of the West and the East, which is based on a number of more or less common principles: recognition of the absolute first beginning (the All, God, Parabrahman, the Tao, etc.) as a source of order, meaning and core values of the world being; mutual mediation of material and ideal beginnings; recognition of the deep (or the divine) self in man. The modern Russian philosopher G. G. Mayorov calls it ‘sophian’ philosophy. Figuratively speaking, fresh sprouts of this eternal line in philosophy are starting to come up through the thick layer of dead leaves of flat-materialistic and purely spiritualistic concepts of the last centuries around the world today.

Commission. In 2017, its Bulletin No. 19 was devoted to the ‘exposure’ of homeopathy:

“Homeopathy as a kind of alternative medicine has existed for more than 200 years. During this time, attempts were repeatedly made to establish a scientific base for homeopathy. All of them were in the end unsuccessful:

- Numerous clinical trials conducted in different countries at different times could not experimentally demonstrate the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies and methods of treatment;
- Numerous proposed theoretical explanations of possible mechanisms of homeopathy are in contradiction to firmly established scientific ideas about the structure of matter, the organization of living organisms and the functioning of medicines;
- a priori postulated ‘principles of homeopathy’ are by their nature speculative dogmatic statements that go back to the proto-scientific stage of the development of physiology and medicine.

... This memorandum states that, within the scientific community, homeopathy for the moment is considered as a pseudoscience. Its use in medicine contradicts the main goals of domestic healthcare and must meet organized state resistance”.³³

Here the phrase “firmly established scientific ideas” is very indicative, but even many ordinary people know how the views on science and scientific knowledge have changed in the last century; how much scientific methods are being revised today. More than that, many of the recorded successes of homeopathic treatment are completely ignored here (one of the authors of the book personally and repeatedly experienced this herself). The fact that the mechanism of homeopathy is not yet clear means only that we currently have insufficient knowledge. Therefore, such statements are typical examples of scientific dogmatism.

Secondly, as has already been mentioned, irrationalism is manifested in the form of a peculiar *scientific magic* within science. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the generally negative trend in education and science. Fundamentality, consistency, breadth, and depth of knowledge are being lost as the number of specialists increases. These specialists cannot be called *scientists*: they know only their very narrow sphere of knowledge, have no broad education. Also, they neither possess philosophical thinking nor know how to evaluate their research from the viewpoint of the Whole. Therefore, they are unable to evaluate adequately

³³ “In Defense of Science”. Bulletin No. 19, 2017. URL: [http://klnran.ru/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BVZN_19 .pdf](http://klnran.ru/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/BVZN_19.pdf).

many hazardous, albeit self-confidently promoted projects. V.S. Solovyov, the outstanding Russian philosopher, pointed this out:

“It is a lie that we call such a thought, which takes exclusively one part of the particular sides of being, and denies the rest of the others in the name of it...”³⁴

Thus, these specialists’ narrow, private knowledge, when denying that which is beyond its frontiers, is a lie. Therefore, present industrial and information technologies, even those successfully applied in their spheres, but based on the “laws of a part,” often result in disorder and potentially destroy the whole. Thus, a modern technique, which is based only on the action of physical laws, results in the destruction of the holistic biogeocenose. The rapid development of information technologies leads to the serious destabilization of the human mind as a coherent system, because our consciousness is not confined to sign-structured information operations. Especially dangerous are the biotechnological experiments on the genome of living organisms, including man, as well as attempts to create ‘human-cyborgs’.

Let us remark that contrariety and vicious reasoning, which we have written about, are clearly in evidence here. For example, the well-known biologist, neurophysiologist, T.V. Chernigovskaya, on the one hand, supports a thesis regarding the *direct* (ontological) information *openness* of consciousness to the world.³⁵ Yet, on the other hand, she actively supports the creation of man-cyborgs and the splicing of the brain with a computer. And in her lectures and speeches, she believes that the current use of computer networks and devices is the first step on the way to fundamentally expanding our consciousness. However, first, these engineered capabilities have not changed the possibilities of consciousness *in themselves*; they have merely increased the flow of information dramatically. Besides, 90% of information noise would ‘pollute’ consciousness, without expanding its limits in this flow. Second, the most

³⁴Solovyov, V.S. Collection in 2 Volumes. Volume 1. Moscow, 1988, p. 395.

³⁵ It is the oldest idea of all ‘sophian philosophy’ (the metaphysics of unitotality). It has increasingly been supported and confirmed in various studies in recent decades. We can recall, for example, works of western authors, written by G. Hunt and J. Gibson. As G. Hunt writes, “in contrast to the traditional view of the nature of consciousness, it is important to note that in principle Gibson flow is shared... it is ‘consciousness with’ **essentially ‘non-partialar’ consciousness** [emphasis added], on the absence of which most representatives of western philosophy and psychology insisted”.– Hunt, G. *About the Nature of Consciousness: Cognitive, Phenomenological and Transpersonal Perspectives*. Moscow, 2004, p. 116.

important thing is that *openness* assumes a *direct bond between consciousness and the world*, which was well known and practiced by all ancient cultures. And then it is unclear why we should re-invent artificial technical ‘crutches’ instead of developing these natural abilities, something that was achieved long ago in the Indian schools of yoga or the Taoist monasteries of China.

Moreover, if first and foremost we consider the personality to be a spiritual creature, being in diverse subtle-informational (ideal) interaction with the world, we can imagine all these practices giving rise to chaos in the mind, as well as in the whole body (the transplantation of the operations of animal organs in the human body, or sex affirmation surgery; sophisticated forms of the information manipulation of consciousness, etc). All these things, as already mentioned, are the same ‘black magic’, except placed within the externally legitimate scientific frame, which Russian philosophers P. A. Florensky, S. N. Bulgakov and N. A. Berdyaev have warned us about.

Philosophical irrationalism. This reached its peak in postmodernist philosophy. In fact, it is not even a ‘philosophy’ because there is neither wisdom, nor love, but rather a general destructive and diseased way of thinking. It is here that the goal is set to destroy the idea of an order of being. It is a paradox that postmodernist philosophy turns out to be close to the ideology of destructive sects, as it brands logic and reason as manifestations of ‘repression’ and ‘totalitarianism’. Consequently, postmodernists deny science (because it is based on the recognition of the laws of nature³⁶); and the human mind (because it doesn’t only ‘constructs’ these laws, but also *cognizes* through them); and culture and education. Moral values are denied too, and anti-values (pathology and anomalies supposedly embodying the spirit of freedom) are promoted instead. The purpose of life, for philosophical irrationalism, is an ability to play a variety of (fictional, scientific, occult, philosophical) language games freely and ironically. As a result, human existence is without basis and devoid of depth; being fluid and event-driven, it becomes deeply meaningless.

Unfortunately, even for many professional philosophers, this ideology has replaced the classical view of science as *a search for the truth*, the revelation of **objective internal structures, and the connections and laws of the Whole**. Such professionals look at nature as a construction toy, in which we may frame and take to pieces everything we want at our

³⁶ In the sense that we recognize their independent existence from our subjectivity. It is natural that our understanding of these laws deepens as far as our knowledge increases.

own whim, including man himself. Here is a good example of this reasoning:

“The individual...is an integral unit, assembled from large microbiological coordinating practices...The individual is a used resource for the science and technology complex, and attempts to defend his ‘holiness’ by right, moral and ethical complex is a barrier to progress...We are free to move in other new huge territories of habitat, computerized and created with genetic methods, where the limits are set only by the power of fancy”³⁷.

The question arises: what unites the three kinds of irrationality? Firstly, it is the narrowness and subjectivity of thinking. Using the parlance of Plato, we are dealing with “shockingly bad” religion, “shockingly bad science” and “shockingly bad philosophy” here, making their prejudices absolute. Secondly, it is absolute *heartlessness*. It was that heartlessness that Russian philosopher I. A. Ilyin considered the main threat to civilization at the beginning of the century. He wrote:

“Present-day humanity...must understand and make sure that ... *heartless culture is not culture but evil ‘civilization,’* creating disastrous technical equipment and a humiliating agonizing life.”³⁸

And further, he writes,

“Heartless thinking, even the cleverest and nimblest one, is *indifferent* in the end: it does not matter what to take on, or to think over or to study. It turns out to be insensitive, indifferent, relativistic (All is conventional! All is relative!), machinelike, cold and cynical... Its main device is mental degradation of life, like mental ‘vivisection’ of living phenomena and beings”.³⁹

And, thirdly, again, it is the denial of the order of being in which the world inevitably becomes the theater of the absurd.

³⁷ Bertilsson, M. The Rebirth of Nature: Implications for Social Categories. In: *Socis*, 2002, No. 9, pp. 119-123.

³⁸ Ilyin, I. A. *Way to Evidence*. Moscow, 1993, p. 296.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 298.

“Emperor with No Clothes”

But is there no truth in the dominant and destructive postmodern ideology of today? For it does seem to rest on a number of specific philosophical arguments. Let us try to understand them.

The first argument is associated with the social and historical situation. Today the human world is complex, ‘nonlinear,’ contradictory, and that, as many people see it, refutes the idea of order. The ideology of postmodernism simply reflects these changes,

“... [postmodernism] records and describes the fundamental shifts that occurred in the consciousness of European culture under the influence of the realities of the twentieth century...The cultural and historical situation of modernity has contributed new, special meanings to the atmosphere of intellectual life...We should treat postmodernism seriously in the sense that it is completely natural and congruent with the realities of modern civilization and culture (in the ontological sense)”.⁴⁰

But this reasoning suffers from serious errors. First, this is granting the status of ‘objective laws’ to any social and cultural process: everything happening in the world is believed to be ‘inevitable and objective’, so people have to accept and adapt. The above author does not seem to notice the contradiction: there are no objective laws from the postmodern viewpoint, so, why do the ‘new meanings’ have any priority over the old ones, and why should we accept them? But this is not the main thing. The existence of objective laws in history is a debatable question. In our opinion, these are *meta-laws*; they are a complex reflection of the world order in its social being. If this is true, then there should be some mechanism of natural selection, but at the level of civilization. Namely, if our free will chooses the wrong track, which does not agree with the world order, human society will gradually deteriorate and may disappear from the face of the Earth. V. S. Solovyov conceived of something close to this:

“...We should admit that there is also a fatal necessity, but...indirect and conditional in the moral world. Vocation, or the particular idea that the thought of God considers for each moral being (an individual or the nation), and which is opened to the mind of this creature as his supreme duty, this idea applies as real power in all cases, it determines the being of a moral creature in all cases, but it does it by two opposite ways: it

⁴⁰ Uvarov, M. S. *Is Postmodernism Elite?* — URL: http://www.sofik-rgi.narod.ru/avtori/uvarov_postmodern.htm

manifests itself as the law of life, when duty is fulfilled, and as the law of death, when it did not happen”.⁴¹

It follows that we should not accept blindly and adapt to all social and cultural processes and ‘new meanings,’ but *evaluate them as true or false*. Large-scale crises in all spheres are the visible sign of our rejection: not only is our society being crippled but also the natural basis of our existence.

The Postmodernists’ second argument is associated with a dramatic change in the scientific worldview. Here is a typical example,

“...Prigogine’s hypothesis about the instability of the Universe is postmodern, according to which the world is in a precarious balance, teetering on the brink of order and chaos...We should recall B. Mandelbrot’s fractal geometry...In general, post-non-classical science is characterized by the rejection of the dominant concept of the world as the rigid universe, subordinated to immutable laws...and the transition to its understanding as the ever-changing, and amorphous; multivariate in its development and an infinitely complex reality”.⁴²

These arguments are an example of banal ignorance. Why do multiplicity and variability necessarily mean ‘amorphousness’? Why does the existence of laws imply a ‘rigid’ universe? How does this fractality come into the picture, when the essence of such fractality is a complicated mathematical order?

But there is another more serious mistake: the narrow and one-sided interpretation of order. **The order of being is as multidimensional, dynamic and hierarchical, as being itself.** So, the advances in natural science just prove the higher orderliness of the universe, an order that is not primitive but, rather, complex and only partially comprehensible. We would add that another aspect of the order of knowledge is its combination with openness, i.e., the eternal renewal and clarification of our scientific knowledge, and the preservation of the obtained relative truths.⁴³

⁴¹ Solovyov, V. S. *The Russian Idea*. In: *The Russian Idea*. The Collection of Russian Thinkers’ Works. Moscow, 2002, p. 229.

⁴² Emelin, V.A. *Postmodernist Labyrinths: Identification of the Elusive Meaning*. — URL:
http://istina.msu.ru/media/publications/articles/245/88d/592700/LABIRINTYi_POSTMODERNIZMA_IDENTIFIKATsIYa_Uskolzayuschego_smyisla.pdf

⁴³ Nobody denies the partial truth of Newton’s mechanical laws or Mendel’s laws of inheritance, although, of course, our knowledge has moved forward in the field of mechanics and genetics significantly since then.

If you tell a naturalist or a practitioner about the basic ‘truths’ of postmodernism, this will raise an ironic smile. For example, you can imagine the reaction of an animal technician to the statement that the rules and composition of feeding cattle is the “conceptual construct of his scientific consciousness.” He will almost certainly answer that the discrepancy between his subjective knowledge of the reality may result in the death of a poor cow and the loss of his personal scientific reputation, and therefore, he, unlike the irresponsible philosopher-humanitarian, certainly believes in the objective laws of physiology and a balanced diet.

And, as we have said, the growing irrationality of modern life is itself a convincing argument against postmodern ideology. Even helpful and sensible ideas have been distorted into becoming their opposites for the past decades; for example, the famous slogan “liberty, equality, fraternity.” The remnants of moral norms, natural laws were alive during the development of the “Charter of Human Rights” in the mid-twentieth century. So, it was not then apparent that freedom could be interpreted as permissiveness, i.e., the destruction of the family, the organization of bloody shows for children, sacrilegious acts in the temple, etc. But the masses decided: why not? Because everything is relative in the world, and therefore everything is permitted. The concept of equality has undergone a startling transformation. It changed from equality before the law into a violent *adjustment, the leveling* of people (their personal qualities, intelligence, cultural affiliation)⁴⁴ on the grounds of ‘tolerance’ and ‘political correctness’. The absurdity of this is clear: on the one hand; it is stated that human characteristics, tastes are equal (in the sense of “none is better than the other”). But on the other hand, any hint of these features is somehow perceived as an offense. Let us take, for example, a ‘gender diversity’ ban. Does it turn out that to be a woman or a man is offensive?

“In contemporary capitalistic society, the meaning of equality has been transformed. By equality, one refers to the equality of automatons; of men who have lost their individuality. Equality today means ‘sameness’ rather than ‘one-ness. It is the sameness of abstractions, of the men who work in the same jobs, who have the same amusements, who read the same newspapers, who have the same feelings and the same ideas. In this respect, one must also look with some skepticism at some achievements which are usually praised as signs of our progress, such as the equality of

⁴⁴ By the way, if you look at it from a systemic point of view, any complex, developed system is orderly, *hierarchical*. The elements are ‘equal’ (that is ‘the same’) only in the most primitive ‘zero-system,’ for example in a pile of sand.

women. Needless to say, I am not speaking against the equality of women, but the positive aspects of this tendency for equality must not deceive one. It is part of the trend toward the elimination of differences. Equality is bought at this very price: women are equal because they are not different anymore. The proposition of Enlightenment philosophy, *l'ame n'a pas de sexe*, the soul has no sex, has become the general practice. The polarity of the sexes is disappearing and with it erotic love, which is based on this polarity. Men and women become the same, not equals as opposite poles. Contemporary society preaches this ideal of un-individualized equality because it needs human atoms, each one the same, to make them function in a mass aggregation, smoothly, without friction; all obeying the same commands, yet everybody being convinced that he is following his own desires. Just as modern mass production requires the standardization of commodities, so the social process requires the standardization of man, and this standardization is called 'equality.'

Union by conformity is not intense and violent; it is calm, dictated by routine, and for this very reason is often insufficient to pacify the anxiety of separateness. The incidence of alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive sexualism, and suicide in contemporary Western society are symptoms of this relative failure of herd conformity. Furthermore, this solution concerns mainly the mind and not the body, and for this reason too is lacking in comparison with the orgiastic solutions. Herd conformity has only one advantage: it is permanent, and not spasmodic. The individual is introduced into the conformity pattern at the age of three or four, and subsequently never loses his contact with the herd⁴⁵.

And it is significant that any attempts to introduce logic into this nonsense are aggressively rejected. There is a clear feeling that the world is directly moving toward the realization of well-known dystopias, written by Bradbury, Zamyatin or Orwell.

Of course, we may say much more on this topic, but we hope that the crudity of the apologists' arguments of postmodern 'deconstruction' is clear even from this cursory review. The emperor is without clothes once again.

Human Nature

Opponents often argue: if humanity has chosen this path of civilization, then there was no other choice, this is *human nature* itself. Given that this topic is huge and complex, we shall discuss only some of the main issues.

⁴⁵ Fromm, E. *The Art of Loving*. London, 1995, pp. 12-13.

Having abandoned the old notions of man as a primarily spiritual being, the European philosophy tried to create its own, secularized model of a 'man of sense' and a 'reasonable society.' It was considered that it was only necessary to free people from external oppression, to create conditions for full social and economic life, and those acts could guarantee social progress and personal development. The liberal democratic doctrine was formed with those goals in view. But those illusions were quickly dispelled. The 'mass,' about which much was written in the twentieth century, has come into being instead of a society of moral, active and intelligent citizens.

"The multitude has suddenly become visible, installing itself in the preferential positions in society. Before, if it existed, it passed unnoticed, occupying the background of the social stage; now it has advanced to the footlights and is the principal character. There are no longer protagonists; there is only the chorus...The mass is the average man. In this way what was mere quantity- the multitude- is converted into a qualitative determination: it becomes the common social quality, man as undifferentiated from other men, but as repeating, in himself, a generic type. The characteristic of the hour is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will. As they say in the United States: 'to be different is to be indecent'. The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select.

...The common man, finding himself in a world so excellent, technically and socially, believes that it has been produced by nature, and never thinks of the personal efforts of highly-endowed individuals which the creation of this new world presupposed...This leads us to note down in our psychological chart of the mass-man of today two fundamental traits: the free expansion of his vital desires, and therefore, of his personality; and his radical ingratitude towards that which has made possible the ease of his existence. These traits together make up the well-known psychology of the spoiled child.... The young child exposed to this regime has no experience of its own limits. By reason of the removal of all external restraint, all clashing with other things, he comes actually to believe that he is the only one that exists, and gets used to not considering others, especially not considering them as superior to himself. This feeling of another's superiority could only be instilled in him by someone who, being stronger than he is, should force him to give up some desire, to restrict himself, to restrain himself. He would then have learned this fundamental discipline: 'Here I end and here begins another more powerful than I am. In the world, apparently, there are two people: I myself and another superior to me'. The ordinary man of past times was daily taught this elemental wisdom by the world about him, because it was a world so rudely organized, that