




<https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2023-27-3-582-597>
EDN: GSOONC

Research Article / Научная статья

Receptions of Kant's Philosophy in Russian Empiriocriticism

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Abstract. The article analyzes the influence of Kantian philosophy on the problems and development of Russian empiriocriticism. It is shown that the critical pathos of Kant's philosophy, as well as his call for intellectual honesty in philosophy, was appreciated first of all. Relying on Kant, Russian empiriocritics proved the inconsistency of metaphysics in both its religious and materialistic forms. In addition, the teachings of the founders of empiriocriticism, E. Mach and R. Avenarius, were also criticized because some dogmatic assumptions were found in them. Attempts to eliminate these assumptions resulted in a dynamic concept of experience, based on which the concepts of empiriomonism (A. Bogdanov), empiriosymbolism (P. Yushkevich), scientific philosophy (V. Lesevich), positive philosophy of life (S. Suvorov), positive aesthetics (A. Lunacharsky), ethics of mutual joy (A. Bogdanov) and many others were developed. Special attention was paid to the analysis of the “thing-in-itself” since this very concept of Kantian philosophy was used by G. Plekhanov to justify “orthodox” Marxism. Russian empiriocritics opposed Plekhanov's identification of the “thing in itself” and the material object, arguing that the concept of matter is a metaphysical assumption and, for this reason, cannot contribute to refuting dualism and Kantian “agnosticism.” From the monistic point of view, the “thing-in-itself” should be understood on the basis of experience as a necessary form of its organization. According to Bogdanov, there is nothing a priori in the “thing-in-itself”; this idea appeared as a result of substituting the known for the unknown and expressed a process rather than essence. Kant's aesthetics and moral philosophy were also actively discussed in Russian empiriocriticism. The interpretation of beauty as “expediency without purpose” was extended to the fundamental principle of the “aesthetic worldview,” which gave credibility to the doctrine of the ideal, the practice of social construction, etc. As a result of the polemic with the ethics of compassion, of which Kant was considered the most authoritative defender, an alternative ethic of mutual joy was created. Thus, the influence of Kantian philosophy on Russian empiriocritics was complex and contributed to the development of new ideas.

Keywords: thing-in-itself, history of Russian philosophy, Russian positivism

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Article history:

The article was submitted on 18.01.2023

The article was accepted on 17.06.2023

For citation: Rybas AE. Receptions of Kant's Philosophy in Russian Empiriocriticism. *RUDN Journal of Philosophy*. 2023;27(3):582—597. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2023-27-3-582-597>

The interest in I. Kant's philosophy among the supporters of empiriocriticism in Russia, a movement that grew out of the reception of the theories of E. Mach and R. Avenarius in the early 20th century, was due to at least two reasons.

First, with a good knowledge of Kant's transcendental idealism, it was possible to understand Avenarius' philosophical system. It is known that the main idea of the Swiss thinker was to continue the critique of pure reason begun by Kant, making the concept of "experience" the object of consideration. According to Avenarius, Kant's "experience" was not subjected to critical analysis as it was the fundamental category of his whole system. This is a dogmatic notion, and consequently, its criticism is necessary. Thus, *the Critique of Pure Experience* is a prolegomena to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and studying the former is impossible without knowledge of the latter.

The second reason why Russian empiriocritics began to turn to Kant was to critically develop and supplement empiriocriticism by eliminating the dogmatic assumptions in this doctrine. Indeed, those who popularized the ideas of Mach and Avenarius in Russia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries cannot be called epigones: they were independent thinkers who created their philosophical systems. They perceived empiriocriticism as an advanced philosophy, the most developed and scientifically argued, but they still need to be completed. The teachings of Mach and Avenarius were criticized by them precisely for the fact that, while overcoming the "dualism of reality," they turned it into a "dualism of the way of knowing" [1. P. 13]. Thus, the task of criticizing experience still needs to be solved because the dualism of cognition is only a modification of the dualism of reality. In addition, a simple description of the experience is not identical to its cognition and fixation of elements of experience or sensations, as fragments of reality do not eliminate in man the aspiration to comprehend the "higher unity" of all being. To avoid a one-sided treatment of experience and to eliminate dualism by replacing it with monism, Russian empiriocritics tried to synthesize empiriocriticism with other philosophical teachings, above all, Marxism and energeticism, and also turned to Kant. Thus, there appeared different systems of "non-metaphysical unity" that justified the possibility of monistic thinking: empiriomonism and tectology by Aleksandr Bogdanov, scientific philosophy by Vladimir Lesevich, empiriosymbolism by Pavel Yushkevich, positive philosophy of life by Sergey Suvorov, positive esthetics by Anatoly Lunacharsky and so on. It is interesting to note that empiriocriticism, as a criticism of Kantian philosophy, was corrected by Russian empiriocritics through Kant's reception. As a result, the experience was

interpreted dynamically — as a moving system of interrelated and antagonistic relations. For example, Bogdanov regarded the experience as a “living” one, which represents an arena of the struggle of different vital forces. Its elements as “crystals of social activity, formed in the flow of labor — experience, as material for systematic grouping according to the needs of that collective, which is the bearer or the subject of experience” [2. P. 232]. This is how the “ontology of practice,” a peculiar philosophy of life, emerged. Avenarius’ “name being innocent and distant from the worldly struggle” became embroiled “in the disputes of Russian intellectuals” who considered the *Critique of Pure Experience* “almost a ‘symbolic book’ of the revolutionary social-democratic creed” [3. P. 36].

Let us consider some of the most critical aspects of the reception of Kantian philosophy by Russian empiriocritics. These are 1) criticism and the principle of intellectual honesty; 2) the discrediting of dogmatic philosophy; 3) the status of “thing-in-itself” in the system of knowledge; 4) aesthetics; 5) ethics.

Criticism as a method of philosophy

Without exception, all supporters of empiriocriticism in Russia perceived Kant's criticism as a necessary condition for philosophical cognition. An example is the reasoning of Bogdanov, one of the most reputable thinkers of this direction.

Bogdanov begins his presentation of his system of empiriomonism with small but essential remarks on the method of philosophical knowledge and emphasizes the need to assume absolute freedom of criticism. He was defining his epoch as “the age of criticism by preference” [1. P. 3], he also points to the origins of criticism: it is, on the one hand, the French Revolution, which destroyed the social foundations of traditionalism and made possible the conscious modeling of social life, and, on the other hand, the philosophy of Kant, which proclaimed critical thinking as the only genuine cognitive attitude to the reality. Bogdanov insists that freedom of criticism is a necessary condition for progress in science and philosophy and in life in general: progress is the affirmation of the new and the elimination of the old, which is what criticism does first and foremost.

Bogdanov emphasizes that the role of criticism is not limited to its negative aspect, i.e., the exposure of “idols” and various “fetishes” of knowledge. Negation is only a moment of criticism, and not the most important one, because the primary purpose of criticism is to develop an exceptional, productive view of the world, which allows us to formulate the “ideal of cognition” and create the necessary conditions for achieving it. Here, expository criticism organically grows into creativity and becomes a stimulus for the development of life. “Criticism,” Bogdanov wrote, “is the gardener who carefully clears the soil for the tree, prunes the superfluous and improperly growing branches; but he is not the cause of the tree growing and bearing luxurious fruit. Life develops out of life and determines its purpose; it is creativity, not criticism” [1. P. 4].

As a method of philosophy, criticism is described by Bogdanov in the following way. First, it should be a “cold and strict criticism of experience and

abstract thinking” [1. P. 4], as a result of which metaphysical dualism will be overcome, and the foundation of empiriomonistic philosophy will be laid. Further, the criticism should be successive, i.e., such criticism should not be conducted from the position of a single subject’s worldview. However, it should consider “all the acquisitions of the great epoch of criticism” [1. P. 5] and be based mainly on those philosophical teachings in which the spirit of criticism found the complete expression (such, according to Bogdanov, were the systems of empiriocriticism and Marxism, which represented “the critique of all cognition from the standpoint of experience and the critique of experience itself from the standpoint of its connection and regularity” [1. P. 5]). Finally, criticism should be scientific, i.e., objective and unbiased, conducted in the name of truth, and not to agree new data with the existing explanation system (ideology). Bogdanov believed such criticism would correspond to the criteria of intellectual honesty, on the necessity of which Kant insisted.

Discrediting dogmatic philosophy, i.e., metaphysics as a whole

Asserting criticism as a method of philosophy, the Russian empiriocritics followed Kant and categorically opposed dogmatic philosophy. The “soul” of dogmatic philosophy was recognized as metaphysical thinking, with its characteristic dualism and the ontological priority of the “world of ideas” over the “world of things.” The “war” that broke out against metaphysics aimed to restore to philosophy its true significance. It should be noted that while discrediting metaphysical thinking as an organon of knowledge, the Russian empiriocritics had in mind not only and not so much those philosophical teachings that openly positioned themselves as metaphysical, but also those that were considered alternative: thus, some traces of metaphysics were found in Marxism (both in its classical and Russian variants), in energeticism, and even in empiriocriticism.

Metaphysical thinking, having no support in reality and not knowing the limits of its activity, Lesevich, the father of Russian positivism, argued, refers not to philosophy but to poetic creativity because “only poetic works are guided by the unity of any idea and are carried out by any one person” [4. P. 239]. Therefore, metaphysical systems should be treated as works of art, which, perhaps, embellish life, but in no way contribute to its cognition. The metaphysical language of description of being abounds in allegories and metaphors, and this is not accidental. Metaphors and allegories are appropriate only where objective reality is subject to the subjective arbitrariness of thought because no adequate means can be found in language to express the imaginary. “Subjective speculation constructs many bold, complex, slender, and majestic systems in which even the most contradictory facts to their basic position are given a meaning consistent with that position” [5. P. 59]. The arbitrariness of subjective creativity leads to the fact that “abstract concepts are imperceptibly objectified, words are taken for the very objects and, thus, there appear a number of realized abstractions, such as essence, ultimate goal, first cause, etc.” [5. P. 59].

According to Bogdanov, metaphysical thinking is vulgar thinking precisely because metaphysicians deal with “higher” questions. Vulgarity is manifested here first of all in the very opposition of “higher” to “lower,” which indicates an adaptation to generally accepted ways of thinking. The very “notion of the ‘absolute’ is quite fictitious, for the content of concepts is taken *only from experience*, and there is nothing absolute in experience and cannot be” [6. P. 153]. Truths, which cognition deals with and which determine human existence, cannot be absolute: they are “living organizing forms of experience,” they should not only be “discovered” or “stated” but serve as a guide in human activity “lead the way,” give “a point of reference in life’s struggle” [1. P. 219]. The vital importance of truth is conditioned not by the fact that the truth is eternal and unchangeable but by the fact that it can serve as a goal of joint actions and as an instrument to achieve this goal. Just as the final goal would mean the end of movement and thus the end of life, the final, absolute truth would mean the end of thinking and human creativity.

From Yushkewich’s point of view, metaphysics is a legitimate product of “substantive thinking.” This thinking is characterized first of all by the fact that it is based on the belief in substance, an “artistic symbol” created by primitive man in order to systematize a rather limited range of phenomena, namely his experiments with solids. Thus, “substantialism is primarily an ideology of solids, an ideology of tactile sensations elevated to the absolute” [7. P. 145], and the limits of its applicability are determined by the degree of primitiveness of human experience. For everyday life, the metaphysics of substantialism is quite suitable because it presents the being in its finite definiteness and the world as a whole — as a logically ordered totality of the being, or picture, as a result of which a person acquires that “simplicity of look,” which allows him to see in transient something unchangeable, “true.” However, metaphysical thinking is unacceptable for philosophical reflection because focusing solely on the “genuine” loses sight of the actual content of experience. Yushkevich contrasts metaphysical substantialism with philosophical “constantialism,” an approach to the interpretation of being that allows us to create a picture of the world in its dynamics, reflecting, on the one hand, the ontological unity of being and, on the other hand, the relativity and infinity of its knowledge.

The status of the “thing-in-itself” in the system of knowledge

Developing a dynamic conception of experience in order to overcome the epistemological dualism preserved in the teaching of Avenarius and gain “cognitive access to reality,” Russian empiriocritics repeatedly appealed to Kant’s philosophy, referring in particular to the analysis of the concept of the “thing-in-itself”. This was also facilitated by the dispute with “orthodox” Marxism, whose most authoritative theorist Georgy Plekhanov, justifying “his own ‘fetishist’ materialism” [8. P. 131], relied on his proposed materialist interpretation of Kant’s philosophy. “Plekhanov had no doubt that Kant, just like the materialists, affirmed the existence of external objects independent of our consciousness” [9. P. 34] and

essentially identified the concepts of “thing-in-itself” and “material object.” According to Plekhanov, in Kant’s philosophy “perception, and consequently the image of an object, is the result of two forces: the properties of the objects that produce a certain impression on us, and the properties of a person who receives these impressions, the properties of our ‘I’ that groups them in a certain way, so to speak, arranges and links them *per its nature*” [10. P. 476]. Thus, “things-in-themselves” are simply external objects existing independently of the subject, and only their effect on us can be cognized. Defending the thesis of the activity of the subject in the process of cognition and at the same time being wary of solipsism and agnosticism, Plekhanov argued that some forms or relations of the cognizing subject correspond to forms or relations of “things-in-themselves.” However, this correspondence cannot be considered direct or be reduced to reflection. “Our conceptions of the forms and relations of things,” he wrote, “are nothing more than *hieroglyphs*; however, these hieroglyphs designate precisely these forms and relations, and this is sufficient to enable us to examine the action on us of things-in-themselves and in turn to influence them” [11. P. 447].

The Russian empiriocritics, arguing with Plekhanov, pointed out the most crucial contradiction in his materialist interpretation of Kant’s philosophy. On the one hand, they agreed with Plekhanov that the thesis of the incognizability of “things-in-themselves” must necessarily be rejected because it opens up space for various “theological fantasies” where “all those ghosts — God, the immortality of the soul, freedom of will — can find refuge, which cannot coexist with the concept of lawfulness” [10. P. 477.] On the other hand, they showed that the correspondence or hieroglyphic theory in no way explains the possibility of cognition but merely dogmatically presupposes it. The objects of the material world identified with “things-in-themselves,” which exist outside the cognizing subject’s consciousness and are simultaneously cognizable by it, are also a fantasy, if not theological, then metaphysical. For it does not yet follow from the fact that we learn about processes occurring in “things-in-themselves” by those changes observed in the world of phenomena that what we cognize in this way is adequate to what objectively occurs in “things-in-themselves.” From the hieroglyph to the material object, there is the same gap as from the phenomenon to the “thing-in-itself,” it cannot be bridged without a metaphysical leap. One has, therefore, only to believe that the order of ideas corresponds to the order of things and that changes in the world of phenomena are adequate to the corresponding processes in the world of things-in-themselves. Metaphysical dualism does not disappear, nor do the problems and contradictions that go with it.

In order to overcome Kantian “agnosticism” and prove the possibility of knowing “things-in-themselves,” the Russian empiriocritics believed it was necessary to abandon faith in the matter because it did not, in principle, differ from all other faiths. Matter is a metaphysical assumption, just like any other absolute. Instead of matter, the concept of experience should be used.

The concept of “experience” is fundamental to all varieties of Russian empiriocriticism. The main distinguishing feature of “experience,” as interpreted here, is that it is a limiting concept that allows us to justify the possibility of monistic cognition. Consequently, the experience cannot be contrasted with anything super-experiential or a priori. It is interesting to note that Kantian philosophy, too, was used to prove this thesis — of course, in a corresponding interpretation.

A typical example of this interpretation is Bogdanov’s reasoning about the experiential origin of everything a priori. According to the author of empiriomonism, this conclusion follows from the analysis of the well-known contradiction of the concept of “thing-in-itself” as presented in Kant’s transcendental idealism. On the one hand, Kant regards things-in-themselves as the cause of sensation, assuming that they affect our sensibility. However, on the other hand, the categories of cause and effect, according to Kant, are those of reason and, therefore, they are applicable only within the limits of experience and cannot in any way be attributed to things-in-themselves. In other words, the contradiction in Kant’s understanding of thing-in-itself consists in the fact that being supersensible and transcendent simultaneously affects our feelings and causes sensations. Bogdanov, criticizing Plekhanov and representatives of his school, points to this very contradiction. Suppose we assume that “every ‘phenomenon’ arises from the action of external ‘things-in-themselves’ on that ‘thing-in-itself’ which constitutes the essence of a given ‘person’” [1. P. 235], then it is necessary to admit that the thing-in-itself, acting as the cause of the phenomenon, causes the corresponding change in the other thing-in-itself (in the person who fixes the given phenomenon in experience). “Consequently, all ‘phenomena,’ all ‘impressions,’ all ‘experience’ represent only *changes of things-in-themselves*” [1. P. 235]. It turns out that if the concept of “thing-in-itself” is not devoid of content, then it must be dynamic, not static, i.e., a “thing-in-itself” is some process, not an essence. Thus, every change, impression, or any other phenomenon — all experience as a whole — represents a definite change in the course of some process, or “thing-in-itself,” called a “living being.” These changes constitute the actual content of the concept of “experience.” “Therefore, ‘things-in-themselves’ consist of the same elements that appear and disappear in ‘phenomena’” [1. P. 236]. It makes no sense to suppose that there is something fundamentally inaccessible to cognition in things-in-themselves that does not affect our sensibility or cause any change in experience because that would be to argue about nothing.

Further, the thesis that things-in-themselves are unknowable also contains a contradiction. Of course, we do not know what a thing-in-itself is, but we do know that a thing-in-itself is unknowable. Consequently, what we can say about a thing-in-itself is that it is unknowable, and in this respect, it is obviously cognizable. This knowledge of unknowability is not really a sophism: achieving a wholeness of knowledge in which there are no logical contradictions is necessary. The point of a “thing-in-itself” is that in the place of not knowing something, we substitute our

knowledge for not knowing, thereby achieving the completeness of knowledge necessary for the normal existence of the life system called “man.” The horizon of being is closed, and man gets an opportunity to think logically, i.e., to engage in the systematization of experience. Thus, a “thing-in-itself” results from substituting the known for the unknown. “Whole thinking,” Bogdanov writes, “required ‘last causes’ of things both on the side of their activity and on the side of their passivity, causes of both the ‘actions’ of things and their mere ‘existence.’ These ‘last causes’ were called a ‘thing in itself’” [1. P. 110].

Bogdanov traces the genesis of “thing-in-itself,” showing that throughout its existence, humanity has unconsciously used it as a necessary tool of experience gathering. At first, the “thing-in-itself” was formulated in primitive, roughly realistic forms, when it was considered an exact copy of the thing-appearance (hence, according to Bogdanov, the famous teaching from antiquity that we see things because of their subtle and small likenesses, which are separated from things and fall into our eyes). Then, as the dependence of the phenomenon of a thing on the device of the organs of perception and the intellectual capacity of man was discovered, the “thing in itself” came to be understood as an essence hidden far from direct contemplation, and this essence became an object of cognition. Finally, Kant elevated the concept of “thing-in-itself” to the highest degree of philosophical purity by declaring it incognizable. As a result, “the collapse of this concept became inevitable: its logical emptiness and, with it, real meaninglessness could no longer hide from the knife of criticism behind the shell of formal obscurity” [1. P. 108]. “It turned out,” Bogdanov concludes, “that this concept expresses nothing but reality plucked to the point that nothing is left of it. In this concept, nothing is thought — such is its main defect. Kant has almost discovered this defect, having put his ‘thing-in-itself’ outside the categories of human thinking, i.e., in essence, outside the sphere of thinking itself, operating with these categories” [1. P. 108]. After the critique of Kantian philosophy by empiriocritics, firstly, it became clear that there is nothing a priori in “thing in itself” and that it consists of the same elements of experience as phenomena, and, secondly, the actual content of “thing in itself” was revealed, namely that it is the result of the substitution of the known for the unknown.

We can say that “thing-in-itself” is the general name for all the concepts necessary for experience’s integrity. Such fictions, or “truths-errors,” include the concepts of the soul, God, immortality, absolute truth, unconditional goodness, etc. They are all formed experientially through substitution, the universal way of systematizing experience, rather than through the dubious religious-metaphysical practices of transcendence. Critical analysis of these notions, according to Bogdanov, should lead not only to their elimination but also to an explication of the part of the truth that they contain. In other words, one should understand the necessity and mechanism of the substitution. It must be shown that the unknowable world of “things-in-themselves” has always served the cognizability of “things-for-

us,” thus contributing to the development of knowledge (more on empiriomonism see: [12. S. 96—130].

Positive aesthetics

The rejection of metaphysics could not but lead to a “philosophical protest” against reality, from which the unconditional truths and eternal values that determined the order and meaning of human life had been removed. In the era of “the completion of the great process of the death of anthropocentrism,” “materialistic pessimism” began to spread intensively, arguing that nothing but nature exists and that nature is not a deity with reason, but an impersonal mechanism, a “workshop” in which, moreover, there has long been no master. This is how Anatoly Lunacharsky wrote about nature, summarizing the theoretical positions of the “dystopian philosophy”: “It does not, strictly speaking, exist at all, for it has no central consciousness, it feels nothing, it is a mere conglomerate of forces. But the most murderous thing about it is its regularity, for there is no contract and no legislator, only slaves. Every creature’s origin, development, and extinction is mathematically strictly dependent on its environment. It got everything from the latter, which determined it. But the whole is composed of such slave parts, everything is blindly, incongruously mutually oppressed, mutually enslaved, forged together by the chains of impersonal fatalism” [13. P. 68].

In such a situation, it was necessary to find a way to “reevaluate values” in order to ensure that people have the most important reference points in life. Russian empiriocritics were well aware that after the collapse of the “moral interpretation of the world,” a return to the values of traditional morality was impossible because the “heavy hammer of science” had shattered the “clay idols” once and for all. There was only one thing to do: to justify the possibility of their creation instead of searching for the “unconditional beginnings” of existence. Thus emerged so-called God-building, representing the experience of modeling the most important religious and metaphysical meaning — God — based on a scientifically substantiated ideal of human life. As for the other values, they had to be constructed in the same way.

Positive aesthetics was to contribute to solving this problem. Emphasizing that aesthetics was important for ethics and epistemology, Lunacharsky wrote that “the basic laws of aesthetics, when properly understood, cast a bright light on all psychology and can serve as the basis for an entire worldview” [14. P. 114]. The aesthetic worldview is characterized above all by the fact that it does not appeal to essences but allows us to assert universally valid truths.

This fundamental position of the aesthetic worldview was substantiated, among other things, by Kant’s ideas expressed in *Critique of the Power of Judgement*. According to Kant, there are statements, namely judgements of taste, which differ from the rest in that they do not require the real existence of an object to prove their truth. Indeed, as long as we experience artistic enjoyment of objects, even if only imaginary, this enjoyment is quite natural and has an unconditional

value. Moreover, a judgement of taste implicitly includes a universal meaning and claims to be universally valid, even though it has only subjective necessity [15].

According to Lunacharsky, the judgements of taste described by Kant best reflect the specificity of cognitive acts and form the basis of all other judgements. Consequently, the aesthetic relation to everything that exists should be recognized as universal. This extension of the subject matter of aesthetics followed from the considerations, on the one hand, of the impossibility of metaphysics and, on the other, of the fundamental incompleteness of experiential cognition. Since the ideal of objective science is unattainable and scientific concepts, do not reflect reality adequately, but only symbolize it, nevertheless claiming universality, all cognitive acts do not essentially differ from judgements of taste. As a result, the Kantian formula of beauty as a form of expediency without purpose is a formula for understanding being in general. So every object can be called “beautiful” because it exists in this way and not otherwise, i.e., it “conserves” its form or strives for “self-preservation.” The principle of “movable equilibrium,” which plays a crucial role in positive aesthetics and the philosophy of empiriocriticism in general, derives from the same considerations.

Justifying the “positive aesthetics” project as a fundamental and comprehensive science, Lunacharsky wrote: “Aesthetics is the science of evaluations. One evaluates from three points of view: from the point of view of truth, beauty, and goodness. Since all these evaluations coincide, we may speak of a unified and integral aesthetics, but they do not always coincide, and therefore aesthetics, unified in principle, separates from itself a theory of knowledge and ethics” [14. P. 132]. The ideal of cognition, according to Lunacharsky, coincides with the maximum of life and consists in achieving the identity of aesthetic evaluations of truth, goodness and beauty, “harmony of soul and body”. The criterion for advancing toward this ideal is determined on the basis of the following considerations: “Everything that promotes life is truth, goodness, and beauty... everything that destroys or belittles life and limits it is falsehood, evil, and ugliness” [14. P. 132]. On the whole, Lunacharsky’s position can be called aesthetic realism because the aesthetic attitude towards existence wholly determines it: in a world where “man is the measure of all things” everything testifies to his creative activity and exists only because it receives an appropriate aesthetic evaluation.

The thesis on the construction of values appeared to Russian empiriocritics as a development of Kant’s doctrine on the dialectic of pure reason. According to Kant, the transcendental illusion “is inherent in human reason and does not cease to seduce it even after we have revealed its false brilliance” [16. P. 218]. This illusion arises from the fact that the subjective premises of reason are regarded as objective as soon as cognitive judgements are made about that which lies beyond experience. This illusion is natural because it is inherent to man to think and inevitable. After all, every cognitive act is formally expressed as a complete definition, i.e., as if the object were cognized adequately, as its thing-in-itself, which is impossible.

Developing Kant's thesis, the Russian empiriocritics showed that transcendental illusion is necessary for a reason and human life in general. A world in which "life itself becomes philosophy" [17. P. 40] cannot be described statically regarding the transcendental subject. It is a constantly complicating system of experience, and the vector of progressive development determines its dynamics from lower forms of organization (subjective experience) to higher ones (objective experience). From within experience, i.e., without using metaphysical ideas of perfection or ultimate purpose, it is also possible to formulate the ideal of knowledge (which would also be the ideal of life). This ideal, Bogdanov argued, consists in that cognition would unite "the whole sum of human experiences into harmoniously whole, infinitely plastic forms, in which the experience of each person organically merges with the experience of all" [1. P. 36].

In general, such notions as "perfection," "ideal," and "fullness of life" are of great importance for human life because historical (intellectual, moral, artistic, social, etc.) development becomes possible thanks to them. The modeling of ideals should be based, on the one hand, on the ideas developed in modern science about the optimal form of human existence and, on the other hand, on the understanding that these ideals are never attainable in practice. Only in this case, the affirmation of ideals as the goal of development will make it possible to preserve the dynamics of life. Creating "great, super-personal values" is not to build the only authentic, scientific picture of the world but to ensure the realization of human creative potentialities with the help of "collective creation of the ideal in the real." Thus, what was important in the construction of values was not the result, i.e., not the values themselves, but exclusively the process of their creation. Thus, Lunacharsky, stressing the importance of creativity as a process, wrote that even if all the results of human creative activity prove to be fragile and "disappear in the future, the very activity, the very creativity of values justifies itself at any given moment by the happiness that it gives" [18]. Along with affirming scientific, moral, and artistic values, man himself as a value must be created. It will be a "new" man living in a "new" world.

The ethics of mutual joy

Kant's practical philosophy was also at the center of attention of Russian empiriocritics. Speaking against the "individualistic morality" of which Kant was claimed to be a supporter, they proposed various versions of a new morality built on the principles of collectivism. The most elaborate moral doctrine was Bogdanov's "ethics of mutual joy" [17. P. 46—76] presented as the opposite of the traditional ethics of compassion. Without going into a substantive analysis of this doctrine, we will note only those aspects in which the influence of Kant can be observed.

Bogdanov argued that the traditional system of moral norms, or the ethics of compassion, emerged due to the spontaneous movement of life and has long been transformed into a system of moral enslavement of man. A new morality, which

can be opposed to it, should proceed from the idea of harmonious, i.e., “consciously expedient” development of society. This can be achieved if we can, firstly, show the possibility of modeling moral norms of the non-coercive type and, secondly, find a “contradiction-free answer” about the purpose of life, which would be the central regulator of the new moral values.

According to Bogdanov, moral norms free from coercion and from conservatism can be “norms of expediency,” which do not prescribe man his goals but only indicate the means of achieving them. These norms are similar to “scientific and technical rules” and resemble the hypothetical imperatives described by Kant, who regarded them as “prescriptions of skill, commanding always only conditionally” [16. P. 277]. Bogdanov also calls them “forms of life,” thus emphasizing that “norms of expediency” are natural and correspond to the “harmonious development of life.”

As for a consciously formulated goal in life, Bogdanov believes it may be an ideal consisting of “an infinitely increasing sum of happiness” [17. P. 62]. This ideal, or the maximum of life of society as a whole, coincides with the maximum of life of its separate parts or elements — individuals. It is superindividual (not suppressing the person and not elevating him, but eliminating the individualistic content in man), dynamic, and essentially unrealizable.

One of the central values of the ethics of mutual joy is freedom. Bogdanov’s interpretation of freedom is a peculiar development of Kant’s practical philosophy, although it ultimately contradicts it. It is known that Kant regarded the idea of freedom as a condition of moral law and derived from this notion the ideas of God and immortality, asserting their objective reality based on the subjective need to allow them as regulators of the moral universe. “The kingdom of liberty” thus opened up space for faith, which, being based on pure practical reason, became, in fact, the guarantor of the apodictic nature of all theoretical truths. This way, “moral knowledge” came to be regarded as the highest and most complete knowledge, and theoretical reason became dependent on practical reason.

In his analysis of Kant’s understanding of freedom, Bogdanov points out that his doctrine deals only with the *concept* of freedom rather than with real freedom. Indeed, on the one hand, Kant characterizes freedom as a problematic concept and, on the other hand, claims that it is “the only one of all ideas of speculative reason, the possibility of which, although we do not comprehend, we *know* a priori, since it is a condition of the moral law which we know” [15. P. 124]. The possibility of freedom is a priori known, i.e., apodictic. In other words: freedom as a possibility is always realized, and therefore it is already somehow defined, fixed in this or that notion of freedom. As a concept, freedom occupies a strictly fixed place in the “metaphysics of morals” and is necessary for the completion of the system of transcendental idealism; moreover, it is subject to the necessary logic of this system and is itself a necessity since it conditions the consistency and functioning of the system as a whole. That is why Kant can say: “The concept of freedom, since its reality is proved by some apodictic law of practical reason, constitutes the support of the whole building of the system of pure, even speculative, reason, and all other

concepts (about God and immortality), which as mere ideas have no support in this system, are added to it and with it and due to it acquire durability and objective reality, i.e., their possibility is proved by the fact that freedom is realized because this idea manifests itself through the moral law” [15. P. 123].

Bogdanov criticizes “metaphysical idealism,” drawing attention to the fact that Kant creates only a new code of law, although in fact, “real, fully realized freedom is not a ‘law’ at all, but the negation of law” [17. P. 65]. Freedom, in general, has a *negative* nature, and any attempt to frame freedom within positive definitions would substitute real freedom for the concept of freedom. As a result, freedom would be interpreted to approve necessity under its name.

The interpretation of freedom as a cognized necessity, among other things, implies a system of restrictions and punishments. For this reason, in modern society, the concept of freedom is integrated into the system of legal conceptions and is considered exclusively from a legal point of view. “What is this freedom? A certain *law*. Therefore, as a rule of law, it must contain elements of external coercion” [17. P. 64]. Bogdanov emphasizes that freedom is regarded as a law in order to enable disobedience to that law by making it nominal and fictitious. After all, it is no coincidence that they speak of “freedom” of speech, unions, etc., but not of “freedom” of inner experiences — thoughts and dreams, of “freedom” to breathe or to dream: in the first case there is a law, but freedom does not exist; in the second case freedom is natural, because it is an inherent characteristic of human life.

The ethics of mutual joy also opposes the Kantian understanding of morality in other respects. In particular, it excludes the appeal to conscience as the stronghold of morality. According to Bogdanov, interpreting conscience as an impersonal categorical imperative makes morality artificial, endowing it with additional punitive functions. The criterion of morality should not be conscience but a scientifically grounded principle indicating objective regularities of the dynamics of morality as a particular system of human experience.

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Рецепции философии Канта в русском эмпириокритицизме

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Аннотация. Анализируется влияние кантовской философии на проблематику и развитие русского эмпириокритицизма. Показывается, что прежде всего был воспринят критический пафос философии Канта, а также его призыв к интеллектуальной честности

в философии. Опираясь на Канта, русские эмпириокритики доказывали несостоятельность метафизики как в ее религиозной, так и материалистической формах. Кроме того, критике подверглись и учения основоположников эмпириокритицизма Э. Маха и Р. Авенариуса, где также были обнаружены догматические допущения. В результате попыток устранить эти допущения возникла динамическая концепция опыта, на основе которой были разработаны концепции эмпириомонизма (А. Богданов), эмпириосимволизма (П. Юшкевич), научной философии (В. Лесевич), позитивной философии жизни (С. Суворов), позитивной эстетики (А. Луначарский), этики сорадования (А. Богданов) и многие другие. Особое внимание уделялось при этом анализу «вещи в себе», поскольку именно это понятие кантовской философии было использовано Г. Плехановым для обоснования «ортодоксального» марксизма. Русские эмпириокритики выступали против предложенного Плехановым отождествления «вещи в себе» и материального предмета, доказывая, что понятие материи является метафизическим допущением и не может по этой причине способствовать опровержению дуализма и кантовского «агностицизма». С монистической точки зрения, «вещь в себе» должна быть понята исходя из опыта, как необходимая форма его организации. Согласно Богданову, в «вещи в себе» нет ничего априорного, эта идея возникла в результате подстановки известного под неизвестное и выражает некоторый процесс, а не сущность. В русском эмпириокритицизме активно обсуждались также эстетика и моральная философия Канта. Истолкование прекрасного как «целесообразности без цели» было расширено до основополагающего принципа «эстетического мирозерцания», что позволило придать убедительность учению об идеале, практике социального конструирования и т.д. В результате полемики с этикой сострадания, наиболее авторитетным защитником которой считался Кант, была создана альтернативная этика сорадования. Таким образом, можно сделать вывод о том, что влияние кантовской философии на русских эмпириокритиков было комплексным и способствовало разработке ими новых идей.

Ключевые слова: вещь в себе, история русской философии, русский позитивизм

История статьи:

Статья поступила 18.01.2023

Статья принята к публикации 17.06.2023

Для цитирования: *Rybas A.E. Receptions of Kant's Philosophy in Russian Empirio-criticism // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Философия. 2023. Т. 27. № 3. С. 582—597. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2023-27-3-582-597>*

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