

Anton Vidokle

Energy of Kosmos is Indestructible!!!

01/12

This is a script for a film we shot last summer in Russia and Kazakhstan. The film is still being edited. The script is comprised of excerpts from poems, philosophical texts, scientific writings, academic papers, and historical studies by and about Cosmo-Immortalists, a surge of thinking that emerged in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It linked the Enlightenment with Russian Orthodox and Eastern philosophical traditions to create an idiosyncratically concrete metaphysics of its own. The script liberally combines these writings with recent news items and various personal details. It includes the poetry of Nikolai Zabolotsky and Maximilian Voloshin, writing by Maria Ender, and quotes from Nikolai Fedorov, Vladimir Solov'ev, and Alexander Chizhevsky. It's very much indebted to a number of scholars, including Svetlana Semenova, Svetlana Cheloukhina, Vyacheslav Stepin, and other writers whose work influenced my understanding of this complex and paradoxical field of thought. The script contains little punctuation and no footnotes and is broken into simple lines of text for subtitling. Some of the more significant quotes are italicized for emphasis.

– Anton Vidokle

x

e-flux journal #48 — october 2013 Anton Vidokle
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ACTRESS

Here is what's going to happen
The man in bed is a professional actor
He is not asleep
He will turn on cue and start to speak in Russian
I will translate his words for you

Before he moves, I want to tell you something
My mother was born in the same town as the man who flew into
space from his apartment
Her father was a painter and a fighter pilot
He was killed in battle in China when he was very young
This film is dedicated to him

The footage you are seeing was shot in Ukraine a few days ago
Liza found this place and I like it very much
Even though I have never been there and know nothing about
the area
We produced the snow by shooting at the sky with artillery

The actor will read a script for a film

It will be shot on location in Kazakhstan, in Crimea, and in
Siberia
It's based on the ideas of a Russian philosopher
Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov
Who, like others, was convinced that death is a mistake

Because the energy of cosmos is indestructible
Because true religion is a cult of ancestors
Because true social equality means immortality for all

Because of love
We must resurrect our ancestors
From cosmic particles
As minerals
As animated plants
Solar, self-feeding, collectively conscious
Immortal
Transsexual
On earth, in spaceships, on space stations
On other planets

[CUT. ACTOR SPEAKS]

ACTOR

I have no idea what energy is
No one does
But it is subject to a law

A law that has no exceptions
An abstract, mathematical law
About a numerical quantity
That does not change when something happens

Trees fall, houses burn, cities flood, stars explode
But the number remains the same, always
It's peculiar

Life is impossible without energy
*A tree is saturated with solar energy.
Branches are arranged by the most intense solar energy,
Roots, along the paths of the most intense salts of the
earth's force.
The forest reveals the saturation of space in three
dimensions;
It captures the marrow of life.
The frost on the window forms the image of force-currents
caught on a single plane.
I want to catch direction.
The body grows out of the meeting of various movements.
There are no boundaries—the connection of things.
Things are nodes of various energies.*

Energy is life
Life ends, but energy is indestructible

If you expect to find a scientific definition of consciousness,
you will be disappointed
Like energy, nobody knows what it is, but all know it exists
In humans, in animals, perhaps in other things

What can be expressed mathematically can be recorded and
transmitted
Backed up like code or a music score
That is what Russian cosmists thought at the beginning of the
twentieth century
It carried over to America

Cosmos is not merely distant outer space
Like cosmetics, cosmos means beauty and harmony
It also means the world, a harmonious world
In which this planet is a mere speck

Unlike cosmos, earth is full of chaos, suffering, and death

To reach cosmos, one does not travel upwards
Climbing the Eiffel Tower to view the panorama of the world,
to exalt oneself
To reach cosmos one has to dive

To immerse oneself
In the ocean

Cosmos needs reason to be cosmos, not chaos
*Cosmos is a force without reason, while man is a reason
without force
But how can reason become force, and force become reason?
Force will become reasonable when ruled by reason
In this sense, everything depends on man*

Russian cosmists aimed to build cosmos on earth
To construct a new reality free of hunger, disease, violence,
death, need, inequity
Like communism
They happened at the same time

*We don't erect temples to cosmogony
In order to reflect the external world
But merely to see facets of our ignorance*

*All the systems of the world, casts of ancient souls
Are mirrored phantasms of mutual reflection
Two juxtaposed abysses*

*There is no exit from the labyrinth of knowledge
And a man will never become other
Than what he passionately believes*

[CUT. ACTOR CONTINUES]

ACTOR

Here is a simple idea
Common efforts of all mankind should be directed toward a
single task
Victory over death
Immortality
Resurrection of all who ever lived
By all means available to science and art

Nikolai Fedorovich Fedorov called this the common task
He meant it literally

Using their own genetic makeup, humans would resurrect their
parents
From themselves, parents would resurrect their own parents
And so on
Back to the first people on earth

The process could take several thousand years

Which is why it becomes urgent to begin immediately
Because we are all dying

This means
Museums should be moved to cemeteries
Libraries should become nurseries for the resuscitation of
writers.
Armies, factories, farms, hospitals, and universities should
work together to achieve the common task of immortality
All the productive forces of humanity should aim to achieve
the return of every resurrected human being
Each person with his or her own individual consciousness

A new grand synthesis of various sciences will be reached on
a new, cosmic scale
Nature, including the cosmos and humanity, will become a
scientific
laboratory

During this time a new type of society will emerge
Fedorov called it *psychocracy*

Resurrection requires a new body to host consciousness
A rebuilding of tissue
Humans should understand the mystery of how plants regenerate
themselves
We need to study their mechanism of nutrition
For the necessary reconstruction of the human organism,
humans need to become self-feeding

We will build new organs
Change and adapt to new living conditions in the cosmos

As long as humans reproduce like animals, they will die like
animals

To exist as a gendered being is to follow the path to death
Man has a huge energy potential
Which he uses to multiply as a natural being

The energy of love is the most potent of all types of energy
Love can be used in a new, more powerful way

When sexual distinctions are overcome
A tremendous amount of energy will be unleashed
And it will increase as the need for sexual reproduction
decreases
Love will satisfy a more profound need

This is because

At present, sexual love is egoistic
The noblest ambition of love should be
To fight death
To develop a new creative personality
Immortality and resurrection for all!

In transforming nature's destructive forces
In making them constructive
We will gain control over evolution and the regulation of the
cosmos
We will conquer death itself
And release the endless creativity of life within the universe
To that end, we must strive to acquire knowledge and
experience
To labor within the existing limits of knowledge and
technology
To use real means and opportunities available today

Gradually, our limits will expand
All that seems fantastic to us today
Will become real!

**[CUT. A GROUP OF ANIMALS APPEAR ON SCREEN. THEY RECITE FROM "THE MAD
WOLF" (1931) BY NIKOLAI ZABOLOTSKY]**

Gathering of the Animals

CHAIRMAN

Today is the anniversary of the Mad One's death.
Let us honor his memory.

STUDENT WOLF

Most honored Chairman, all of us lament
the Mad One's sad, untimely death.
But I've been delegated
to seek your answer to a question,
formulated by our board of students.

CHAIRMAN

Speak.

STUDENT WOLF

Thank you. My question is plain.
We all know that the old forest is dead,
and that no boring mysteries remain
for us to believe in to the very end.

We are building a new forest, such as
has not been seen before on earth.
Men, women, children, all of us—
and I swear we shall complete the work.

Before your very eyes, we're altering
the universe, a wretched thing till now.
We sit before you on this day of reckoning,
engineers, judges, doctors, in a solemn row.

Mighty science sparkles like a waterspout.
The wolf eats pies and writes down figures.
He pounds nails. The world trembles at his shout.
And our technical block's already finished.

And so, most honored Chairman, tell me,
why do you trouble our sober world
with that apostate, that traitor's crazy dreams?
The Mad One's plans are totally absurd!

Just ask yourself this: Can a plant be turned,
simply by dreaming, into an animal?
Can a mere product of the earth
learn how to fly and then become immortal?

The dreams of the Mad One were crazy from the start.
He gave his life for them. Well, what of it!
The new century's song is ringing out.
We build a world, but you, you fly from it!

WOLF ENGINEERS

Arranging crossbeams in a special way,
we are throwing a bridge over to the other shores of animal
felicity.
We are constructing electrical men,
who will bake pies.
Internal-combustion horses
will carry us across the bridge of suffering.
And a coachman in a glass hat
will sing a ditty:

"Giddyup, gee-gee,
twice the ener-gee-gee!"

Of this sort is the builders' dream,
so their progeny should reign supreme.

WOLF DOCTORS

We, doctors, physicians,
interpreters of the beasts' emissions,
into the skulls of wolves insert glass tubes,
observe the brain at work, constructing,
the patient's coiffure not obstructing.

WOLF MUSICIANS

On the body's violins, we
squeak, as science hath decreed.
With our noses' bow we saw
through the new days' bolted door.

CHAIRMAN

Slowly, slowly, slowly,
the marvelous age approaches.

Like balls of thread, we roll into the distance,
trailing our deeds behind us.
For we have woven wondrous cloth
and countless miles our feet have trod.

The forest, with its hunger, misfortune, grief,
like a fiery neighbor, looms far off.

Look, beasts, at these woods. A bear
in them consumes a mare,
while we who dine on pies and ale
forget the caverns whence we hail.

Look, beasts, at this valley deep.
Consumed by beasts, a bullock weeps,
while we who have built our habitation
note down the magical equation.

Look at this world, oh valiant beasts.
Here the naked creatures course,
while we, with the sword of science unsheathed
to cut off all evil, go forth!

Slowly, slowly, slowly,
the marvelous age approaches.

I close my eyes and see a glass structure in the forest.
Handsome wolves, in lightweight clothing,
are engaged in long discussions on science.
One of them leaves the group,
lifts his slender paws,
rises smoothly into the air,
lies on his back.
The wind propels this floater eastward.
Below, the wolves are talking:
"Our philosopher has gone
to instruct the Burdock
in ethereal geometry."
What's this? Strange visions,
the soul's mad fabrication,

or simply the product of the mind?
Learned scholar, you decide!

The Mad One's dreams are quite absurd,
but you don't need eyes in the back of your head
to see that from the viewpoint of the old world,
we're mad as hatters to be baking bread!

The ages pass, years drift away,
but living things are no dream;
they live and, living, they prevail
over the old truth's stern regime.

Sleep, Mad One, in your noble grave!
May your head, unhinged by its thoughts, rest now!
You do not know who dragged you from your den,
who harried you into a life of solitude and suffering.
Seeing nothing ahead, hoping for nothing,
you roamed the earth, like a great captain of thought.

Yours is the first breaking of the chains!
You are the river that gave birth to us!
We stand at the frontier of the ages,
workers, our heads like hammers.
We have sealed the ancient graveyard of the forest
with your mangled, rotted corpse.

Lie now in your grave, at peace,
Great Flyer, Great Topsy-Turvy.
We wolves will carry on your work,
your eternal labors. Onward to the stars!

[CUT. ANIMALS DISAPPEAR. ACTRESS SPEAKS]

ACTRESS

Western leftists think Russians fucked up communism
And that the Soviets contaminated Marxism with totalitarianism
and repression
After all
Why did the Communist Revolution take place in such a backward
country?
Where three-quarters of the population could not even read or
write
Where science, modernity, technology
were largely introduced by force
Why did it not happen in France, for example?

I suspect there was something peculiar to Russians themselves
That did not carry over to Western Romantic intellectuals and

artists

Who remained captive to their own dreaming

Because of Fedorov's unusual call for immediate action

The whole Soviet experiment was indeed

An applied cosmism

To this day, the Western Left remains stuck in the same place

Communist hypothesis

Idea

Dream

It's so hard to accept

that with all their tragic and glorious moments

Russians already had it

What was behind that strange energy that realized such a

radical social experiment?

The energy that enabled a modernization so rapid

a new society that rivaled the most advanced capitalist states

Propelling humanity into cosmos

And yet

If all energy is truly indestructible

Where is that energy now?

In a contest organized by an international cosmetics company

Egyptians nominated their president to be sent on an

all-expenses paid trip

into the cosmos

The winner is slated to train at the Global Space Camp in

Orlando, Florida

In answer to the question, "Why do you want to go to space?"

The Egyptian president quoted Russian scientist Alexander

Chizhevsky

Man is not only a terrestrial being,

but a cosmicone connected by all his biology, all molecules,

particles of the body

with cosmos

with its cosmic rays

its flows and fields

According to Hu Fang in China, a real estate developer is

planning to build luxury condominiums on Mars

Meanwhile in America

Google's director of engineering

is trying to achieve immortality and resurrect his father

He is trying to modify his own DNA

taking several hundred different vitamins every day

to deactivate the genes responsible for aging

In his house he set up a small museum
A room containing everything that belonged to his father
books, letters, photos, film and sound recordings, receipts,
clothes, tissue samples
because an advanced computer program
will soon be able to use this material to interpellate his
father's consciousness

I hope he succeeds

As for the young fighter pilot
who died over the Great Wall of China
The only object that remains
is a painting he made before he went to war
A landscape

It hangs on the wall in a room inside a housing unit
in the city where the man who flew into space from his
apartment used to live

I would like to see it

Anton Vidokle is an editor of e-flux journal.

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