

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF SECULAR ASCETICISM

Kozhevnikov N.N., Danilova V.S.

North-Eastern Federal University, Yakutsk, e-mail: nikkoz@gmail.com

The ideas of secular asceticism are based on the conception of “the world coordinate system on the basis of the extreme dynamical balances”. The last represents natural or cultural formations where all its interactions (power, information, spiritual) counterbalance each other. The formation of “the conjoint substance” can take place being guided by three fundamental limits and represent the fastening within a certain cultural sphere (subsystem) in whole. The questions of the identification and the integration of all cultures can be examined in relation to their asceticism which can become a core ingredient during the initiation of the dialogue between cultures. Such asceticism is able to become the base of the synthetic panhuman culture, so all unique and specific of different people will be already a superstructure over it.

Keywords: world coordinate system, extreme dynamical balance, balance-web, conjoint substance, cultural asceticism, identification, integration, dialogue, synthetic, the basement of panhuman culture

The ideas of secular asceticism are based on the conception of “the world coordinate system on the basis of the extreme dynamical balances”. This concept is developed by the authors and the main idea of developing our approach is formulated in the following way. The world around us is viewed as consisting of two unequal parts. On the one hand chains and structures of interrelated limit dynamic equilibriums in the formations at various levels of organization of the world are the same. On the other hand it is the rest of the world, covering nonequilibrium processes and phenomena [4, p. 702]. The main idea of the natural coordinate system of the world is that all the natural and cultural formations and their structures can be connected to the ultimate fundamental equilibriums of three types. These limits are mapped to the coordinate axis, which are associated with the fundamental limits [Ibid].

All natural and cultural formations strive to the three types of ultimate fundamental equilibriums.

1. Any natural formation from the spheres of non-living, living, spiritual (elementary particles, molecules, gaseous nebulae, living organisms, individuals, personalities) tend to self-identification – *I-limit*.

2. All these formations strive to communication-network limit – *S-limit*, that is, they tend toward completeness and a stable equilibrium with environment. An individual is defined by their communications; cultures exist through dialogues within and outside themselves.

3. The existence of all natural and cultural formations is limited to the full time of their existence – *F-limit*, which can be determined only from the point of view of the neighbouring structural levels and unattainable from within these formations. The overwhelming majority of these limits remain unattainable,

due to opposite tendencies; therefore natural formations reach only some intermediate dynamical equilibriums. Any natural and cultural formation can be arbitrarily connected to these limits by the three coordinate axes.

The coordinate system is based on the equilibriums of dynamical chaos, created by specific natural or cultural formations, through that part of the energy that can be balanced. The result is a cell of dynamic equilibrium (“cell interconnection”) the system of coordinates and this formations simultaneously. The coordinate system has no location or any spatial-temporal constraints; it exists in every part of the world, at all levels of its organization. The coordinate system interacts only with open natural or cultural formations, with a tendency towards self-development or dialogue.

Intermediate dynamic equilibrium, in which the fixed nature of formation have not met their self-organization identification and systematic communication of limits will remain stable only if they will be in the “calibration” (space-time) nodes, which are separated from each other by intervals corresponding to the frequency oscillations of these fundamental limits. They can be considered fundamental rhythms of the world. Calibration originating from full-time existence of natural and cultural formation reveals optimality and stability of these “steps” and rhythms. The combination of all three types of “steps” and rhythms that conform to these limits, build sustainable natural formations, and these “steps” and rhythms define the parameters of the spatial-temporal cells coordinate system on the basis of “deterministic chaos” [9, p. 77]. In their development, these “steps”, rhythms and cells are sent coordinate system and can exist in the world, millions and billions of years, as for example, galaxies, planetary systems, the atmosphere,

the hydrosphere of the Earth, philosophical and religious concepts. In case of deviation from these rhythms are all natural or cultural formations destroyed.

Calibration of the above-mentioned limits means that they can be used as the basis of scales, and the units for these scales are obtained by multiplying the values of these bases on the corresponding coefficients. The cell is made up of these fundamental limits will be the largest of all. The corresponding coefficients for these limits (identification, systematic communication, full-time existence of natural or cultural formation) let k_1, k_2, k_3 . Then units scale respectively will be k_1I, k_2S, k_3F . The cell formed by the fundamental limits can be defined as the ISF , and large-scale cell at a certain stage of development of natural or cultural formations as " $k_1I k_2S k_3F$ ". These cells are unusually stable. They have a minimum of energy, information, spirituality, and other similar settings, and their main characteristic is becoming "connected substance" and its specific values connected energy, information, spirituality.

The Foundation of approaches

Besides the coordinate system on the basis of the extreme dynamical equilibriums, the conception of "emptiness", the web-balances and also the notion of "conjoint substance" can refer to the ideas underlying the secular asceticism. These notions and conceptions have been rather carefully analyzed in Taoism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism and Christianity. "The Path" – "pada" is the main notion in Buddhism, in Taoism this is the notion of "the Central Path" – "tao". They are accessible from any place and time and represent the harmony or the connection with the beginning of the world coordinate system, its original state. When the nature, the society or a human finds this path, they find their harmony of development, stability and the optimality of their existence, as they have interrelation with all limits of fundamental balances mentioned before.

"The emptiness" is one of the central notions of Taoism. "Tao is empty but thank to it everything exists and doesn't overflow" [10, p. 13]. "Thirty spokes in the wheel converge to hub, which middle is empty, thank to it it's possible to use the wheel. When the loam is being potted to make the vessel, it's done so that the middle is empty, thank to it's possible to use the vessel. When the house is being built, the holes for windows and doors are made, the middle is left empty, thank to it, it's possible to use the house. That's why the filling it's what brings a return, the devastation it's what does

well" [Ibid, p. 23]. The ascetics' experience, which matters a lot almost in all religions, also proves the fundamental meaning of "the emptiness" as the guide of the cancellation of interactions with three limits mentioned above. In Christianity a special emphasis is laid on the poverty of spirit.

This contradiction may be solved through the development of the notions about the types of balances, which ideas were elaborated in the XX century. Web-balances represent the next stage of development of dynamical equilibriums which are present in all spheres of nature, society, human. All nature and cultural systems tend to them. Such equilibriums are studied in the thermodynamics of information processes, the synergetic, the tectology and in other sciences. "The balance-web" is the most spread among web-balances; it is formed on the basis of chaotic processes (exchange processes of different kinds) during the formation of the planetary cultural webs. The balance-web needs the multiple layers, deepness and the entwinement of the culture, as the interactions web itself is more important than their sources, so the main resources of information, spirituality are contained in the web of interactions itself forming this balance.

The balance-web provides mutual complementarity of the difficulty and simplicity, of the natural and human sciences, in spite the fact that natural science interacts with one range of the extreme culture foundation, and human sciences do it with the other range, and the conceptual frameworks of the organization of these schemes are different. The balance-web encourages the revelation of stable correlation relations between these ranges and extreme culture foundations. The conception of universal planetary being and its formation can be realized by means of such mutual complementary relations.

"The conjoint substance" represents natural or cultural formation where all its interactions (power, information, spiritual) counter-balance each other. So this element, covering all existent interactions of natural education with its environment, characterizes the entirety of these interactions, and as a result it also characterizes the connection of this formation with the fundamental balance. The conjoint substance (power, information, spirituality) is the main characteristics of the construction of extreme relational equilibriums, providing their existence and being the main internal characteristics of this construction. "The conjoint substance" hasn't been examined or studied in Philosophy, although the examples

of the use of conjoint power or information as a constitutive parameter in number of sciences provided the formation of the top-to-bottom view in many examined natural processes.

Features of secular asceticism

“All religions suppose anyway ascetical practice as a mean of spiritual and moral purification and also of transformation of daily activities...As a moral principle the asceticism requires asceticism, abstention from the sensual pleasures and strengthening of the will for perfect duty performance. A human should turn away from carnal in his mind and attain the self-control in the ascetical effort – restraint from food, drinking, carnal infatuations, negotiation of the weaknesses (e.g. voluptuousness), control of physical state and of the state of mind. A pray is an important mean if the asceticism” [2, p. 188]. In the religious asceticism the body resources help during the process of human’s spiritual perfection, his ascension to the God, the rupture to Him. “The ascetics represented a special class of more faithful people than the other ordinary people at the First Church” [3, p. 35].

Cultural and secular variety of asceticism can lay upon religious experience in its development, but there are some considerable differences. The cynicism elaborated the approaches focused on the ideals of the asceticism during the antiquity. “All kinds of physical or spiritual poverty were more preferable than the richness for cynics: it’s better to be a barbarian than an Hellen, it’s better to be an animal than a human. The life simplification was completed with intellectual simplification” [1, p. 245]. The notion of “epoché” is not less significant for the development of ideas of cultural and secular asceticism. “It goes up to the antique skepticism and it was revived by E. Husserl in the XX century. He defined it as a complex of preparative procedure-phenomenal methods which function is “sidelining” or withholding, or “parenthesizing” or “suspending” of “naive and realistic” assumptions of science and philosophy about the world, the human, and his conscious... “Parenthesizing” itself has got only methodic nature: it’s only a thought, only methodic “counteraction modification” which doesn’t concern the state of the facts in the world itself” [7, p. 452].

In Modern age the ideas of asceticism were scarified, especially in the works of P. Holbach and F. Nietzsche. P. Holbach wrote that, the ascetics “consider in their delirious the hate, self contempt, voluntary slavery, melancholy, indolence and self-torture – in short,

continuous insult of their nature which does real good neither to them, nor for society – to be a virtue”. Moreover “according to Baron d’ Holbach, raising the suffering to religious cult was the absolute evidence that the religion prescribes the human “to refuse everything that can make him happy”, as the real morality “tells the human to work for real happiness” [5, p. 267–268]. F. Nietzsche considered that the asceticism contradicted the human’s aspiration to health, beauty perfection and taste. The ascetical ideal rises from protecting and treating instinct of degenerating life falling over itself to resist and fighting for its existence; he points at a partial physiological detention (of some functions) and the fatigue with which the deepest remained untouched life instincts fight... the ascetical ideal is a trick for saving a life” [8, p. 165].

The cultural and secular asceticism represents the combined state of individuals’ intelligence and intellectual activities within the context of their ethnic differences. The protestant ethic of M. Weber correlates with it. His ethic avoid superfluity and to lead austere life. According to the authors, the estimations of the asceticism within the context of sociology, political science or religion science issue from the fact that they are beyond the current research. Dogmatic ideology widely used by all theorists of collectivism was elaborated on the ground of the asceticism. It’s possible to study pros and cons of the asceticism, but it’s not interesting for us as a system of axes, relatively to which different cultural and social processes take place.

The formation of “conjoint substance” can take place being guided by three fundamental limits and represent the fastening within a certain cultural sphere (subsystem) in whole. In some cases it’s enough to lean on two of these limits. Orientation to “identification limit” allows distinguishing a core of definite kind of cultural activity or such several cores. Art styles can be considered as such cores in Art as for literature they can be chronotopes. In modern culture the stress is laid on memes which can also be considered as such cores. In many cases polysemy takes place in the designation of such cores, and their interaction with each other.

The aspiration to the system and communication limit supposes the formation of stable and optimal system covering the cores within an activity or the whole cultural sphere. If a separate core is often distinguished with some ambiguity, then the complex of these cores forms stable structures within the system.

In culture and its main subsystems the core systems are used in the first place. Cultural code uniting the cores of all main kinds of activities of examined culture is the brightest example.

The conjoint substance can appear as coherent information, coherent spirituality, coherent intellect. These are dead simple constructions, where all phenomena correspond to fundamental zero balances connected in a single whole. The process providing bigger and bigger simplification in comparison with spontaneous structures corresponds to them. Coherent spirituality and intellect have got the essential meaning for the provision of coherence during the formation.

There are some bright examples of conjoint substances in culture, arts, linguistics and in other sciences. In cultural sciences the conjoint substance can be considered as “zero cultural code”, which should be understood as culture elements which absence can result in the distortion of the whole culture. There are some examples of the most simple style in art, for example the paintings “Red square”, “Black square”, “White square” by K.S. Malevich, about which the author himself gave a comment “Suprematic three squares are the establishment of a definite world view... black as a sign of the economy, red as a revolution signal and white as a pure action” [6, p. 187–188]. The atomic propositions of L. Wittgenstein and his “Logic-Philosophical Tractates” should be mentioned in linguistics and its philosophical understanding. There is nothing superfluous in this tractate, only the necessary for the expression of main ideas, so this approach can be also used to prove the ideas developed by us.

Features of secular asceticism

In modern global world there are two main tendencies to which the majority of cultures is subject. From one hand everyone aspires to self-identification, in other words to distinct determination of own borders, typical features and to maximum transparence for there presentatives of other cultures. The problem is that many cultures still haven't established yet, they stayed somewhere on the half-way of their development. From the other hand they have to contribute to the integration of the humankind. So nowadays the weakening of economical, political and state borders combines with much bigger cultural isolation (cultural diversification).

Moreover, in recent times, the culture relevant to modern human needs tends to become network and traditional cultures can be a part of it as some elements. Cultural nets

should be formed on the ground of systems and subsystems made of these elements. The diversity is the cornerstone of sustainability in the nature, human and social spheres aren't exceptions. The tighter and the more active the cultures will be connected with each other, the better for humankind. Of course, they all should be tolerating, humanity-oriented and unique. Every modern human should interact actively with several cultures, contributing to their closing in united energetic and information cycle.

The questions, mentioned above, connected with the identification and integration of all cultures can be examined from the point of view of their own asceticism, which can become a key-element during the formation of the dialogue between cultures. What's more, the asceticism as a localized state of the spirituality within its ethnic and individual demonstration can become a base of synthetic panhuman culture, so everything unique and specific of different nations will be already a superstructure above it.

In the frame of developed approach, all cultures in modern conditions should tend to the state of stable synchronic and diachronic fluctuations. In the first case (named for our purpose horizontal) it happens between the cores of self-identification of traditional cultures and forming invariants of panhuman culture. In the second case (named for our purpose vertical) it happens between two best examples of the world cultural heritage and corresponding milestones of information society. As a result, there is a two-dimensional dynamic balance within the interaction of traditional cultures with economical, financial, technological, informational subsystems of modern world is possible. It's so much important, that over whelming number of culture in the human history were traditional and two great “mutations” which formed antique and Christian cultures took place among them. In all interactions mentioned above it's possible to distinguish extreme dynamic balances and to connect them thereby with natural system of axes on all levels of the formation of cultural super-system. Every nation is able to make its own unique contribution to the formation of natural system of axes and the more contribution they make, the more stable this system will be. At that, the ascetic parts of traditional cultures will be formed as their invariants, determining the web of the main worldview universals able to provide further possible human development. Nowadays, there is no alternative to such development.

If all cultures will tend to the identification of their own asceticism, the formation of intercultural dialogue will happen due to universal rules, contributing to the establishment of the world communicative reality changing gradually into the world being. The revelation of the rules mentioned above considerably depends on new educational approaches.

Firstly, the education should expose the particularities of two kinds of asceticism: self-identification asceticism and web asceticism. During the personality formation it necessary to choose carefully everything that will be part of the “self-identification structure”, where from the one hand there shouldn't be anything superfluous, but from the other there should be all necessary elements for self-identification. The web-structure also rejects everything superfluous, that hinders its formation in the optimal way, otherwise, it becomes unstable and easy to destroy. The web self-organization aspires to provide their formation with optimum speed of complementary unification of synchronic and diachronic cultural subsystems, in other words, of the elements of national and mass culture, and also of the best samples of world culture and information society.

Secondly, continuous human education on the ground of “the balance-web” should be developed. The main point of this education is the creation of communication web by a human during all his life. This web con-

nects him with other people deeper and more tightly, unites the people of different cultures. This web is focused on the only system of the world axes. It allows to overcome the social isolation in whole through the development of new communication forms, the conservation of these best forms and restores integrity of separate “I” which was disturbed by nonlinearity and unpredictability of the world around us, by too fast rate of its development.

References

1. Averentsev S.S. Cynics. The new philosophical encyclopedia in 4 vol. – Vol. II. – M.: Mysl, 2000 – P. 188–189.
2. Apresyan R.G. Asceticism. The new philosophical encyclopedia in 4 vol. – Vol. I. – M.: Mysl, 2001. – P. 218–220.
3. Christianity. The encyclopedic dictionary in 3 vol. – Vol. 1 – M.: Great Soviet encyclopedia, 1993 – 863 p.
4. Kozhevnikov N. Universal Principles of the World and the Coordinate System on the Basis of Limit Dynamical Equilibrium. – *Analecta Husserliana*. – The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research, V. CX, 2011 – P. 701–709.
5. Kuznetsov V.N. French materialism of the XVIII century – M.: Mysl, 1981 – 303 p.
6. Malevich K.S. Collected works issued in 5 volumes. – M.: Giley, 1995. – Vol. 1 – 396 p.
7. Motroshilova N.V. Epoché. The new philosophical encyclopedia in 4 vol. Vol. IV. – M.: Mysl, 2001 – 452 p.
8. Nietzsche F. Collected works issued in 2 vol. – Vol. 2 “Beyond good and evil” – M.: Sirin, 1990 – 414 p.
9. Prigogine I., Stengers I. Time, chaos, quantum. To the solution of the time paradox. – M.: Russia: Editorial URSS, 2000 – 240 p.
10. The Tao Te Ching. – Novosibirsk, 1995 – 153 p.