
RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF RUSSIAN RENAISSANCE IN S.I. FUDEL'S WORKS

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Abstract

The article is devoted to Sergey Fudel's appreciation on ideas of Russian symbolists. The author refers to S.I. Fudel's appreciation of this brilliant and controversial period when the formation of religious and philosophical beliefs of the thinker had occurred, as well as to the S. I. Fudel's characterization of those creative figures of Russian culture, which he knew personally and who influenced on the formation of his ideology.

Keywords: symbolism, Russian symbolism, identity, new religious consciousness, Silver Age

1. Introduction

Sergey Fudel (1899-1977) was born in Moscow in the family of the priest Joseph Fudel, who was the friend of Konstantin Leontyev. Fudel's house was the centre of Moscow intelligence. In father's home and on the meetings of religious-philosophical society devoted to Vladimir Solovyev, S.I. Fudel communicated with outstanding philosophers of that time. In the soviet period S.I. Fudel was repressed three times. His main works which are devoted to different aspects of Russian philosophy especially ecclesiological themes were written from 1962 till 1977. They could not be published in the soviet period for ideological reasons. A number of works was published in France, Germany and USA. Nevertheless, S.I. Fudel's books preserve its newness nowadays. The author of the present article is trying to understand the way of Russian thought from the point of view of authenticity. The author was familiar and communicated with Sergey Fudel, when the philosopher lived in Pokrov during the last period of his life.

The youth of S.I. Fudel fall on a very bright period in the history of Russian culture. In 1901, in Saint Petersburg was opened a Religious-Philosophical Community, whose chairman was the Bishop Sergius (Starogorodsky), the future Patriarch. In 1906, the same Community was opened in Moscow. It was a time when there were thinkers who could express religious and philosophical ideas unusual for the Russian Orthodox (e.g. V.V. Rozanov, D.S. Merezhkovskiy, N.M. Minskiy and others).

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Truly deep personal religious identity involves explicit or perhaps not so obvious, and not even thoroughly perceived dialogue with the 'other'. Ideally, this dialogue with an 'absolutely other', as was shown by R. Otto in the early 20th century, is God, or Genesis as such [1]. But on the other hand, the personal religious identity manifests itself in a living social and historical forms of this 'absolutely other' and therefore could be interpreted not only as an 'Orthodox identity' in the conventional sense, but as the identity of 'critically Orthodox', 'non-Orthodox', 'non-Christian' or even 'scientific atheistic' when it ceases to be a religious identity.

The trends of decadence arose in literature, and the symbolism was formed. A new frame of mind, allowing you to take liberties with the basic Christian values, finds the tribunes in the pages of book collection 'Problems of Idealism' (the first collected edition was published in Moscow on November 16, 1902), *Vekhi* (Milestones) (the collected edition was published on March 16, 1909) and the monthly publication *Russkaya mysl* (Russian thought) edited by P.B. Struve. Later, this short but certainly bright period in the history of Russian culture will be called as the 'Silver Age' and 'Russian Renaissance'.

The end of the XIX century was marked by intensive development of Russian philosophical thought (L.M. Lopatin, B.N. Chicherin, N.G. Debolsky, M.I. Karinsky, A.I. Vvedensky and others). The most prominent representative of this period of religious philosophy was V.S. Soloviev. Soloviev was an initiator of the School of religious thinkers who starting from Soloviev's ideas developed their own religious and philosophical ideas. On the other hand, the "general public began to show interest in religion, the metaphysical and ethical idealism, the idea of the nation and even spiritual values" [2]. All this was the basis for a 'Russian Renaissance'.

2. Symbolism and the symbolists

Symbolism and the symbolists had a particular effect on the ideology of S.I. Fudel. Russian Symbolism was not only literary, but a religious and philosophical movement. Being a response to the Symbolists' ideas in the French literature, embodying the intuition of F. Nietzsche and A. Schopenhauer, the symbolism in Russia, as well as in France, soon acquired the character of modernity. At the same time the Russian symbolism mostly was related to the search of religious reality. Therefore, S.I. Fudel showed keen interest to it.

This period was qualitatively different from the 'Golden Age'. Russian classical culture of the XIX century preserved the philosophical and aesthetic resistance, based on Christian values. The symbolism, reinterpreting these values and sometimes leaving or abandoning them, appeared in unstable, ambiguous concepts and images. No wonder, N.A. Berdyaev called one of his works on the symbolists poets Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely – *Mutnye liki* (Muddy faces) [3].

In France, the symbolism was a reaction to the enhanced naturalistic trends in the literature (works of Zola), in which, not without a reason, have been

seen an expression of unbelief and materialism. Early French symbolism are represented by the names of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, whose works in Russia have affected, for example, V.Y. Bryusov. This trend negatively evaluated the world around the person in which the 'flowers of evil' were only seen. Quite the other side of French symbolism was reflected in the work of M. Maeterlinck: the world and things in it have a mysterious being ('Blue Bird'), the pain of a man standing alone in front the cold world has a loud sound in these works ('Blind'). S.I. Fudel knew and liked the work of M. Maeterlinck, and often quoted him.

Naturally, the work of the Russian symbolists, among which S.I. Fudel lived, could not leave him indifferent, as well as his teachers - P.A. Florensky and S. N. Durylin. S. I. Fudel felt the living stream in the religious ideas of the symbolists. But he applied to everything a fairly conservative standard of a Christian thinker, and therefore often uncompromisingly criticized their ideas, which included neo-pagan motives.

For example, D.S. Merezhkovsky attempted to explain the so-called 'new religious consciousness'. The significance of these compositions was as follows. D.S. Merezhkovsky relied on the old theory of dualism. Man's soul and body are two aspects of one single entity. The connection between soul and body should be stable. Paganism has collapsed because it asserted the body to the detriment of the soul. The historic Christianity, "hopelessly dismembered body and soul" [4], advanced the ascetic ideal of the spirit priority in the detriment of the body, and then it was doomed. Christ according to D.S. Merezhkovsky, "asserts the equivalence, equal holiness of Soul and Body". Hence, D.S. Merezhkovsky concludes that "the Church of the coming is the Church of the Body and the Holy Spirit". Thus, following the calmed, slacked historic Christianity will come 'the apocalyptic Christ', or 'second Christ', and then a scope for imagination and living sense will be re-opened.

The asceticism of historic Christianity persecuted the carnal love. Restoring the rights of the body, D.S. Merezhkovsky speaks not only about the 'Holy Body' but also about the 'sacred sensuality'. D.S. Merezhkovsky called his views 'heresy of astartism'.

Hence, appeared a mystic-erotic utopia of Christianity's 'Third Testament' or the religion of 'holy community'. The modern philosopher, P.P. Gaidenko writes: "The main impression endured from the reading of the documents of that duck epoch - diaries, articles and letters of Z. Gippius, works of D. Merezhkovsky, D. Filosofov, N. Berdyaev (except V. Rozanov, who protected the sanctity of heterosexual marriage and rejecting any sexual deviations) - it is unclear for them, how should we understand this is 'holy community' based on universal love, this 'common, a single act'. There is an association with Khlystovsky's 'zeal', where the mystical and ecstatic cult sometimes took the orgiastic shape" [5]. The idea of 'holy community', according to P.P. Gaidenko, is based on anarchism [5, p. 346-355].

The ideas of D.S. Merezhkovsky in the XX century existed not only in Russian symbolism, but also in later period, and even abroad. Thus, S.I. Fudel

saw a modification of the 'Third Testament' of D.S. Merezhkovsky in the works of Teyyarade Sharden [6]. He bitterly notes that the convicting of the Church in unspiritual "in the XIX-XX centuries were repeatable by Merezhkovsky and other members of the 'new Christianity' or 'Third Testament Christianity', and presently repeated by intellectuals, who, first coming out of the impasse of the materialist squalor and touching, though primitive, but still some over the material forms of thinking, like Tolstoyism, Theosophy, Buddhism, etc., have considered themselves entitled to talk about church unspiritual with neglect" [7].

S.I. Fudel wrote that "the new religious consciousness" - is a desire to create a new religion of the Holy Spirit beside the Christianity, to open the "Third Testament" [8]. Here, in fact, presented an opinion of Joachim Florsky about the First Testament - is a Testament of God the Father, executed in the Old Testament, the Second Testament - is a Testament of God the Son, executed in the Christian period. The Third Testament - is the future religion of God the Holy Spirit. Such a deviation S.I. Fudel notes in the works of his teacher P.A. Florensky. "His deviation in some mystical rationality, 'a new religious consciousness' is a scientific oversaturation of Merezhkovsky." [8, p. 369] In pneumatology P.A. Florensky also, sometimes unwittingly approached the position of D.S. Merezhkovsky.

However, S.I. Fudel is ready to seek in D.S. Merezhkovsky, 'who we so easily anathematize', not only the negative, but something good. It appears to him, that is quite dangerous to pass a 'judgment' on somebody. The speech of D.S. Merezhkovsky in the Saint Petersburg Religious philosophical society against the V.V. Rozanov, in defence of the Church is clearly demonstrated this.

The ideology of S.I. Fudel evolved not only under influence of Slavophil ideas, but also under the ideas of the symbolists: "We read Tyutchev, Blok, Annenskii, the *Tri Razgovora* (Three Conversations) of Soloviev and his poems, Florensky, Ern, Euripides, Rozanov, some early Symbolists" [6, p. 68-69].

Nevertheless S.I. Fudel saw in the works of the symbolists a lot of unnecessary and even harmful things: "Such a master of uselessness sometimes was V.Y. Bryusov, many of the French were such masters." [6, p. 268] For S.I. Fudel, for example, Bryusov's lines sounded blasphemous: "I want the free boat. To be floating everywhere. And I want to praise Hesiod and Devil."

The main criterion for S.I. Fudel in the selection of artworks served as a criterion for the effectiveness of the meanings and ideas thereof in order to achieve positive change in the spiritual and moral state of the man: "... a perfect beautiful or witty data form of artworks still quite insufficient... We could specify, for example, K.D. Balmont as a poet. His form is perfect, but who does it need?" [6, p. 268]

S.I. Fudel was very fond of poetry of A.A. Blok. He appreciated him as a tragic poet. His tragedy had deeply religious roots: the desire for immense, infinite (so he imagined the 'divine'), by a painful way it was combined with contempt for anything close and usual. Boris Zaytsev in his memoirs about Blok wrote: "Sobbinness, though restrained and a great sincere (the violent ecstasy

wasn't typical for Blok) penetrated" [9]. This internal breakdown overthrew the poet into the abyss of sin, but he also gave birth to repentance and piercing lines:

And there was a fatal delight
In flouting sacred truths,
And my heart was maddened
By this bitter, wormwood passion!..

The literary critic V.M. Zhirmunsky, contemporary of both S.I. Fudel and A.A. Blok, in 1928, wrote in the article 'The Poetry of Alexander Blok': "These words were not about a simple, common suffering of love, but about the immeasurably profound mental anguish, religious disease of some special acuity" [10]. This could not excite the sensitive young soul of S.I. Fudel: "He (Blok – G.G.) said such words which I would like to remember in the hour of death: O Lord, O Lord, may those more worthy than us, Behold Thy kingdom!" [6, p. 60]

Especially S.I. Fudel was amazed by prophetic omens of A.A. Blok: "Many of us then were filled with the Blok, his nightly premonitions of history" [8, p. 290]. He who had passed the Soviet concentration camps and had seen many saints and righteous people, remembered with a special feeling, as once Blok said: "The nineteenth century has made us forget the very names of the saints." However, he added: "The twentieth century, perhaps, will see them with own eyes" [8, p. 54].

For S.I. Fudel the opinion of his spiritual Reverend Father, Nectarios Optinsky, evidenced the victory of the light side in the poet's soul, who took an interest in Velimir Khlebnikov, and he said about Blok: "He is in Heaven now. Tell his mother that she was trustworthy" [6, p. 181]

At one of the meetings of Religious-Philosophical Society, S.I. Fudel had heard a report of the symbolist V.I. Ivanov, 'On the limits of art'. There from he got the idea, which then would play a significant role in his own aesthetic views, the idea that art is not omnipotent.

S.I. Fudel remembered the sharp negative reaction to the report of Andrei Bely. "Standing in the back row of a small hall where the meeting took place, he was not even saying, but shouting his objections, and sometimes bouncing after saying his words. The report, he clearly perceived as a betrayal of art and warned a speaker of the terrible danger for him - of some Apis." [6, p. 63]

"I remember – S.I. Fudel writes - anthroposophy and the poet Andrei Bely, with its intolerable mystical electric gleam in his eyes" [8, p. 334]. Particular attention S.I. Fudel paid to acquaintance and relations of A. Bely with his teacher, Father Pavel Florensky. A. Bely was delighted with the ideas of P. A. Florensky. "In 1903 A. Bely dedicated him a poem '*Svyashchennye dni*' (Holy Days):

Not once in the night the curtain swayed.
Again, I was surrounded with a stern melody,
A melody of ages of the coming of the New...
And eternity knocked on the window as a storm." [8, p. 334]

For S.I. Fudel the only measure of internal authenticity of a man was the spiritual result, with which a man approached the threshold of eternity, “G.I. Chulkov told me that when A. Bely was dying, he came to say goodbye to him, and took something good from this last meeting. I do not remember exact words of Grigory Ivanovich about this meeting, but know that he was a former ‘mystical anarchist’, and a poet, and a confrere both of Blok, and Bely, and a member of the Society of Political Prisoners, at this time has already been a spiritual son of Alexey Mechev and if he had not had any reason, he would not say so.” [6, p. 64]

But the Russian Symbolism had another side that was noticed by the psychiatrist and art historian Max Nordau in the French Symbolism. The existence of pathology in the art of the second half of the XIXth century, M. Nordau considered as symptomatic for social disease, not only in France but also in other civilized countries. The famous British researcher of the history of Russian symbolism, Avril Payman, writes: “perverse inclinations of degenerate-artist, as opposed to degenerate-criminal, M. Nordau stated, are made evident not in actual crimes, but in the fact that the artist infects the healthy body of society with his dangerous dreams and aspirations. To do this, he uses techniques and methods that his sick mind told him. This is - synesthesia, associative thinking and slurred musicality of a madman, who plays with words just for their sound, without worrying about the content. All these techniques are directly related to the theory and practice of symbolism.” [11]. Doctors as E.S. Botkin and G.I. Rossolimo wrote about this. This disease was usually accompanied with a painful eroticism. This disease was usually accompanied with a painful eroticism. To one extent or another, the erotic motifs appeared in works of almost all the Russian symbolists.

Words of S.I. Fudel directly coincide with the ideas of Max Nordau: “The period before World War I was the most stuffy and scary period of Russian society. It was the time of still alive ‘Anathema’, progressing ‘cinders’ and the mass suicides of young people, the time of the flood of sexual literature, when Sologubs, Verbitskys, Artsybashevs literally crippled the lives of people. The time when the gendarme officers read about the ‘pink bridges’, and high school students wanted to be ‘thieves-gentlemen’, a time when Rasputin cast suspicions on the throne, and replaced the bishops and ministers.” [6, p. 39-40]

L.A. Kolobaeva in her monograph ‘Russian Symbolism’ writes about the special role of fantasy in the works of the symbolists [12]. S.I. Fudel interprets the existence of this origin in the work of the symbolists as follows. In a letter to his son of November 21, 1951, sharing his impressions of M.M. Prishvin’s work, S.I. Fudel forms a line ‘Prishvin-symbolists’. On the one hand, “no one gave me such a human reality in nature ... - says S.I. Fudel about M.M. Prishvin – this is Dersu Uzala, but with deep and suffering European philosophy of ... “ [6, p. 376]. But on the other hand, “reality is not only in the ‘animal track’ of Prishvin, if you go along it, you can come to animal primitivism. Oversimplification is terrible, because it is blind.” [6, p. 378]

However, the symbolists threw the 'blue blanket' over the life, as it seemed to be too rough and dull. And "we must learn to look at people without any blankets, with the common look of your own eyes, at their bodily and direct reality. This includes not only debt of love, but also an instinct, and this is the right path to Truth through the taiga." [6, p. 376-377]

The 'blue blanket' of symbolists was able to lead the weakest souls to an unreal world. S.I. Fudel wrote: "In my youth, I remember, there were the poets' cafes, some random stages, where they appeared. And remember not them, but sitting and melting girls, exhausted from the prettiness." [6, p. 377]

The narcissism and egocentrism is the scourge of the symbolists, and the "narcissism is inconsistent with the creative life ... This aspect of the symbolism is obvious." [6, p. 377] It is inconsistent with genuine love. Even "when the woman they love, then love is not for her and to her, but to her admiration for them" [6, p. 377].

But according to Fudel, there is "something terribly important in the symbolism. You only must know how to 'read' it without becoming entangled in their diseases. I would be determined that 'something' like: a sense of the spiritual world reality, the assertion of the truth of invisible existence." [6, p. 378] S.I. Fudel encourages people to be established in the entire and absolute realism, which covers "the totality of human existence and life, in which not only a visible, but also an *invisible* is real" [6, p. 378]. The symbolists strongly felt this 'invisible'. In S.I. Fudel's opinion, the symbolism is best understood through the lines of F.I. Tyutchev: "Our timely life is surrounded by an ocean of dreams, just as the earthly globe" [13].

"These people - writes S.I. Fudel - have seen some dreams, they were able to talk about them" [6, p. 378]. For a moment the mind of the poet received a second vision, through which it was achieved a knowledge of the whole, but not just external 'shelly' reality. And the night is the time for these revelations and these dreams. S.I. Fudel repeatedly noted that the theme of the night appeared in the lyrics of many poets. This thread comes from the 'night' poems of A.S. Pushkin throughout the XIXth century to the '*Nochnye chasy*' (Night time) of A.A. Block. This intuition is the timeless value of symbolism.

S.I. Fudel in his writings has inherited the striving of the symbolists for religious and philosophical understanding of the world and man, but at the same time, he managed to avoid the temptations to which the symbolists could not resist. Moreover, S.I. Fudel could accurately specify the diseases of that period, which lost its quality as compared to the 'golden' XIX century: the 'mystical jugglery', substitution of specific knowledge of a 'pseudoreligious literature', the painful eroticism, chiliastic aspirations, questionable value of the 'new religious consciousness' and the like. But in the same period in the poetry of the symbolists 'golden stars' [6, p. 266] lit up in the dark night sky. And S.I. Fudel saw them. That's why he was able to evaluate the work of the symbolists quite objectively.

3. Conclusion

The era of ‘Silver Age’, when S.I. Fudel lived, was notable for the desire to create a new universal philosophy, the whole knowledge, destined to overcome the crisis of cognition, personality, life in general. And it was an urgent need for the Russian philosophy, realized after the appearance of the self-realized ideas of positivism, a ruinous lordship of ‘abstract principles’. V.S. Soloviev said: “Under the abstract principles, I mean those particular ideas (special aspects and elements of all-unified idea), which, being distracted from the whole and approved in their exclusivity, lose their true character, and contradicting and fighting with each other, are exposed the human world in a state of mental disorder, in which he found hitherto” [14].

But this search for a new piece of knowledge “prevailed speculative, supramundane, abstract thought of the individual integrity” [15]. In order to conclude, P.A. Berdyaev has defined this era in the following words: “The Russian Renaissance is associated with psychic structure, which is lacked of moral character” [16].

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