



**Semantic-cognitive  
structure of social-  
philosophical discourse  
of the end of XIXth  
- the beginning of  
the XXth century**



**SEMANTIC-COGNITIVE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL-PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE OF  
THE END OF XIXTH - THE BEGINNING OF THE XXTH CENTURY**  
**ESTRUCTURA SEMÁNTICA-COGNITIVA DEL DISCURSO SOCIAL-FILOSÓFICO  
DEL FIN DEL SIGLO XIX - PRINCIPIOS DEL SIGLO XX**

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Fecha de recibido: 13 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de aceptado para publicación: 30 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de publicación: 10 de diciembre de 2019

**Abstract**

The article discusses the features of the Russian religious and philosophical discourse of the late XIXth – early XXth centuries. The subject of study is the archaic meanings of socio-philosophical discourse concepts and their semantic transformations, as well as new meanings that appeared in the late XIXth – early XXth centuries. It is proved that the “EVENT” concept, which includes the composite components “Kingdom”, “Emperor”, “Russians” and “literature”, is structurally-forming.

**Keywords:** socio-philosophical discourse, the concept of event, the composite component Russia, the composite component Kingdom, the composite component Emperor, the composite component Russians, the composite component literature.

El artículo analiza las características del discurso religioso y filosófico ruso de finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX. El tema de estudio son los significados arcaicos de los conceptos del discurso socio-filosófico y sus transformaciones semánticas, así como los nuevos significados que aparecieron a fines del siglo XIX y principios del XX. Está comprobado que el concepto de "EVENTO", que incluye los componentes compuestos "Reino", "Emperador", "Rusos" y "literatura", se está formando estructuralmente.

**Palabras clave:** discurso socio-filosófico, el concepto de evento, el componente compuesto Rusia, el componente compuesto Reino, el componente compuesto Emperador, el componente compuesto Rusos, el componente compuesto literatura.

## Introduction

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, they developed the conceptual bases of social thought development trend were formed in Russia, intellectual communities were formed that were capable of socially-philosophical understanding of modern socio-political processes, which are discussed on the pages of the periodical press and at various meetings. On the eve of the revolutionary events of 1917, the Russian public could not remain aloof from the socio-historical processes that were characteristic of Russia at the beginning of the 20th century. The social and philosophical discourse, which is a special phenomenon of social and philosophical reflection in national culture, is widespread. The main representatives of the socio-philosophical discourse were the members of the Moscow (1905 – 1918), St. Petersburg (1907 – 1917), Kiev (1908 – 1919) and Rybinsk (1916 – 1918) philosophical societies. A distinctive feature of socio-philosophical discourse is its fragmentation, its concentration “around some supporting concept”, which “creates a general context that describes the actors, objects, circumstances, times, actions, etc.” and is determined “not so much by the sequence of sentences as the general world that creates the discourse and its interpreter, which is “built” in the course of the discourse development” [3: p.7].

## Problem Discussion

### The features of socio-philosophical discourse

The study of socio-philosophical discourse phenomenon of the late XIXth – early XXth centuries involves the analysis of its formation context, formation trends, sources, problem fields and boundaries, since discourse cannot be understood outside the context, because it becomes a semiotic system in the context only [11, 13-15]. The context of Russian socio-philosophical discourse development is associated with the phenomenon of reception, which determines the features of socio-philosophical discourse. Philosophy acts as the method of reflection, and socially becomes the object of philosophical reflection.

The process of forcing the socio-philosophical discourse began at the end of the last third of the XIXth century (pre-revolutionary period). This period is the most difficult. The works by N.Ya. Grot, Vl. Soloviev, P.D. Yurkevich, V.D. Kudryavtsev-Platonov, N.N. Strakhov, V.A. Snegirev, V.V. Rozanov, V.S. Serebrennikov, S.N. Trubetskoy, V.I. Nesmelov, M.M. Tareev, N.O. Lossky and others belong to this period. This stage involves the formulation of the subject matter of socio-philosophical reflection from socio-political issues to its philosophical understanding. The last stage of the socio-philosophical end of the XIXth – the beginning of the XXth centuries has the following time frame: 1917 – the second third of the XXth century. It is represented by the works of Russian thinkers-immigrants. After the revolution, the ideas of socio-philosophical discourse were continued abroad in the works of our compatriots N.O. Lossky, S.L. Frank, V.V. Zinkovsky and others.

The most prominent representatives of the socio-philosophical discourse were S.A. Alekseev, Andrei Bely, Z.N. Gippius, A.V. Yelchaninov, Vyach. Ivanov, A.A. Meyer, D.S. Merezhkovsky, G.A. Rachinsky, V.V. Rozanov, V.P. Svetsitsky, D.V. Filosofov, P.A. Florensky, V.F. Ern and others. Social-philosophical discourse is characterized by reflexivity and interest in mental processes against the background of historical apocalyptic events. “During those years, many people suddenly discover that a person is a metaphysical



being ... Religious need is awakening in Russian society again ... A religious theme is now becoming a theme of life, not just a topic of thought ... The thirst for faith flares up. The need for a "spiritual life" is born, "the need to build one's soul" [Florovsky]. Thus, man and his inner world are in the center of attention, which indicates that the prevalence of religious and moral principles is characteristic of Russian religious and philosophical psychology. The key point of the socio-philosophical discourse is the recognition of free will presence in a person with an original interpretation of "free will" concept <...> [9: p. 39-40].

Socio-philosophical discourse reflects the phenomena related to people's lives, as well as people's attitudes in society. It presents all the elements of the discourse pointed out by V.Z. Demyankov: "a) the circumstances surrounding the events; b) the background explaining the events; c) the assessment of event participants; d) the information relating discourse to events" [3: p.7]. That is, socio-philosophical discourse is a mental space based on generally accepted methods of perception and interpretation of a social phenomenon. In other words, social discourse represents certain rules of speech interaction, which is localized in certain sociocultural conditions of a particular historical era. Words are the representative of the established content, and the communicative act is the semantic filling of the discourse, that is, it is a plan of content that reflects past experience.

By the beginning of the 20th century, social contradictions were aggravating in society, opposition moods were growing, various political parties and directions were gaining strength: RSDLP (b), RSDLP (United Mensheviks), the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (Socialist Revolutionaries), People's Freedom Party, the Union of October 17 (Octobrists), Labor People's Socialist Party (Trudoviks), also the organizations of the Black Hundred and anarchists. Literary and political magazines and newspapers were the form of thought expression. There was an active study of topical issues for the Russian Empire on their pages, and the projects for the further development of Russian society were formulated. There is a close relationship between some of them, there is a hidden or open polemic between others. The subject of socio-philosophical discourse was all sectors of society that expressed public opinion. At this time, the state ideology loses its total influence.

The socio-philosophical discourse of the beginning of the 20th century is the response of the thinking public to the imminent collapse of the Russian Empire. It is imbued with vague expectations of impending catastrophes, a sense of tragedy, the proximity of death of everything around: family, country and the world. Studying the formation of Russian socio-philosophical discourse involves the analysis of the language development and the conceptual basis of the discourse, which is the code that conveys information in the communication process.

### **The content of socio-philosophical discourse**

The key to the socio-religious discourse during the beginning of the 20th century is the concept of "EVENT", which has a composite structure. By composite concepts we mean a special type of concepts that reflect phenomena and can be described as a specific composition (an ordered collection) of a number of other similar concepts.

The structure of the “EVENT” concept is formed by the sense-forming cognitive components “Russia”, “Kingdom”, “Emperor”, “Church”, “Russians”, “Literature”, which can be considered as separate independent concepts.

The nominative field of the composite concept “EVENT” is formed by the lexeme "event" and "apocalypse".

In MAC, the word event has the following meanings: “1. The thing that happened; a phenomenon, a fact of public or personal life. 2. An important, outstanding phenomenon, an exciting incident” [12: p. 241].

In the socio-philosophical discourse of the beginning of the 20th century, the lexeme "event" nominating the concept of the same name actualizes the seme "something disastrous for the world, civilization, people; the apocalyptic nature of the events at the beginning of the 20th century is emphasized: “... in view of events that are not imaginary apocalyptic in nature, but really apocalyptic in nature” / «...ввиду событий, носящих **не мнимо апокалипсический характер, но действительно апокалипсический характер**» [10]. Here, two aspects are implicitly opposed – the real and the unreal. The reality of events is indicated by the sign ‘occurring in real time’: not an imaginary apocalyptic character; truly apocalyptic in nature.

The concept of “EVENT” is revealed through the cognitive model ‘event - foundation’. The revolution took place not without an apparent reason. It had the basis: “There is no doubt that there is a deep foundation of everything that is happening now ...” / «**Нет сомнения, что глубокий фундамент всего теперь происходящего...**» [10].

There is a sense of tragic events in the Russian socio-philosophical discourse: “Where? Nobody knew this, but even then, at the turn of the century, tragedy was felt in the air” / «**Было возбуждение и напряженность, но не было настоящей радости**» [4].

Tension was felt in society on the eve of the 1917 revolution: “There was excitement and tension, but there was no real joy” / «... в европейском (всем, – и в том числе русском) человечестве **образовались колоссальные пустоты...**» / «...в эти пустоты проваливается все: троны, классы, сословия, труд, богатства...» [2].

The reason for the apocalypse lies in humanity itself, which has lost its content. The cognitive model of “humanity - space”: “... enormous voids have formed in European (including all Russian) humanity ...” [10]. The phrase "colossal voids" gives a qualitative description of the event: ‘outstanding in size, quantity’: “... everything falls into these voids: thrones, classes, estates, labor, wealth ...” [10].

Humanity has become stifled. The soul lost its content: “But all this falls into the void of the soul, which has lost its ancient content” / «**Но все это проваливается в пустоту души, которая лишилась древнего содержания**» [10].

Christianity has lost its mission. In the socio-philosophical discourse of the early XXth century, they noted that the basis of social cataclysms lies in the fact that voids formed instead of “past Christianity”.

### Composite component “Russia”

The nominees are the words Rus, Russia, the Russian Empire, the empire. Often, the phrase old Russia is used to nominate the past Russia. For example: “A cultural renaissance



came to us during the pre-revolutionary era and was accompanied by a keen sense of the approaching death of old Russia” / *«Культурный ренессанс явился у нас в предреволюционную эпоху и сопровождался острым чувством приближающейся гибели старой России»* [2].

The socio-philosophical discourse reflects the feeling of approaching the death of Russia: “Something was breaking in Russia, something was left behind, something, having been born or revived, was striving forward. – Where? Nobody knew this, but even then, at the turn of the centuries, tragedy was felt in the air” / *«Что-то в России ломалось, что-то оставалось позади, что-то, народившись или воскреснув, стремилось вперед. – Куда? Это никому не было известно, но уже тогда, на рубеже веков, в воздухе чувствовалась трагедия»* [4].

The future and the present of the country is conveyed by the following verbs: crumbled, closed, faded. These verbs have the contextual meaning ‘cease to exist’. For example: “Russia faded in two days. At most, in three. Even the “New Time” could not be closed as soon as Russia closed. It is amazing that it crumbled all over at once, to details, to particulars” / *«Русь слиняла в два дня. Самое большее – в три. Даже «Новое Время» нельзя было закрыть так скоро, как закрылась Русь. Поразительно, что она разом рассыпалась вся, до подробностей, до частных»* [10].

No other country experienced such a shock. The great migration of peoples is an entire era, two or three centuries, and here it is literally three or even two days, after which there is nothing left:

The cognitive model ‘empire – emptiness’: “– There is no kingdom left, no church left, no troops left, and no working class left. So what is left? In a strange way – literally nothing” / *«Не осталось Царства, не осталось Церкви, не осталось войска, и не осталось рабочего класса. Что же осталось-то? Станным образом — буквально ничего»*. [10].

### **Composite component Kingdom**

The formation of Russian religious and philosophical discourse took place under the influence of the Byzantine model. The inextricable link between Christianity and the empire is reflected in the composite component of “Kingdom”. In the “Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language” the word kingdom has the following meanings: “1. A state ruled by a king. 2. The reign of a king, reign. 3. Some area of reality phenomena” [12: p. 241].

In the socio-philosophical discourse of the beginning of the 20th century, the kingdom is conceptualized in two trends: religious and secular (kingdom – Empire).

Since 1453 – the time of Constantinople fall – the concept of the ideology of Moscow sovereign theocratic power was expressed in the messages to the Grand Duke of Moscow Vasily III by the old man of Pskov Elizarov: “Keep and heed, pious king, that all Christian kingdoms converge on one, that two Romes have fallen, and the third is standing, but the fourth cannot be” [7: p. 441]. The Russian Tsar united the Orthodox, becoming in fact the head of the church. However, if in the conditions of Byzantium there was the parallelism of the priesthood and the emperor kingdom. In Russian culture, such an understanding of

power was perceived as an interference of secular authority in the church. Being the visible head of the church, the patriarch was the image of the invisible head of the church (i.e. Christ, therefore, he had the status of an “earthly God.” The proclamation of Moscow as Third Rome made Moscow the guardian of Orthodoxy. The collapse of the Empire threatened the fate of Orthodoxy.

Accordingly, on the eve of revolutionary events and revolution, the status of the “earthly God” fell. Strengthening the sacralization of the monarch occurred in the process of Europeanization of Russian culture.

The microtext “The Scattered Kingdom” reveals the idea of losing integrity: both the religious and secular kingdoms lose their integrity. The cognitive metaphor ‘kingdom – loose matter’. And then everything collapsed, all at once, the kingdom and the church. The kingdom is seen as a collection of small particles, more unlinked with each other. “Filaret, the Hierarch of Moscow was the last (isn't he the only one?) Great hierarch of the Russian Church ...”. There was the procession in Moscow. And then all passed – bishops, mitrophor priests, merchants, people; they carried icons, crosses, and banners. It all ended, almost ... And now, he was walking at the distance from the last people. He was Filaret” / *И вот рушилось все, разом, царство и церковь*. Царство рассматривается как совокупность мелких частиц, более несцепленных друг с другом. «Филарет Святитель Московский был последний (не единственный ли?) великий иерарх Церкви Русской... “Был крестный ход в Москве. И вот все прошли, – архиереи, митрофорные иереи, купцы, народ; пронесли иконы, пронесли кресты, пронесли хоругви. **Все кончилось, почти...** И вот поодаль от последнего народа шел он. Это был Филарет”» [10]. The church and the empire lose their integrity. The lexical and semantic field of the composite component “Kingdom” includes invisible lexical units, and fractions.

The composite sign ‘shine’ (the lexical unit “shine”) is explicated by the following context: “Meanwhile, Pushkin, Zhukovsky, Lermontov, Gogol, Filaret - what a radiance of the Kingdom. But Nicholas wanted to shine alone "with his friend Wilhelm-Friedrich” / «Между тем Пушкин, Жуковский, Лермонтов, Гоголь, Филарет – какое сияние Царства. Но Николай хотел один сиять “со своим другом Вильгельмом-Фридрихом” которым-то» [10].

The Russian socio-philosophical discourse conceptualizes the present and future of the Russian Church.

The cognitive models ‘church – glass’ and ‘empire / kingdom – glass’: The priests just do not understand that the church broke even worse than the kingdom / *Попам лишь непонятно, что церковь разбилась еще ужаснее, чем царство*. [10]; And the first church collapsed, and this, by the way, was “according to the law” ... *И вот церковь-то первая и развалилась, и, ей-ей, это кстати, и “по закону”...* [10].

### Composite component “Emperor”

The notion of Russian statehood forms the base layer of the composite component “Emperor”. The semantically close word is emperor. On the eve of the revolution, the process of desacralizing the image of the monarch is gaining more and more strength, the emperor is losing his influence. For a long time, the conceptual model ‘emperor - intercessor’ was updated in Russian linguistic culture. A breakdown is felt in imperialism:



“Here – not in the church, but in the imperialism - a turning point, a breakdown has already taken place or was committed” / *«Тут – не в церкви, но в императорстве – уже совершился или совершался перелом, надлом»* [10]. The cognitive metaphor ‘emperor - betrayal’ is revealed in the context: “The king ... <...> did not break, did not lie. But, seeing that the people and soldiers denied him so terribly, they betrayed him (for the sake of the vile Rasputin story), and also the nobility (Rodzianko), as always the fake “representation”, and also the “gentlemen merchants”. So he wrote, in essence, that he renounces such a vile people. And he began to crack ice (in Tsarskoye). It’s reasonable, beautiful and competent.” The emperor was betrayed by everyone - nobles, soldiers, and people: “There was a vile people, of whom there is one, an old man of about 60 years and so serious,” in the Novgorod province, who said the following: “It would be necessary to take the skin from the former tsar strip by strip”. That is, it is not immediately tearing off the skin, like the Indians, but it is necessary to cut a ribbon after a ribbon from his skin in Russian way” [10] / *«Царь ... <...> не ломался, не лгал. Но, видя, что народ и солдатчина так ужасно отреклись от него, так предали (ради гнусной распутинской истории), и тоже – дворянство (Родзянко), как и всегда фальшивое “представительство”, и тоже – и “господа купцы”, – написал просто, что, в сущности, он отрекается от такого подлого народа. И стал (в Царском) колоть лед. Это разумно, прекрасно и полномочно». Императора предали все – и дворяне, и солдаты, и народ: «Остался подлый народ, из коих вот один, старик лет 60 “и такой серьезный”, Новгородской губернии, выразился: “Из бывшего царя надо бы кожу по одному ремню тянуть”. Т. е. не сразу сорвать кожу, как индейцы скальп, но надо по-русски вырезать из его кожи ленточка за ленточкой»* [10].

### Composite component “Russian”

The socio-philosophical discourse of the beginning of the 20th century contrasts the Russian and European skills: “No one was busy with the fact (and I did not read a single article in the magazines - nor in the newspapers, either) that there is not a single drug store in Russia, i.e. constructed and traded by a Russian man — that we don’t know how to extract iodine from sea herbs, and our mustard plaster is “French”, because the Russian people do not even know how to spread the diluted mustard on paper with fixing its “strength”, “spirit”. What can we do?” / *«Никто не занялся тем (и я не читал в журналах ни одной статьи – и в газетах тоже ни одной статьи), что в России нет ни одного аптекарского магазина, т.е. сделанного и торгуемого русским человеком, – что мы не умеем из морских трав извлекать иоду, а горчишники у нас «французские», потому что русские всечеловеки не умеют даже намазать горчицы разведенной на бумаге с закреплением ее «крепости», «духа». Что же мы умеем?»* [10].

### Composite component “Literature”

In the socio-philosophical discourse of the early XX century there is an understanding of the role of literature and Russian philosophy. On the one hand, there is an aggravation of aesthetic sensitivity: “It was the era of awakening of independent philosophical thought in Russia, the flourishing of poetry and aggravation of aesthetic sensitivity, religious anxiety



and search, the interest in mysticism and occultism ... they saw new dawns, combined the feelings of sunset and death with a sense of sunrise and with the hope of life transformation...” / *«Это была эпоха пробуждения в России самостоятельной философской мысли, расцвет поэзии и обострение эстетической чувствительности, религиозного беспокойства и искания, интереса к мистике и оккультизму... видели новые зори, соединяли чувства заката и гибели с чувством восхода и с надеждой на преобразование жизни...»* [2]. And on the other hand, the unnaturalness of our literature, its playful beginning, is noted: “We, played in literature per se. And the whole thing was that he “wrote well”, and nobody cared about the things he wrote. According to the content, Russian literature is such an abomination of shamelessness and arrogance like no literature” / *«Мы, в сущности, играли в литературе. И все дело было в том, что «хорошо написал», а что «написал» – до этого никому дела не было. По содержанию литература русская есть такая мерзость, – такая мерзость бесстыдства и наглости, – как ни единая литература»* [10].

Russian literature is also guilty of the apocalypse of the beginning of the XXth century. “In the great Kingdom, with great power, with the people hardworking, smart, humble, what did it do? It didn’t learn and didn’t inspire to learn – so that these people, although they would learn how to forge a nail, use a sickle, make a scythe for mowing (“we take out scythes from Austria”, – geography). The people grew completely primitive with Peter the Great, and literature was engaged only in “the ways they loved” and “what they talked about”. And everyone “talked” and “loved” only” / *«В большом Царстве, с большою силою, при народе трудолюбивом, смышленном, покорном, что она сделала? Она не выучила и не внушила выучить – чтобы этот народ хотя научили гвоздь выковывать, серп исполнить, косу для косьбы сделать (“вывозим косы из Австрии”, – география). Народ рос совершенно первобытно с Петра Великого, а литература занималась только, “как они любили” и “о чем разговаривали”. И все “разговаривали” и только “разговаривали”, и только “любили” и еще “любили”»* [10].

## Conclusions

Thus, the public thought of the late XIXth – early XXth centuries plunged into self-observation and analysis of the social life of Russia. Socio-philosophical discourse takes thinkers to the level of historiosophical generalizations. It discusses the historical path and social life of Russia, faith, and the kingdom. Thinkers are trying to find answers to the following questions: what was, what is and what will be. Gradually, there is the realization that the Russian Empire is collapsing. The causes of social discontent in society were the following ones: the crisis of the power, the lack of labor legislation, the lack of political rights and freedoms, the unresolved agrarian issue, and a low standard of living.

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