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The Universe as an Aesthetic Symbolism of Postmodernity

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Abstract: The article reveals the philosophical, worldview, aesthetically-axiological aspects of considering the universe as a symbolic phenomenon of the postmodern era. It is emphasized that the analysis of beauty, as the basic category of aesthetics, needs to find out its aggregate nature, depending on the individual and social semantic characteristics of reality. One of the key points of such an analysis is its metaphysical problematic – the direct emergence of constructive emotion into the realm of the transcendental, namely, the view of Man from the Universe from the standpoint of eternity. The timeliness and necessity of considering the problem of the symbolic context of the universe is obvious in the context of the third millennium, the realities of which call into question the very fact of conservation of wildlife on Earth. In the minds of assimilating the finality of the earthly boot, its primarity of progressive stochasticity, in the midst of the amplification of the eschatological context, the people of the era of postmodernity are demonstrating the development of the fastflowing, hardened nonsense. In the philosophical tradition, the symbol is the role of a pure "selfness", not tied to the powerful moment of the object: the symbolic picture does not reflect reality, as it is - the symbol of knowing the "refair" in the sphere of the virtual. It is proved that for the modern man the Universe is the object of not only scientific, technological, but also philosophical, cultural studies, it synthesizes for the unity of the object of scientific interest, a symbol of aesthetic pleasure and a source of formation of appropriate images and archetypes.

Keywords: *Universe; Cosmos; human; living matter; beauty; values; chaos; symbol; macrocosm.*

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1. Introduction

Of the idea of the Cosmos as a single world to the actualization in philosophy of the idea of a pluralistic picture of the world, each of which does not aspire to the status of ontology; from dreams of the Cosmos, its aesthetic symbolization – to rational knowledge and practical assimilation. Ovid's dream – not only to admire the cosmos, but also In the XXI century, society acquires fundamentally new qualities of complexity, unpredictability and stochasticity: individuals, social groups, cultures, societies and technologies are taking the shape of a new reality of existence, and hence there is an increasing need for updated theoretical and methodological tools, worldviews, in new thinking paradigms and models of imagination. The second half of the last century was marked by the formation of a wide range of extraordinary, defining, mutually enriching discoveries, ideas and inventions in various fields of human knowledge. For decades, there has been a journey from the blind selfish subjugation of nature to the realization of prudent environmental policy, from the pre-emption to "touch your hand to the sky" – has come to life in the form of one of the most significant and far-reaching achievements of earthly civilization.

Why is humankind constantly interested in the topic of space, the universe? Maybe because "Global consequences of the scientific and technical progress, the exit into space make us think over the social and philosophical problem 'the man – the universe', the problem of correlation between a cosmic particle of dust of the personality possessing mind and gigantic, practically endless universe" (Berehova, 2020, p. 43).

In the postmodern era, the fundamental foundations of knowledge are extremely important. The methodology of cognition in postmodernism is distinguished by an extraordinary pluralism - this applies to the study of both man and the Cosmos (Bekh et al., 2020; Sagan, 2011). Research on consequentialism in the context of the commercial exploration of the Cosmos is also relevant. Some authors predict an active expansion of the space market and the colonization of space objects. All this can lead to a revision of the fundamental provisions of consequentialism (Bazaluk & Balinchenko, 2020).

The reference to the theme of the Universe as an aesthetic symbol of the postmodern is conditioned by the contradictions that are etiologically arising within the rather broad limits of the universe's interpretation of itself in the contexts of the natural and theological sciences, philosophy and culture, forming a powerful corpus of "eternal images." A meticulous philosophical analysis of beauty as a key category of aesthetics, of course, requires clarification of the cumulative nature of the category, depending on

the individual and social semantic characteristics of reality. One of the most important points of such analysis is its metaphysical problematic – the direct exit of constructive emotion into the realm of the transcendental: the view of Man on the Universe *sub specie aeternalis* – from the standpoint of eternity.

2. Diversity and multi-dimensionality of "Universe" phenomenon

Traditionally, philosophy seeks to explain the eternal from the standpoint of the present, rational means of creating the most generalized picture of the world and establishing the place and role of man in the universe. We have good reason to agree with Oleg Bazaluk's view that "the need for a philosophical way of knowing the world is rooted in the dynamics of social life and is dictated by the real needs to find new worldviews governing human activity. There are always epochs in the development of society when the established landmarks expressed by the system of universals of culture – ideas about nature, society, man, good and evil, life and death, freedom and necessity, etc. – cease to provide the reproduction and cohesion of activities necessary for society. Then there are gaps in traditions and the need to search for new worldview meanings. Philosophy produces them. It summarizes the created, opened, reproduced into a holistic picture, and presents the world as a system in which everything known about the world for a given period of time takes its place" (Bazaluk, 2008, p. 4).

In antiquity, thinkers identified the Universe (Cosmos) and Beauty, while the aesthetic motives of ancient philosophy were closely implicated with the mythological worldview. The formation of scientific knowledge in ancient Greece was intensified by the natural-philosophical understanding of the world, and the syncretism (integrity) of philosophical knowledge (Sagatovskiy, 1999) led to an understanding of nature as a whole, made up of interrelated and interdependent components. The key philosophical problems of this period were the search for the natural primordial and the design of cosmogony – knowledge of the processes of origin and development of objects of the cosmos, an element of which was recognized by man. In Plato, in particular, philosophical assumptions about nature take the form of a cosmogonic myth. In Timay's work, he emphasizes: "What about the all-embracing sky?" Call it the cosmos or whatever name is most appropriate for it, we are in any case obliged to ask the question from which we should begin to consider any thing: whether it always was, without having its origin, or did it arise from the beginning? ... Cosmos is the most wonderful thing ever to happen, and its demiurge is the best for a reason. In this way, the cosmos was created on the same and unchanging pattern, which is grasped with the help of consciousness and mind" (Plato, 2007, p. 510).

Anaxagoras portrayed the image of chaos as an undifferentiated mixture, contrasting it with an order created by a Mind that is not part of the world. The concept of space is opposed to the concept of chaos: "At origin of the "cosmos" idea, there were the simple observations made on the phenomena of nature…The big and central idea of ancient Greek Philosophy is concentrated in the notion of cosmos-order, which gives the unity of the world, harmony but also determinism, as well as the preoccupation to understand the origin of the world and its order in search a divinity as a unitary principle Unchangeable, to give him real existence" (Bugiulescu, 2017, p. 26).

It should be emphasized that the very word "cosmos" in ancient Greece symbolized order, perfect order, proper measure, and "light-handed" Pythagoras made sense as the definition of the universe in general; so Pythagoras highlighted the most important characteristics of the universe – its symmetry, orderliness, harmony, organization, in a generalized sense – its beauty. The beauty of the universe (macrocosm) is revealed only to the person who lives in harmony with his inner world (microcosm), maintains his orderliness, organization and beauty. Such a way of life, according to Pythagoras, leads to cosmic meta-target – the transfer of the harmony of the universe to the inner world of man. In this context, the beauty of the universe is a reflection in the soul of man, which in turn is enriched by the beauty of cosmic harmony; at the same time, in the cataclysms of the universe – the formation of black holes, the disappearance of individual stars and entire galaxies – there is nothing ugly. Cosmic dramas, "written out" by the Creator, evoke in man a complex range of feelings, which results in an understanding of the beauty of eternal change, the harmony of bright flashes and fades, the laws of the highest inspiration of the universe and its seeming soullessness; giving cosmic processes and phenomena signs of anthropomorphism, man eternally bows to the wise, perfect, intelligent beauty of the universe.

It is also necessary to note that in the worldview tradition of the ancient world, the cosmos not only was inhabited by living beings of different levels of organization, but also acquired the meaning of a living creature. However, even among the thinkers of the Antiquity, there were fundamental contradictions: the ontology and cosmogony of the ancient Greek atomists was the opposite of Platonic. In the following centuries, ontological and cosmological contexts about the origin of species have never existed in the consensus space, and today discussions continue on "eternal" issues – about chance, order, necessity, and purpose in the earthly nature and beyond – throughout the Universe (Hodge, 2019).

In the Middle Ages, the notion of "cosmos" in some way changed its meaning: in the ancient sense of the cosmos – the universe is holistic, unified and harmonious, then in the interpretation of medieval thinkers it is dualistic – split into two worlds: the divine and the human. In other words, the ancient Cosmos as the embodiment of the natural beauty of the world order and harmony in the contextual space of the Middle Ages lost much of its sacredness – the notion of "cosmos" gained a prevailing affiliation with the human world, demonstrating a semantic emancipation from the sublime esthetics. The truth, according to Aurelius Augustine, must be sought not in space, but in the soul of man. From the Antiquity era, the medieval understanding of the cosmos received "inheritance" a sense of hierarchical ordering, structure and harmony. But the beauty of the ancient Cosmos is nothing before the beauty of the church; deployed before the curious eye of the human abyss of the Cosmos, it occupies only a secondary position in a system of ideological orientations, value ideals and everyday constants, the unconditional dominant of which was the holy church.

One of the clearest tenets of Renaissance philosophy is the affirmation of the infinity and eternity of the universe created by the almighty God. In particular, Giordano Bruno (Bruno, 1936) attempted to reform the system of medieval worldview, to lay the foundations of a modern-day culture: a soulless, boundless, and indifferent to earthly life. In order to understand the greatness of the universe, one must feel the amplification of the state of infinitiveness (infinity), in the general sense, of becoming God. Giordano Bruno was one of the first to attempt to abolish the doctrine of God's providence and to form an idea of the immutability of the laws which govern and organize the life of the universe. It should be added that the ideas of Giordano Bruno have been further developed and transformed accordingly; New Age thinkers, such as Rene Descartes, Gottfried Leibniz, Isaac Newton, and others, have expanded and specified the theoretical basis of the rationality of the system of laws under which the universe operates. The mythology of the cosmos acquired an archetypal manifestation of peace, stability, order, integrity, harmony; at the same time, Man felt part of the Universe, therefore – considered all his feelings, moods and intentions as manifestations of cosmic existence per se. It is evident that the New Time symbolized, among other things, the realization that life cannot exist beyond the aesthetic harmony of all its manifestations – from bacteria and unicellular cells – to man; the unity of the universe cannot but be revealed in the personifications of the eternally living beauty of the universe, in the unbreakable unity of the whole spiritualized world of Man and Mind.

In the nineteenth and twentieth century's, the aesthetic canvas of the Universe became extraordinarily complex, multifaceted, and mosaic: it was enriched with extraordinary colors, new compositional notes, spatial connotations and semantic contradictions. Great thinkers of the time – Volodymyr Vernadsky, Weiner Heisenberg, Albert Einstein and Erwin Schrodinger – have added to the picture of the universe fundamentally new conceptual motifs: the vast scale of the cosmos, based on the effects of Hubble dynamics of "galactic" galactic, galactic, of light in four-dimensional space. Volodymyr Vernadsky in his work Biosphere and Noosphere raises key methodological issues and fundamental scientific problems, highlights the presence of characteristic viewpoints and ideas about the Cosmos; "... thousands of facts have long predominantly reflected on the outlook of nature researchers, have taken many forms: they have formed ideas and awareness of the unity of nature, a sense of elusive, but strong and deep connection that encompasses all its phenomena – the idea of the Universe, the Cosmos" (Vernadsky, 2004, p. 185).

Volodymyr Vernadsky emphasizes that exploring the star systems, the Milky Way or the spaces around the constellation of the Cross in the southern hemisphere will probably open up new possibilities for nature exploration to humanity, and then all age-old fantasies and aspirations will be of fundamental novelty and of significance. According to the scientist, "... ideas about the infinity of the world, about the infinity of the star worlds, about their submission to the same laws that prevail in the group of celestial bodies closest to us, the thoughts about the identity of their composition with our Earth – deeply penetrated the minds of researchers. But their inner structure, and obviously the new phenomena that are drawn to us and felt by us in these broadest images of the Cosmos, are still in the stage of scientific origin, still waiting for a certain expression" (Vernadsky, 2004, p. 188).

In this context, the emphasis is placed on the creation of Volodymyr Vernadsky's doctrine of the so-called "living substance", which the scientist proposed to consider as a collection of all living organisms, including, of course, man on planet Earth. In his conception of a living substance, the researcher proceeded from the assumption that all living organisms and the matter of matter are part of the Universe, they are in constant interaction; living matter is a key component of the biosphere. Functionally living matter is an important link through which the emergence and formation of chemical elements is combined with the evolution of the biosphere. We also consider it necessary to add that living matter is the carrier of the highest forms of intelligent life, it is the concentrated cosmic energy that is saturated throughout the universe. Everything in space is the epitome of unity, unlike

dead matter, which symbolizes disunity; between the living and the dead is the eternal boundary of time and space, the substantive representation of the optimum and the pessimism, the symbolic expression of eternal cosmic light and the same etheric cosmic darkness.

3. The aesthetic symbolism of the Universe in the context of the worldview pluralism of the postmodern age

Following this approach, it is logical to state that in different periods of civilization humanity made, with varying degrees of success, attempts to find answers to questions about the role and place of man in the world, his planetary mission, as well as connection with the Universe, part who is human. The multifaceted, multidimensional and multi-faceted nature of the phenomenon of the Universe – Cosmos causes attention to it philosophy, in particular – ethics, as well as the natural sciences, art, religion. Thus, in appealing to Valery Sagatovsky's doctrine of the unity of the universe, Halyna Berehova raises the problem of the integrity of human existence and the cosmos in view of modern civilizational aspects and the noospheric vector of humanity's generation, arguing that understanding the unity of the universe and man has always been an important pre-human, "unity is characterized by complete mutual permeability and at the same time the separation of the elements of the whole" (Berehova, 2017, p. 109).

In the new millennium, "on the verge of coming with the infinite", in the words of Guillaume Apollinaire (2014), human life is becoming more voluminous, multidimensional, full of prophecy, synchronous and allusive, with the mosaic intertwining of the real and the fantastic, therefore, the universal is a space of convergence and mutual reflection of infinitely large and infinitesimal worlds, light and darkness, ultimative and proximative, temporal and perpetual, ephemeral and perspective.

It is worth to emphasize that in the conditions of the 21st century, an approach prevails, in which postmodernity is considered as a specific state of modern society, a new form of reality and a corresponding human society. From the large number of diverse and ambiguous, often contradictory evaluations of the postmodern, we can distinguish those that most clearly manifest its meaning, and those that reveal the substantive content of the postmodern – they give preference to superficiality, alternative, plasticity, constant transformation, criticality. Postmodern age man is different in outlook and consciousness, respectively – aesthetic preferences that have the same unpredictable combinatorial character as the cultural environment in which the person is. The postmodern era is

constantly in different modernities, though it is in a single chronological flow with the outside world, in the broad sense – with the Universe.

In the postmodern, there is a higher existential choice of a person who does not have quantitative explication and offers an outline of the prevailing identification models of the world and the universe, in which they acquire a representation of the desired type of existence space, the parameters of which are more of a character than empirical. The formation of the image of the universe and the person in it provides for the formation of a personality that is implicated with the culture, that is, at the same time both the creation of the culture, the subject of its assimilation, and, finally, its creator; personality oriented on perpetual moral and spiritual values; individuals who develop and enhance their own nature-driven potential. In philosophical perspective, postmodern aesthetics is understood not only as a specific means of knowledge and assimilation of the beauty of the outside world, as a tool for improving the adaptation mechanism at the personal (individual), social (population), human (species) levels, but much wider than the spiritual, and physical existence. The timeliness and necessity of considering the problem of the symbolic context of the universe is apparent in the context of the third millennium, the realities of which call into question the very fact of preserving wildlife on Earth; in circumstances where man feels neither part of nature nor his master, which provokes a universal human feeling of particularization from nature, from the near and far Cosmos.

It should be note that for the postmodern age, everything is an interpretation: man creates his own reality, plunging into his personal reality and his own aesthetic symbols, interpreting the world around him in all his ways. Awareness of pluralistic reality in the postmodern era casts doubt on the presumption of the absolute truth of any picture of the world represented from the standpoint of mono-valuation, but it does not exclude the presence of aesthetic symbols as such. It should be noted that the presence of alternative ways of perceiving the world and realizing itself in it leads to the recognition of the existence of a great many a priori realities that do not coincide, respectively – the pluralistic nature of cultural forms and manifestations. As we can see, the postmodern in some way negates the general rules, unquestionable criteria of judgment, unwavering standards and immutable constants. Jean Baudrillard's statement that "there is no longer a God in aesthetics today who is able to recognize his subordinates. Or, following another metaphor, there is no gold standard for either aesthetic judgment or pleasure" (Baudrillard, 2000) does not deny, in our view, the presence of a rather wide symbolic field whose elements are etiologically congenial to the overwhelming number of "subordinates" (using the image

Baudrillard, 2000), for whom God himself and everything created by him – from infinitesimally small fermions and bosons to the infinite universe – are symbols of various manifestations of reality.

Serhii Kostiuchkov used to note, in the postmodern age "The reality is changing rapidly, increasing its own stochasticity and eventuality, it provokes manifestations of powerful counter-trends in all spheres of public life, destabilizes existing and well-organized systems, increases the number of interpretive scenarios and options for future development…. Approved in the postmodern finality of human existence is also confirmed by its historical determinism – Post-Modernism does not cancel division of time into the past (potential), present (actual) and future (perpetual) – it changes the degree of their predominance. In the "premodern" (traditional) society the past reigned over the present and the future; social development was based on the observance of the laws, customs and traditions of the past. Modern (industrial) society believed in the infinite possibilities of the mind, its prognostic possibilities, created daring futuristic projects, idealized the future in relation to the pre-sent and the past. Postmodern (post-industrial) society asserts domination of the present over both the past and the future" (Kostyuchkov, 2018, p. 104).

Such a context makes it possible to assert that the category of reality in the postmodern, as well as any penetration into the deep, is irrelevant, since it implies a significant difference between reality from the image, from the sign system and symbolic space. Postmodern culture is content with the world of symbols, cut, phantoms, simulacra, chimeras, traces that only touch objects and events with a light touch, perceive them as they are without trying to delve into the basic horizons. In the conditions of awareness of the finality of terrestrial being, its ghostliness and progressive stochasticity, against the background of the amplification of the eschatological context, a person of the postmodern era demonstrates disappointment in the fleeting, saturated dangers and risks of terrestrial life; her eternal, beautiful Universe attracts her attention; in fact, it becomes an aesthetic symbol of the postmodern, the object of artistic interpretation, a virtually inexhaustible source of philosophical and creative inspiration, the embodiment of absolute beauty. It is the beauty as the infinity of the living, as the eternity that lasts for a moment (according to Albert Camus), is a metaphorical basis for the human desire for an infinite perspective of time and space.

The postmodern age intensifies the appeal to symbols because chaos is recognized ontologically in the postmodern world; the order acquires signs of generalizing dysgenicity, and the former space-time determinants lose their attractiveness. Postmodern people strive to actively absorb new spaces

that have no clear limitations, fill them with their own meaning; Suffice it to recall that the second half of the twentieth century became a "space era": the first artificial satellite of the Earth, the first man in space, orbital stations in Earth orbit, "landings" of automatic interplanetary stations on Mars and Venus. Purely technologically, the expansion of the human relative to near and far space has until recently been seen as real as to how quickly engineering thought will transform inter-galactic spacecraft, nuclear and photonic engines into ready-made structures. The idea of the cosmos as a single world has undergone a certain secession – philosophy has actualized the idea of a large number of pictures of the world, each of which does not aspire to the status of ontology. Therefore, the beauty of the universe is reflected in the context of pluralistic representations of it, and it is indicative here of I. Kant's thesis that "… true exaltation should be sought only in the soul of the judge, but not in the object of nature, the judgment of which this is the mindset" (Kant, 1994, p. 126).

Indicative in this context is the thought of Nerijus Stasiulis that "in the kantian and post-kantian philosophy there is manifested the trans-formation of the principle of sheer identity, while identity is crucially understood to be identical with non-identity, the self with the non-self, the object with the subject, the representation with the will, the for-itself with the in-itself, the phenomenon with the noumenon. Accordingly, philosophy revealed the depth of possible contradictions and irregularities underlying the contradiction-free, law-like and regularity-oriented mathematical and thus deterministic, (conception of) reality" (Stasiulis, 2016, p. 44).

Within this interpretation, we consider a symbol as a conditional, generalized sign that combines the features and properties of an abstract concept, in this context – the universe, as something universal, all-encompassing, all-encompassing. In the philosophical tradition, the symbol acts as a pure "self" unrelated to the moment of being of the object: the symbolic picture of the world does not correspond to reality, and therefore the symbols find a "refuge" in the realm of the virtual. The postmodern man – Homo postmodernus – seeks to immerse himself in the world of the virtual, inhabited, mostly, by symbols, the producer of which is, of course, the real world; to put it in general, how many people have so many virtual realities. Thus, the universe, as a symbol, determines the unlimited variety of sporadic connections between the phenomena of reality, thereby providing a deep implication of the virtual and the real in human being. Characterization of the Universe – the Universe as a phenomenon that unites people, has a place in the creative explorations of modern thinkers, in particular, Michel Onfray, author of the work "Cosmos. Materialist Ontology" (2016).

An assessment should be made of the situation articulated with regard to the specificity of the postmodern era and the existence of *Homo postmodernus* in an adequate state when one seeks to symbolically unite the universe physically and spiritually, creating a special atmosphere in order to feel his own spiritualized cosmic essence. For the modern man, the universe has not only a scientific, technological, but also a philosophical, cultural aspect connected with the multicomponent constellation of spiritual values. Also, the Universe synthesizes for the unity of man an object of scientific interest, a symbol of aesthetic pleasure and a source of formation of appropriate images and archetypes that remind the person of his connection with the macrocosm and contribute to his philosophical, spiritual and aesthetic understanding.

4. Conclusions

Based on the above, we can make the following conclusions:

1. In various historical periods, thinkers sought to create the most universal picture of the world and to establish the place and role of man in the universe: in antiquity, the main philosophical problems were the search for natural "primordial" and knowledge of the processes of origin and development of objects of the cosmos, which was recognized by Man; The Middle Ages virtually "stripped" the universe of sacredness and elevated aesthetic definitions – the cosmos was "annexed" to the human world, and the Truth was offered not to seek in the cosmos, but in the soul of man. Modern times have inspired the soulless, boundless, indifferent to earthly life of the Universe, emphasizing the union of the weak Man with the almighty God.

2. From the standpoint of heterotopia, postmodernity creates a pluralistic space: the idea of a large number of paintings of the world has been actualized in philosophy, each of which does not aspire to the status of ontology; it is reflected in the picture of the world as a multicomponent system of images and, consequently, connections between them, that is, ideas of man about the world and his place in this world, about the beauty of the Universe – a symbol of infinitely large and infinitesimal worlds, light and darkness, orderliness and randomness, depending on individual semantic characteristics. Therefore, the beauty of the universe is reflected in the context of pluralistic ideas about it.

3. The rapidly changing global world is dramatically re-articulating the socio-cultural configuration, disrupting the former integrity of man, affecting his expressions and aesthetic dominants, nominating new symbols, patterns, signs, models and styles instead of rapidly transcending archaic

issues, in the Micro-World (Man) and Macro-World (Universe) systems. Modern humanity must turn to eternal spiritual values, to become aware of the organic part of nature and the element of the universe, to form an aesthetic, ecological and cosmic consciousness in order to symbolically unite the universe physical and spiritual, to feel its own spiritualized cosmic essence, for the wide to escape from the trap of global contradictions, to avoid moral degradation and the process of planetary omicide – the self-destruction of man as a biological species.

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