

## NOOSPHERE CONSCIOUSNESS EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*The preservation of life on the Earth depends on our attitude to the biosphere. The writer's pedagogical expertise at the School of Music, Herzen University has proved that the humanities should discuss issues of noosphere consciousness and N. Roerich's Living Ethics Teachings.*

*Humanly, such education substantiates norms of social behavior student is expected to follow and advocate for in his/her future career and everyday life. Professionally, it conceptualizes music as a bearer of sacred information and asserts a high moral mission of musician and pedagogue.*

**Key words:** *Noosphere Concept, the Geo-Cosmos, Teaching of Live Ethics, scientists-Organists and Cosmists, Ecological Psychology, contemporary issues of research and education, higher educational, the humanitarian and professional ones*

Among the many problems of modern higher education, irrespective of the major, one of the most relevant is teaching students a new, responsible attitude to the biosphere. Not only does successful cultural and economic development depends on this, but also the preservation of life on our planet.

Today one is likely to observe that sharp deterioration of the Earth's ecology results in the increase of negative responses from the Cosmos. Thoughtless and wasteful management by people and carelessly cruel attitude to geo-resources are due in no small part to this phenomenon. Social and public processes, norms of public behavior, and moral principles are also subject to negative cosmic influence.

The responsible attitude to the biosphere has direct links to V. I. Vernadsky's Noosphere Concept (Vernadsky, 1991). Today, during the era of total plunder of terrestrial riches, cruel technicalization, destroying all life, and aspiration to develop the similarly destructive "management" in the outer space, the understanding of a role of the noosphere as the most important research category does not demand additional explanations and support.

A number of countries, primarily, those of the so-called "gold billion" treat the problem locally. They carry out full-scale ecological projects and feature a strong position by the Green Party. However, the well-being of their societies is in many respects attained at the expense of other countries, especially the Third World ones by moving dangerous, ecologically impure industries and harmful waste to their territories. Such a selfish approach is incompatible with the noosphere consciousness because the well-being on the Earth is only possible if every region features ecological safety. Geospace is the integrity house.

According to the Russian "The Newest Grand Encyclopedic Dictionary", the noosphere is "a new evolutionary form of the biosphere attained due to the activity of human Reason as a decisive factor of its development" ('Noosphere', 2010, p. 1201). Other definitions also emphasize the key role of human Reason; particularly, a monograph by O. D. Masloboeva holds that "...it is the biosphere transformed into a new quality, that is, a Reason-controlled development" (Masloboeva, 2007, p. 274). V. I. Vernadsky's theory, as well as ideas of other Russian scientists-organists and cosmists – N. F. Fyodorov, N. A. Bulgakov, N. O. Lossky, K. E. Tsiolkovsky, A. L. Chizhevsky, P. A. Florensky and others have much in common with N. K. Roerich's Teaching of Live Ethics. This burst of outstanding scholarly vision happened in Russia at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century – in advance of the era of scientific and technical revolution, the most destructive wars in history and unprecedented level of material consumption. "Cosmism has mapped out a strategy of the constructive solution to the apocalyptic situation of the present day when a social subject is forced to choose between self-destruction and self-revival" (Masloboeva, 2007, p. 260).

These noosphere ideas have their origin in the remote past when no one doubted that the communication between all creation (including humans) and the Cosmos existed. Ancient scholarly knowledge testified to this fact, let alone mythology and religious doctrines. The researchers point to a similar outlook of the ethnic groups currently featuring an early stage of social development. In particular, V. P. Arsenyev, a Russian ethnographer specializing in African Studies, noted about *bambara* people living in the Republic of Mali and Western Sudan: "Bambara attributes violations of integrity of the world or any of its components – from the most significant to the indiscernible – to the notion of 'nyama', a power dissociating from any integral object in case of its partial or complete destruction; therefore, they associate 'nyama' with the violation of universal balance" (Arsenyev, 1991, p. 140). However, once civilized people tend to forget the experience of their ancestors, an inevitable question of developing a responsible attitude to the nature, that is, a new, noosphere consciousness, on the principles of Live Ethics (first of all, among the youth), arises in modern civilized communities.

It is pleasant to note that the examples of such education do already exist; however, such education has no significant coverage either in or outside of Russia. A number of educational institutions of various levels of study, organizations or individuals carry out educational projects in this sphere. In particular, now for 15 years, St. Petersburg schools of general education celebrate "The Day of Culture" on April 15 under the auspices of the St. Petersburg Committee on Education, the St. Petersburg Academy of Post-degree Pedagogical Education and the International League for Protection of Culture. This celebration commemorates the date when the Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (Roerich Pact) was signed. The St. Petersburg electronic journal "Pedagogika Kultury" ("Cultural Pedagogy") ([www.pedagogika-kultura.narod.ru](http://www.pedagogika-kultura.narod.ru)) is a devote champion of Live Ethics ideas. Professor A. I. Subetto from St. Petersburg, of encyclopedic knowledge, passionately advocates for V. I. Vernadsky's concept, as evidenced in his research, social and pedagogical activities (Subetto, 2010, 1012). In November 2012, the city of Yekaterinburg held a large-scale research and pedagogical conference "Ideas of Cosmism in Pedagogy and Education: Culture as a Groundwork of the Evolution", which summarized modern expertise in noosphere consciousness education. However, all of the above present merely a number of separate educational projects dependent upon the views and preferences of individuals and organizations.

Ideally, the development of noosphere consciousness has to begin in the family, from the child's first days if not during the prenatal period. (Civilizations of Ancient Orient were aware of this fact). More so, it must become an important component of all modern educational programs from kindergarten onward. The proceedings of the above conference in Yekaterinburg published in 2013 reported on the variety of germane pedagogical methods ('Ideas of Cosmism in Pedagogy and Education: Culture as Groundwork of the Evolution', 2013).

Universities must become true centers for teaching noosphere consciousness, as they prepare future intellectual elite, who will in turn pass this knowledge on to various spheres of forthcoming professional activity. Besides, students are future parents (and in some cases, they are already parents).

Being a professor of the School of Music (since September 1, 2013 it became the Institute of Music, Theater and Choreography) at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in St. Petersburg, I committed myself to familiarizing students with noosphere issues and the doctrine of Live Ethics. I have pursued this aim since 2007. My seven years of experience enabled me to develop the concept as well as a flexible thematic plan for this educational area.

Pedagogical experience at Herzen University School of Music has demonstrated that it is expedient to include a discussion of Live Ethics and noosphere consciousness issues in the curriculum of a humanities discipline. However, each higher educational institution should answer the inevitable question: in which disciplines do we include this information, and how to incorporate it into the existing majors. In our case, the course "Contemporary Issues of Research and Education" seemed to be an appropriate starting place.

This course is a part of the federal curriculum component for higher educational institutions of Russia. In my opinion, the concept of the course welcomes a discussion of both general research-and-education problems, and specialized ones (with us, these are relevant issues of music studies and music pedagogy).

The characteristic feature of this course is that the list of its topics is subject to change consequent to the rapid development within all areas of study. My seven-year experience testifies that even a well-designed thematic plan that initially meets all requirements, has to be updated every two years. Fortunately, any relevant thematic complex naturally takes roots in this discipline.

Due to the above reasons, I have chosen the course “Contemporary Issues of Research and Education” to teach basic ideas on the development of noosphere consciousness. These ideas form the thematic unit “Geo-space Influence on Humans” to be delivered in the beginning of the course due to its significance (currently, this accounts for no less than eight lecture hours).

This thematic unit illuminates such major questions, as:

- human-Cosmos relationship;
- influence of cosmic factors on humans;
- role of gravitational forces;
- consequences of ecological violations;
- contemporary ecological crisis, and its influence on culture;
- development of Ecological Psychology (R. G. Barker);
- problem of “future shock” (A. Toffler’s term);
- and the concept of Universal history (D. Christian) with its basic provisions.

Certainly, it is crucially important to acquaint students with the idea of *cosmic approach in sciences*. In this respect, I outline the role of ideas of V. I. Vernadsky, N. V. Timofeev-Resovsky, N. K. Roerich, K. E. Tsiolkovsky, A. L. Chizhevsky, P. A. Sorokin, L. N. Gumilev, V. I. Bolgov, and N. N. Moiseyev.

We also discuss with students:

- the new theory of planetary system by G. Ya. Vasilyeva,
- the notion of *noosphere*,
- the notion of *psychosphere* (A. Krylov's term),
- and the concept of *sexual dimorphism*.

In the aspect of geo-influences, I focus on the influence of electromagnetic fields and biological magnetism on physiology and mentality of humans. This aspect of study also includes problems of heredity, talent and modern “decline in the number of persons of genius”. Here, I use statistical data by E. Maksimov and the results of research conducted by V. P. Efroimson, V. A. Rudnik, A. P. Dubrov and others.

Addressing V. I. Vernadsky and L. N. Gumilev's ideas, we discuss provisions of their **Passionarity theory**. This group of problems includes:

- the issues of environment and heredity,
- modern views of them in the contexts of research and education,
- and adaptations to the environment, with specification of the types of these adaptations.

As I teach the discipline at a musical institution, I make sure to deliver the main aspects of P. A. Sorokin’s theory of the socio-cultural development, namely:

- the succession of cultures,
- an interpretation of the arts in the context of the doctrine of three main cultural eras,
- the current situation in Russian culture (as a part of the world culture),
- and the cultural westernization.

In this connection, we discuss with students the idea of synergetic approach and principles of self-organization, interpreting the socio-cultural adaptation as the superior type of adaptation, and emphasizing the priority mission of science, religion and arts in this adaptation process.

Lectures presenting only a part of the above thematic material, students are encouraged to study some questions at seminars or on their own. For this purpose, I recommend them the following materials: the monograph by Herzen University professor O. D. Volchek "Geo-Cosmos and Human" (Volchek, 2006), individual articles by the same author (many of them are available on the Internet) and the issues of the above electronic journal "Pedagogika Kultury" ("Cultural Pedagogy"). These publications contain a comprehensive analysis of medical-biological, economic, pedagogical, culturological and other aspects of the problem in question.

To enhance learning experiences, I also use scientific documentary films "Consciousness on the Eve of Revolution" ("On the new cosmic outlook based on the doctrine of Live Ethics", 2005) and "Time to Gather Stones" (2010).

From the above list of questions, one may conclude that elements of Live Ethics as well as the concept of cosmic approach in sciences and the discussion of the catastrophic state of environment are present in the curriculum of the course due to relevance of these issues to any field of human activity. In the structure of the course, these issues constitute the category of *general* or *basic* ones.

Another avenue of education in "Geo-cosmic Influence on Humans" features a more direct connection with the future profession of our students. Teaching at a pedagogical university I consider it appropriate to include in the curriculum the theme "Children with a New Consciousness: A Problem Discussion" as a topic related to the cosmic outlook (in the West, those children are called 'indigo children', in Russia, L. N. Shaposhnikova coined the term "children with a new consciousness"). Here, my intentions are:

- to discuss the nature of 'indigo children' phenomenon in sociological, pedagogical, and psychological aspects,
- inform of the different views of this phenomenon;
- and explore the terminology issues including terminological distinctions between Russian and international scholars.

In addition, my aim is

- to summarize relevant theories by Russian and international scholars (in particular, compare opinions of Sh. A. Amonashvili, E. N. Chernozymova, A. A. Likhanov, L. Carroll, and D. Touber);
- point to a negative role of mass media in misinterpretation and commercialization of the problem;
- draw a psychological 'portrait' of indigo children, emphasizing their differences from and similarities with "children prodigy";
- specify a singularity of indigo children's hyperactivity and provide data on an adverse effect on them of medical treatment for their alleged "disorder";
- and establish the moral criterion as a basis for psychological evaluation of indigo children and, consequently, adaptation of such children to society.

Pedagogically, I dwell on:

- the relevance of special educational institutions for indigo children;
- possible changes in educational design of "traditional" educational institutions to accommodate indigo children;
- and the creation of special curricula, educational programs, and study guides for them from kindergarten to higher educational institutions.

Inevitably, some musical issues arise as well. In particular, supposing that a causal relationship exists between the geo-cosmic factors and arts, I provide the content analysis data on the mode-tonal evolution

of music. These data signal that the development of music and musical thinking potentially depends on the geo-cosmic influence (though the number of fundamental research works in this area is still insufficient.)

Every academic year evidences for the efficiency of this teaching: having studied the given thematic unit, students become aware of *the link between all the activities of humans and Geo-Cosmos*. They come to realize that our thoughts and affairs, starting from one's personal attitude to environment in everyday life, and ending with global politics, creativity and economics, affect Geo-Cosmos causing the latter's positive or – nowadays more often - negative biosphere responses.

Moreover, students begin to realize that the succession of eras, trends, styles and genres in the history of arts as well as changes to the imagery and expressive language of arts (in particular, music) are in many respects dependent on geo-cosmic factors. Today it would be naive to believe that all such changes are only due to human activities.

The following group of questions suggested for the graded test mirrors the degree of increased competence of students in the issues of noosphere consciousness:

- geo-cosmic influence on humans— the main aspects,
- passionarity and its relation to the Geo-Cosmos;
- geo-cosmic aspect of studies in means of musical expression;
- indigo children phenomenon;
- and the basic ideas of ecological psychology.

However, the noosphere consciousness education cannot be limited to a single thematic unit of the only discipline, even if a possibility exists of introducing a special course into the curriculum that would deal with the problem (for example, an elective course). Therefore, it would be very desirable to view any discipline from a perspective of the development of the noosphere consciousness. This task is much more difficult to complete as it challenges the entire academic community rather than just one teacher (in our case, the one who delivers the course “Contemporary Issues of Research and Education”). Consequently, all faculty members should develop competence in concepts of V. I. Vernadsky, N. K. Roerich and Cosmists. Moreover, this knowledge should become their commitment and define their norms of life. Arguably, Anton Chekhov's well-known words give a best description of an ideal teacher: “Every aspect of the human should be beautiful: face, cloth, soul and thoughts...” (Chekhov, 1956, p. 303).

In addition to appropriate knowledge of the noosphere and Live Ethics, the faculty should make considerable efforts to creatively reconsider their disciplines in the noosphere context and correspondingly update the methodology of teaching identifying and emphasizing problems that are relevant to the noosphere consciousness education. Specifically, besides the course “Contemporary Issues of Research and Education”, I teach History of Music (pre-Baroque period) and several courses in applied psychology, namely, Musical Psychology and Psychology of Music Education; Psychology of Arts Creativity; and Psychology of Creative Musical Self-expression. Therefore, I am going to provide some examples of how teaching these disciplines can fit in the context of developing noosphere consciousness.

Thus, in my music history course, I consider it appropriate to dwell on the cosmological musical concepts of Ancient Assyria and Ancient China. (The sources of germane information include K. Sachs's classical works on music of Ancient Orient, R. I. Gruber's Russian higher education textbooks on music of Ancient World, and many other materials)

Concerning the recent studies in psychology of creativity, I address the works by Professor E. V. Vyazkova from The Gnesins Russian Academy of Music. In particular, they include her doctoral thesis “Processes of musical creativity: a comparative textual analysis” defended at the P. I. Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory in 1999, and her articles on typology of creative composition process, nature of the intertextual links in artistic texts and others (Vyazkova, 1999, 2002). Her method of



studying creative composition process has relevance to the topic discussed in the present article. E. V. Vyazkova classifies types of composition process according to two premises. Firstly, she recognizes the existence of the "field of information" in Cosmos; secondly, she tries to answer the question: 'Where from and how ideas come?' As a result, having analyzed and summarized a huge array of data, she formulates six types of creative composition process:

- 1) Inspired creativity;
- 2) rational creativity;
- 3) creativity as a game;
- 4) creativity after a model;
- 5) creativity as an automatic process;
- 6) and the creativity based on a self-development of the idea.

**Inspired creativity** means establishing a connection to a source of creative ideas. According to composers, such connection associates with a certain disposition, a presentiment described as "an unusual state of consciousness" (Vyazkova, 1999, p. 162).

**Rational creativity** implies that the composer produces his/her music intellectually. Such process requires much efforts.

**Creativity as a game** takes place when the artist (composer) lays down certain rules for him/herself in a manner typical of games.

While **creating after a model**, the composer deliberately follows a particular example that normally belongs to musical classics.

The history of art has recorded unique examples of **creativity as an automatic process**. This mode resembles writing to somebody's dictation. In difference from the inspired creativity, the automatic process implies a lesser interference of the composer's self. It is likely that Schumann's last composition – "Variations on the Theme by Schubert" which, according to the sick composer, "Angel of Schubert" sang to him in a night dream, could be an example of such automatic process of composing.

**Creativity based on a self-development of the idea** can be explained by synergetic – the science studying self-developing systems (Vyazkova, 1999, p. 168).

As we see, at least three types of creative composition process are associated with Cosmos. If we elaborate on this idea (the relevant data are already numerous to allow for generalizations), we would likely to observe the influence of Cosmos as a *source* of ideas for all areas of science and art.

As early as in the late nineties, astrophysics established the impact on human consciousness of particles directed from the outer space. The cosmic factors, such as the Sun, Moon, planetary aspects, space cataclysms, etc. as well as their climatic consequences, make an impact on all the main life processes, growth of populations, sexual dimorphism, increase or, on the contrary, decrease in human passionarity and talent, etc.

Back to the musical aspect of human-Cosmos relationship, this problem now is increasingly relevant due to the pseudo-musical "garbage" that dominates on the radio, television, and Internet, producing the principal sound background of society. All this "information" goes up to celestial heights and the result of this is equivalent to water and air pollution. In such a situation, the fate of children and youth arouse the most pity.

Therefore, the educational material presented in this article pursues the following pedagogical aims:

- to promote a deep understanding of the problem of human-Cosmos communication as the most important component of human consciousness;
- to identify the moral guidelines that provide self-identification of the individual in unity with the Universe;

- to stress a necessity of passing the noosphere knowledge on to all structures of education;
- and to teach a careful and responsible attitude to music and its moral power.

The results obtained in the process of noosphere consciousness education at Herzen University School of Music enable me to conclude that the above thematic unit incorporated into the course “Contemporary Issues of Research and Education” serves two educational purposes: the *humanitarian* and *professional* ones.

Humanitarianly, it substantiates norms of social behavior that students are expected to follow and advocate for in their future careers and everyday life. Professionally, it conceptualizes music as a bearer of sacred information and asserts a high moral mission of musician and pedagogue.

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