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Cristina Moraru

The Solar Vision of the Future. A Cosmist Analysis on Anton Vidokle's film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun*

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Cosmism, immortality, revolution, solar aesthetics, Anton Vidokle, cosmic energy

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Abstract

The Solar Vision of the Future. A Cosmist Analysis on Anton Vidokle's film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun*

This paper explores the symbolic, philosophical, and aesthetic role of the Sun in Russian Cosmism through the lens of Anton Vidokle's film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun* (2015). Interweaving the thought of figures such as Nikolai Fedorov, Alexander Chizhevsky, and Boris Groys, the Sun is portrayed not merely as a physical source of life, but as a metaphysical force capable of shaping history, revolution, and human destiny. Vidokle reinterprets Cosmism's ideas through cinematic language, linking solar cycles to social upheavals and proposing a vision of art as a transformative tool in harmony with cosmic energy. Positioning Cosmism at the intersection of science, art, and politics, the film offers a contemporary reflection on the potential of solar aesthetics to sustain utopian aspirations and a vision of collective immortality. Vidokle's work serves as a visual manifesto of Cosmism, in which the Sun emerges as a unifying force between nature, society, and the cosmos.

The Solar Vision of the Future. A Cosmist Analysis on Anton Vidokle's film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun*

Il contributo indaga il ruolo simbolico, filosofico ed estetico del Sole nel Cosmismo russo attraverso la lente del film di Anton Vidokle *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun* (2015). Intrecciando autori quali Nikolaj Fëdorov, Aleksandr Čiževskij e Boris Groys, il Sole non è concepito solo come fonte fisica di vita, ma anche come forza metafisica capace di modellare la storia, la rivoluzione e il destino umano. Vidokle reinterpreta le idee cosmiste attraverso il linguaggio cinematografico, collegando i cicli solari ai sommovimenti sociali e proponendo una visione dell'arte come strumento trasformativo in sintonia con l'energia cosmica. Collocando il Cosmismo all'incrocio tra scienza, arte e politica, il film offre una riflessione contemporanea sul potenziale delle estetiche solari per alimentare aspirazioni utopiche e un'idea di immortalità collettiva. L'opera di Vidokle è un manifesto visivo della filosofia cosmista, in cui il Sole emerge come forza unificatrice tra natura, società e cosmo.

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Luigi Ghirri, *Bastia*, 1976. © Eredi di | Heirs of Luigi Ghirri.

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Vesper
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Vesper è una rivista scientifica semestrale, multidisciplinare e bilingue, si occupa delle relazioni tra forme e processi del progetto e del pensiero. Ponendo lo sguardo al crepuscolo, quando la luce si confonde con il buio e l'oggetto illuminante non è più visibile, *Vesper* intende leggere l'atto progettuale seguendo e rendendo evidente il moto della trasformazione. Pitagora identificò nel pianeta Venere sia la stella della sera (*Hesperos*) che quella del mattino (*Phosphoros*), i due nomi si riferiscono allo stesso astro ma posto in condizioni temporali differenti. *Vesper* dichiara quindi una posizione più che un oggetto e privilegia il situarsi che ne profila lo statuto. Non è qui accesa la luce tagliente dell'alba, che promette giorni completamente nuovi e alti sol dell'avvenire, ma quella che fa intravedere nella penombra una possibilità nell'esistente.

Richiamando e rinnovando la tradizione delle riviste cartacee italiane, *Vesper* ospita un paesaggio articolato di modalità narrative, accoglie forme di scrittura e stili differenti, privilegia l'intelligenza visiva del progetto, dell'espressione grafica, dell'immagine e delle contaminazioni tra linguaggi. La rivista è pensata nella sua successione di numeri tematici come discorso sulla contemporaneità, nello spazio di ogni singolo numero è articolata in un insieme di rubriche che gettano luci differenti sul tema. Nel procedere delle diverse sezioni – editoriale, citazione, progetto, racconto, lezione, saggio, inserto, traduzione, archivio, viaggio, ring, tutorial, fundamentals – mutano i riverberi tra idee e realtà, si accende l'intreccio tra evidenze concrete e loro potenzialità, potenziali trasformativi, immaginari. Le rubriche sono pensate non per aggiornare istantaneamente ma per indagare condizioni progettuali e per fornire strumenti e materiali dall'*ombra lunga*.

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Vesper is a six-monthly, multidisciplinary and bilingual scientific journal which deals with the relationships between forms and processes of thought and of design. Gazing into the dusk, when light slowly merges with darkness and the illuminating object is no longer visible, *Vesper* aims to interpret the act of designing through tracing and revealing the movement of transformation. Pythagoras identified in the planet Venus both the evening star (*Hesperos*) and the morning star (*Phosphoros*), assigning the two names to the same star observed in different temporal conditions. *Vesper* thus states a perspective rather than an object, privileging the condition that defines its status. Rather than the sharp light of dawn, heralding a brand-new day and promising a brighter future, it is the twilight that allows you to have a glimpse at the potential of what is already there.

Following the tradition of Italian paper journals, *Vesper* revives it by hosting a wide spectrum of narratives, welcoming different writings and styles, privileging the visual intelligence of design, of graphic expression, of images and contaminations between different languages. The journal is conceived as a series of thematic issues that build a discourse on the contemporary. Each issue is divided into sections that offer a range of diverse perspectives on the theme analysed: editorial, quote, project, tale, lecture, essay, extra, translation, archive, journey, ring, tutorial, fundamentals. Throughout the different sections, reverberations between ideas and reality change, connections emerge between tangible facts and their potentials, transformative prospects, collective perception. The principal aim of these sections is not to provide instant news, but to offer an in-depth investigation of different instances of design and to provide tools and materials that have a long-lasting effect.

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Anton Vidokle, *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun*, 2015. Film still. Ph. Ayman Nahle.

Cristina Moraru

The Sun, our vital source of energy and life, and our symbol of cosmic transcendence, bridges a profound connection between the finite and the infinite, mediating between our earthly existence and our cosmic dematerialization. In cosmist philosophy, the Sun is not merely a celestial body providing light and warmth, but a cosmic engine of life that guides our evolution, watching over our collective destiny. For Nikolai Fyodorov, the father of Russian Cosmism, the Sun is a symbol of immortality and hope, a key element in understanding humanity's relation with the universe. In his book, *What Was Man Created For? The Philosophy of the Common Task*, Nikolai Fyodorov attributes a vital force to the Sun, which should be used in completing the common task of transformation and renewal to unite all human beings, bridging the gap between past, present, and future.

In line with a radical cosmist approach on human immortality, Nikolay Fyodorov believed that the Sun's inexhaustible energy could be harnessed to achieve both immortality for all living creatures and the technological resurrection of the dead (Fyodorov 1990). In this respect, the Sun's role transcends its physical properties, becoming a symbol of immortality and hope, embodying the possibility of overcoming death through a synthesis of science and spirituality. In his conversation with Arseny Zhilyaev, entitled *Factories of Resurrection*, Anton Vidokle asserts that art, much like the cosmist vision of resurrection, has the capacity to transcend the limitations of time, death, and materiality. Thus, art can metaphorically resurrect the past by bringing ideas, memories, and histories back into contemporaneity (Vidokle, Zhilyaev 2017), creating new possibilities for understanding the past.

In this film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused by the Sun* (2015), Anton Vidokle explores a complex relationship between the cosmos and human history, particularly focusing on the events surrounding the Russian Revolution of 1917. By correlating solar activity with historical phenomena, Vidokle's film refers to cosmist thinkers, such as Alexander Chizhevsky, a Russian biophysicist, who proposed that solar cycles could predict societal upheaval (Chizhevsky 2018), as periods of increased solar activity affect collective emotions and actions, leading to revolutionary events. In his article *The World-Historical Cycles, from The Earth in the Sun's Embrace*, Chizhevsky analysed historical data, demonstrating a relationship between solar activity and episodes of human unrest, as the Russian Revolution.

Anton Vidoke's film interprets these ideas in an artistic manner, blurring the boundaries between scientific causality and symbolic imagination. By taking Chizhevsky's hypothesis as a narrative foundation, Vidokle allegorizes the Sun's influence, imagining it not merely as a metaphorical force for revolution, but as an actual instigator of socio-political change. The film situates human history within a solar-influenced narrative, suggesting that revolutionary fervour may be as much a product of solar energy as it is a result of conflicting ideologies or material conditions. By juxtaposing historical images of revolutionary movements with images of solar eruptions, Vidokle suggests a profound interdependence between humanity and the cosmos, drawing a visual parallel between the microcosm of human struggle and the macrocosm of the universe.

The solar aesthetics in Vidoke's film is not limited to the use of light, but creates an entire cinematic language around the dynamic presence of the Sun. By focusing on the duality of the Sun as both a scientific resource and a metaphysical symbol, Vidoke's film presents the sun as a symbol of immortality, a primary source of energy for life on Earth, but also as a metaphysical force inspiring revolutionary thought and utopian aspirations. The film oscillates between presenting concrete images of the solar orbit and more abstract images capturing diffused sunlight across landscapes, emphasizing the Sun's dual role as a tangible object and an abstract force. By examining the Sun as a conceptual, aesthetic, and ideological force, Vidokle not only pays homage to the cosmist philosophers, but also extends their ideas into new, contemporary interpretation that reflect on the transformative nature of the Sun as a key element of our interconnectedness with the cosmos.

Further on, Boris Groys provides a contemporary understanding of cosmism as a radical rethinking of humanity's relationship with life, death, and the cosmos. In his article *Russian Cosmism and the Technology of Immortality*, Boris Groys presents cosmism as a philosophy that reimagines revolution not just as a social or political act, but as a cosmic insurgency that transforms humanity's place in the universe. For Groys, cosmism is inherently revolutionary (Groys 2018) as it seeks to overthrow the natural order of life through technological, social, and artistic means. In this respect, Vidokle's film channels this revolutionary ethos, presenting the Sun as a metaphor for transcending human limitations. Through Boris Groys's theoretical lens, Vidokle's film becomes more than an exploration of cosmism; it becomes in itself a cosmist artifact, a work of art that seeks to connect viewers with the revolutionary potential of cosmic forces.

In cosmist thought, art is perceived as more than bare representation, it is a tool for shaping reality in accordance with cosmic energy. In other words, art becomes a vehicle to envision and celebrate eternal life, framing immortality not as a metaphysical abstraction, but as a practical goal that can be achieved through the use of artistic knowledge. In this respect, Alexander Svyatogor, a prominent figure in the Biocosmist movement, extends the artistic dimensions of Russian cosmism into a radical rethinking of poetry's role in society, envisioning poetry as an integral part of a revolutionary project, serving a collective and transformative purpose. In a similar manner, Vidokle's use of striking visuals and poetic narration reflect the cosmist perception of art as a medium to inspire revolutionary thinking and cosmic awareness.

In his article *Biocosmist Poetics*, Alexander Svyatogor argues that poetics must actively engage with the ideal of achieving physical immortality, transcending traditional humanist and spiritualist themes. In his view, the glorification of death in poetry is a relic of a pre-scientific era, incompatible with the Biocosmist ethos (Svyatogor 2018). Thus, art should affirm life, dynamism, and infinite progression, while seeking to align itself with the newest technological and biological breakthroughs. In this respect, Vidokle's film can be seen as a visual extension of Svyatogor's poetic ambitions, since his portrayal of the Sun as a source of life echoes Svyatogor's rejection of death-centric art, advocating for a creative ethos rooted in vitality, energy, and infinite progress. Offering a cinematic description of numerous cosmist themes, Anton Vidokle's film presents the Sun as both a literal and symbolic force and a unifying metaphor for the interconnectedness of life, cosmos, and revolution – ideas that lie at the heart of Svyatogor's *Biocosmist Poetics.*

However, in contrast to Svyatogor's views, Vidokle's film reinterprets the Sun as the driver of historical revolutions, focusing more on human transformation and renewal rather than on technical immortality. Vidokle's film reflects a collectivist ethos, emphasizing shared human experiences under cosmic influences, while the Sun becomes a unifying force, driving humanity toward revolutionary change and collective progress. This revolutionary optimism is echoed by Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, in his article *The Future of the Earth and Man*, in which humanity's evolution is inseparably linked to cosmic forces. For the Russian cosmist and rocket scientist Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, the future of humanity expands beyond Earth through scientific and technological innovation as part of a collective evolutionary mission (Tsiolkovsky 1928) – a vision paralleling communism's utopian drive for societal transformation. Just as Vidokle's film evokes humanity's connection to the cosmos through poetic imagery, implying that our destiny is shaped by cosmic rhythms, Tsiolkovsky sees humanity as a unified organism, working collectively to achieve cosmic integration.

Vidokle's film delineates a poetic meditation on the entanglement of cosmism and communism, suggesting that both movements are driven by a shared desire for collective progress and equality. Associating cosmic imagery with Soviet-era aesthetics, the film describes a philosophical interplay between cosmism and communism, underlying the idea that both ideologies sought to overcome earthly limitations – whether through the abolition of class structures or the transcendence of mortality and planetary boundaries. Juxtaposing cosmist and communist philosophical perspectives with a poetic imagery on the symbolic power of the Sun, the film bridges communism's historical determinism with cosmism's metaphysical resolution, inviting viewers to reimagine humanity's relationship with the cosmos. Challenging conventional narratives of history by situating human agency within a broader cosmic framework, Vidokle's film suggests that revolutions and societal transformations are influenced by the rhythms of the natural world. As both a reflection, and a concrete materialization of cosmist ideas into an artwork, Vidokle's film exemplifies art's ability to engage practically with revolutionary concepts, merging science, spirituality, and creativity.

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