

RESEARCH PAPER

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ENERGY EFFECTS IN PAVEL FLORENSKY'S WRITINGS: ENERGY COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE, ART AND ENERGY READING¹

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1Florensky, P. A.

In light of the contemporary paradigm of quantum reality with research on unified quantum field and energy communication in the Humanities, it is essential to ponder Pavel Florensky's considerations on the *energy effects* and *energy activity* of language, words and space, pertaining both to arts and physics. The Russian language contains the word *ènergijnost'* – a much broader notion than *ènergiya* (*energy*). In Florensky's writings this relates to the author's perception and sensibility for language, art and the space of culture within the integrative tendencies of Russian Cosmism, a subject that has not yet been thoroughly studied. In this essay, we focus on Florensky's interpretation of the magicity of energy communication, as well as on the energy cognition of its participants. A sensitivity to *ènergijnost'* in any dimension of consciousness in communication is being gradually recognised today by both scholars and "non-scholars" who integrate psychological and physiological aspects of cognition. The tendency is to relate *ènergijnost'* to an emerging quantum model of reality.

Keywords: energy effects, *ènergijnost'*, energy communication, energy activity, magicity, P. A. Florensky, language, art, energy reading, energy cognition

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary paradigm of quantum reality we have created and live in, natural scientists are interested in quantum field energy, quantum

¹ This essay is an extended version of a paper written in Russian for the All-Russian Scientific Conference with International Participation *The Garden of Forking Paths: Florensky, Rozanov, Durylin et cetera*, held on 5–6 May 2017 at RGGU in Moscow. I am grateful to Anna Reznichenko for reading that paper, and for her valuable comments on the subject.

energy, the corpuscular-wave theory of light, and the neuroscience of mirror neurons – neurons that in the observer *mirror* the behaviour of the Other, activated as though the observer himself were performing the same action that the Other performs (Lakoff 2008).

But what does that have to do with the Humanities, or with artistic and non-artistic communication, and its energy activity and effects on participants in communication? Within an interdisciplinary, integrative approach to the Arts and Humanities² there is a growing interest in correlating contemporary scientific insights with the reading of cultural artefacts, alongside studying cognitive processes in communication. Because of this, we can deepen our understanding of our "perception" of the world.³

In the context of an emerging quantum energy paradigm, we must not overlook the writings of Pavel Aleksandrovich Florensky (1882–1937), one of the most profound thinkers of Russian Cosmism⁴ who carefully considers *ènergiynost'*. Florensky analyses the energy communication in culture and nature in a particular way, reasoning from the position of a subtle energy perception of the "external world". It is noticeable that his perception of the world – *energy sensibility* – gravitates to what can be described as magic-folklore and religious consciousness, represented in Wilber's Integral Theory of Consciousness⁵ as *stages of consciousness*, or levels/structures of consciousness, i.e. developmental models, and modes of awareness (Wilberian terms), which might be characterised as *energy dimensions of consciousness* in perceiving the world(s).

Many of Florensky's topics are permeated by *ènergiynost'*, including language, words and names, symbols, cults, art, and space in both physical (psychophysical) and aesthetic terms, the latter being the space of works of art (see Veršić 2013: 83–177).

² A paradigmatic example is the emerging need for integrating arts and science, as proposed with programmes in the project "Arts at CERN".

³ We have in mind cognitive disciplines and linguistic research into human cognition and experience, in which an organoprojective conception of culture as outlined by Florensky is recognisable.

⁴ In spite of its reduction to today's transhumanist ideology, "occultism" in the interpretations of some Western authors, or to the beginnings of Soviet cosmonautics, Russian Cosmism proposes an integral worldview at the turn of the twentieth century. Russian Cosmism is an inclination towards a cosmic sensibility, cosmic thinking, and cosmic consciousness, which enriched the scientific, religious, philosophical, poetic, theatrical, musical and aesthetic thought of its time. For more on the Russian cosmic idea, see Veršić 2010.

⁵ On the Integral Theory of Consciousness, see Wilber 1996; 2001.

In the Russian language, *ènergijnost'* is understood and interpreted within religious philosophy as the meaningful emanation of symbols and names, and represents a "deep sense of existence" (Losev 2009). Within Orthodox Christian theology it is the Divine Energy, or the Tabor Light. *Ènergijnost'* refers to the communication of man with God and, viceversa, to the revelation of God to man. Within Florensky's writings, *ènergijnost'* is attributed to the nature of all being, to the philosophy of the name, and the corporality of the word: an explanation of the author's way of seeing the world, and a sensibility for language and art. This phenomenon has not been thoroughly studied, and mainly relates to spiritual practices in Eastern Christian theology.

In this essay the phenomenon of *ènergijnost'* is presented in its broader sense, and is deepened through its integration with an understanding of *energy effects* as well as of *energy activity*, *energy cognition*, *energy clarity*, *energy intelligence*, *energy logic*, *energy creation* vs. *energy reaction*, *energy communication*, and *energy reading*: i.e. with what relates to sensitivity in interpersonal communication. If *ènergijnost'* could be translated to one English word for the sake of brevity, it might be the word "*energisedness*", but this does not seem as comprehensive.

The *energy effects* we consider here may be pertinent to more than just the structure of the cultural text, as explained in structural-semiotic analyses by Yuri Lotman and Tartu-Moscow semioticians, thanks to whom Florensky has been embraced in contemporary semiotic studies.

We shall briefly touch on some points that reflect Florensky's considerations of *ènergijnost'*, and are a manifestation of the energy essence of humans, and the energy principle of humankind's cultural activity.

1. THE ENERGY UNITY OF ALL BEING

Florensky perceives the life space as the energy unity of nature. It corresponds to what is today known universally as "the unified field of energy". According to Florensky, there are those who are able to take advantage of this, those who "know even what is unknown":

All of nature is animated, all is alive in its wholeness and in its parts. Everything is interrelated by secret bonds, everything respire together, with each other. There are hostile and benign influences coming from all sides. Nothing is inactive, however, all actions and interactions of things – beings – souls have in their basis a sort of telepathy, an internally active, sympathetic affinity. Energies of things flow into other things and every single one lives

in all others, and all of them live in every single one. (Florensky 2007: 13, translation mine)

Вся природа одушевлена, вся жива, в целом и в частях. Все связано тайными узами между собою, все дышит вместе друг с другом. Враждебные и благотворные воздействия идут со всех сторон. Ничто не бездейственно, но, однако, все действия и взаимодействия вещей – существ – душ имеют в основе род телепатии, внутридействующее, симпатическое средство. Энергии вещей втекают в другие вещи, и каждая живет во всех, и все – в каждой. (Florensky 2007: 13)

Florensky's sensitivity to the invisible energy field includes the unified perception of time:

In the structuring of my perception a plan seems to be distant and a cross-section very intimate [...] whereas the sequence of things – it's *my* way of thinking and it is perceived as simultaneous. The fourth coordinate – of time – has become so vivid, that time has lost its nature of bad infinity. I have become used to seeing the roots of things. (Florensky 2008e: 727–728, translation mine)

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В строении моего восприятия план представляется внутренне далеким, а поперечный разрез близким... тогда как последовательность – это *мой* способ мышления, причем она воспринимается как единовременная. Четвертая координата – времени – стала настолько живой, что время утратило свой характер дурной бесконечности. Я привык видеть корни вещей. (Florensky 2008e: 727–728)

2. TIME AND ENERGY

The energy of growth is present in time, the fourth coordinate of reality. Florensky compares the energy of culture to the inner time of an organism: alongside biological growth is the cognitive growth of a human being. The idea of time, in Florensky's understanding, consists of an indissoluble connection with the internal, inherent features of things. According to the author, the *acme* (Greek 'ακμή – the best age) of a human being includes both his birth and his death. The nature of an animal or plant, such as a flower, "is being perceived by us as a peak of its organisation, a symbolic substitute of the entire plant":

Yet, that what in the three-dimensional image is the representation of a flower in relation to the entire plant – in the whole four-dimensional image of the same plant, as something that has a life span, has to be recognised beyond the time of blossoming: and it symbolically substitutes the entire growth of the plant. (Florensky 2000a: 200–201, translation mine)

Но то, что в трехмерном пространственном образе есть цветок в отношении всего растения, – в целостном четырехмерном образе того же растения как имеющего длительность во времени следует признать за временем цветения: и оно символически замещает все развитие растения. (Florensky 2000a: 200–201).

It should be noted that, besides living beings, Florensky defines cultural artefacts as being involved in “the circular flow of culture”, i.e. in “the circular flow of the spirit”. In this way, the metaphysician of the concrete interprets the *pneumatosphere*, the space of culture in which “the particular constancy of material formations shaped by spirit, for example, of works of art” reveals itself (Florensky 1993: 165).

3. LANGUAGE AND ENERGY

Following Humboldt's conception of language, according to which language is not just *ἔργον* (work, product), but also *ἐνέργεια* (effect, activity) that reveals itself in the thought activity (interior activity), or the *creativity of language use* of every nation (defined as “the language organism”), Florensky relates *ènergiynost'* to the almighty word, seen as the “language organism”, and to folk (primary archaic) aspects of language and folk beliefs (superstitions):

The word of the magician is material. It is the thing itself. Therefore it is always the name. The magic of the action is the magic of words; the magic of words is the magic of names. The name of a thing is actually the substance of a thing. In a thing there exists the name, a thing is created by the name. A thing enters into an interaction with the name, a thing imitates the name. *A thing has many* various names, but their power differs, their depth differs. There are names that are more and less peripheral and, accordingly having knowledge of this, we have more or less knowledge about a thing, and we are more or less powerful in relation to it. (Florensky 2007: 201, translation mine)

Слово кудесника вещно. Оно – сама вещь. Оно поэтому всегда есть имя. Магия действия есть магия слов; магия слов – магия имен. Имя вещи и

есть субстанция вещи. В вещи живет имя, вещь творится именем. Вещь вступает во взаимодействие с именем, вещь подражает имени. *У вещи много разных имен, но различна их мощь, различна их глубина. Есть имена более и менее периферические, и, сообразно с тем зная, мы знаем более и менее вещь и могучи более и менее в отношении к ней.* (Florensky 2007: 201)

The antinomy *interior/exterior* reveals in Florensky's writings the dual nature of both speech and words, the latter comparable to a living organism: the *interior form* of a word is its *soul* and the *exterior form* its *body* (Florensky 2008b: 211).

A word is the minimum amount of energy measurable in a bodily order. Although the bodily energy – sound energy – of a word is so small that, according to Florensky, its power does not even need to be taken in consideration, it still exists. In this vein, Florensky compares the power of verbal sounds and the power of gravity:

[...] *weight* of 50 g: in a vertical fall from a height of 1 metre develops an energy that is sufficient to produce the sound made by an ordinary voice over a period of ten thousand years without interruption; in other words, if an ordinary hat were to fall to the floor from a table, it would be possible – by using the energy of the fall and transforming it with the help of a device such as a phonograph – to make it narrate the aforesaid event for ten thousand years without stopping. (Florensky 2008c: 233, translation mine)

[...] *тяжесть* в 50 гр., опускаясь на 1 метр по вертикали, развивает энергию, достаточную для произведения звука обычным голосом в течение десяти тысяч лет без перерыва; иначе сказать, если бы обыкновенная шляпа упала со стола на пол, то, использовав энергию падения и преобразовывая ее при помощи какого-либо прибора вроде фонографа, можно было бы заставить его повествовать об означенном событии десять тысяч лет без умолку. (Florensky 2008c: 233)

In this context, as Florensky points out, one could not say that any word (especially an articulated sound) is just a word without effect: that is "empty". In Florensky's opinion, the word is neither *flatus vocis* nor *nihil audibile*.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE WORD AND ENERGY EFFECTS

In its physical (bodily) aspect a word is a subtly organised sound energy; in Florensky's view, the structure of a word is energetically active. A phoneme is the sound energy corresponding to "physical (bodily) energy";

a sememe is the energy of meaning, the internal word form corresponding to "psychic energy"; and the energy of a morpheme, between the psychic and the physical, is "occult energy". According to Florensky, a morpheme represents "the two-unity of primal sound and primal meaning", and its "magicity"⁶ unites "the ultraphysical influence of a phoneme" and "the infrapsychic unity of a sememe":

In other words, the word in the unique exactness of what is called its form fills itself with a specific energy from the organs that produce it. Whether we call this neural energy, or *Od*,⁷ or astral energy, or fluids, or animal magnetism, or something else, is irrelevant. With our own ignorance in mind, for now we shall call this energy, or these energies whatever we want, keeping in view only that their basic property is that... they have qualities similar to both psychic and physical ones. But are these energies even present in the first place, and does the human organism release them? I suppose... after being photographed, after being studied with the naked eye by using light filters, after experiments with heavy masses being attracted and repulsed by these energies and the like, there is no negative answer to any of these questions. (Florensky 2008c: 245, translation mine)

Иначе говоря, слово, в индивидуальной определенности того, что называется в нем формой, заряжается от производящих его органов особою энергией, назовем ли ее нервной, или одом, или астралом, или флюидами, или животным магнетизмом, или еще как-нибудь в таком роде, – сейчас это неважно... Памятуя о своем невежестве, будем пока называть эту энергию или эти энергии – как попало, имея в виду лишь то основное свойство их, что... содержат черты, подобные психическим и подобные физическим. Но, прежде всего, существуют ли такие энергии и выделяются ли они человеческим организмом? Полагаю... после фотографирования их, исследования глазом чрез светофильтры, притяжений и отталкиваний ими весомых масс и т. п., не может быть отрицательного ответа на поставленные вопросы. (Florensky 2008c: 245)

⁶ In Florensky's philosophy of language, the meaning of a spoken word has a "magic effect" on the participants in a communication, due to the concentrated energy in its structure (see Florensky 2016: 141–165; Veršić 2013: 168–177). Although the energy in communication (externalised, or produced, in both verbal and non-verbal artefacts) can be read from various predominant dimensions of consciousness, or stages of consciousness, depending on cultural beliefs or worldviews (see Veršić 2014), it appears to be commonly associated at the collective level with "mystical", "occult", or "magic" knowledge. Our understanding of human cultural energy nowadays tends to correspond with an emerging understanding of "quantum" knowledge. Although "naming" it differently, we are considering the same phenomenon.

⁷ *Odic force* – Carl von Reichenbach's term for the life force or vital energy.

In the word itself, which is characterised by its three aspects (phoneme, morpheme, sememe), Florensky recognises a “spiritual organism” – i.e. the whole of a human being with his three “spiritual functions”, or with “what Philo⁸ calls the realities of body, soul and spirit” (Florensky 2008b: 218). In the philosophy of language on which Florensky elaborates, the phoneme is a symbol of the morpheme, which is its purpose and meaning, whereas the morpheme is a symbol of the sememe, the latter being the purpose and meaning of the morpheme.

Florensky's comparison between the functions of a word and human spiritual activity is evident. A subtle energy communication concerns a spiritual aspect of the human being and, consequently, in the course of communication as a spiritual bond it originates from the “spiritual reaction” that Florensky attributes to a word:

If in a phoneme we have to see a spiritual reaction to impressions and, accordingly, a process by which an impression is being recognised, a morpheme is a spiritual reaction to an already recognised impression and, accordingly, a process by which a notion is being formed – a representation. Finally, a sememe as a spiritual reaction to the latter, serves to form an idea. Additionally, a phoneme is an impression of an impression, or a feeling; a morpheme is a feeling of a feeling, or a representation – a notion; a sememe, for its part, is a notion of a notion, or an idea. (Florensky 2008b: 217–218, translation mine)

Если в фонеме нужно видеть духовную реакцию на впечатления, и, следовательно, процесс, которым осознается ощущение, то морфема есть духовная реакция на уже сознанное ощущение и, следовательно, процесс, которым образуется понятие – представление; наконец, семема, как духовная реакция на последнее, служит образованию идеи. Еще: фонема – впечатление впечатления или ощущение; морфема – ощущение ощущения или представление – понятие; семема же – понятие понятия или идея. (Florensky 2008b: 217–218)

5. THE ENERGY ACTIVITY OF WORDS (THE EMBODIMENT OF MEANING)

In Florensky's view, although a language is a whole, it also consists of many languages within one and the same nation. A language is “the deepest

⁸ Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE –c. 45 CE)

definition of Self", it is "the organ of our thought, and broader, of our personality". Florensky shares Humboldt's view that every human being uses words "in order to express his own particular personality" (Florensky 2008a: 158), noting the fact that in the language of every individual his consciousness and personal cognition of the world is evidenced. Referring to Humboldt (see Humboldt 1999), who in a way anticipates cognitive linguists' research interests, Florensky analyses communication or the transfer of meaning "from one consciousness to another" (Florensky 2008c: 232), showing through the language novelties of his contemporaries that sometimes there is a need for "explanation and preciseness of notions in language" (Florensky 2008a: 158). "[...] it becomes more clear how deep are the roots of these differences in particular mental mood of individuals" (Florensky 2008a: 158). In communication, including the poetic kind, Florensky implies the semantic structure of language, which is antinomic in its essence, and in this regard his aesthetic judgment is indicative of language thought experiments:

[...] *zaum* requires Logos too. This is similar to how a devilish gold, obtained in the ecstasy of a magic spell, in daylight turns out to be excrement. When the antonymy of language is being completely smoothed out, thereby the language itself is being completely annihilated. (Florensky 2008a: 165, translation mine)

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[...] и заумный язык нуждается в Логосе. Это подобно тому, как бесовское золото, полученное в испулении магического заклятия, оказывается при свете дня только калом. Когда начисто сглаживается антиномичность языка, то тем самым начисто уничтожается и самый язык. (Florensky 2008a: 165)

The effective energy of the word enables an approach to the space *beyond* physical experience and sensory perception as we know it; it unifies *visible* and *invisible*, without losing its appropriateness. In this sense, when Florensky considers *zaum* or the *transmental* language used by futurist poets, he notices their non-recognition of and non-acquaintance with the real nature of language, although "their feeling of the roots of language is indicative":

One cannot say that there might be an absence of *λόγος*; but it cannot be seen and, in so far as it cannot be seen, their creations themselves go beyond evaluations. It does not follow that they are not successful, but seeking to become entirely subjective, they do become subjective; and that is why there is also no possibility to objectively decide whether they are successful or not. (Florensky 2008a: 162, translation mine)

Нельзя сказать, чтобы в них λόγος отсутствовал; но его там не видно и, поскольку не видно, постольку и самые творения выходят за пределы оценок. Отсюда не следует, что они не удачны; но, стремясь стать до конца субъективными, они и становятся такими, а потому объективно решать, удачны они или нет, тоже нет возможности. (Florensky 2008a: 162)

Florensky's criticism of futurist poets refers to meaning as a precondition of clear communication with the reader, and finds that this meaning is missing, due to non-articulation. If a poet in his own sincerity is

[...] entirely *trans*-mental and therefore *non*-verbal in his creativity, then *even he himself does not know* what should be embodied in his syllable, and therefore he cannot even evaluate whether it has been embodied or not. (Florensky 2008: 162, translation mine)

[...] насквозь *за*-умен и потому *бес*-словесен в своем творчестве, то и *сам он не знает*, что долженственно воплотиться у него в звуке, а потому не может и судить – воплотилось ли. (Florensky 2008: 162)

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6. CONSCIOUS USE OF WORDS

According to Florensky, because words are not *flatus vocis*, there is a presumption that one is aware of what s/he is saying when communicating any thought form.⁹ In interpretations of the name of God, proper names, or names of things, the author points out the purposefulness of thought embodied in the spoken word. In this connection the ability of energy communication with the environment is primarily related to those who know the real nature of language and use their knowledge as an instrument for different purposes:

But among peasants there are also some to whom the unknown is known. They are wizards and witches, enchanters and enchantresses, as they principally know...[...] Some of them use their knowledge in a good way and some of them in an evil way. But all of them, good and evil, natural-born and taught, face such times when they see, hear and perceive in many different ways what is invisible and unknowable to others. They all live a double life. The other-worldly doors open wide before all of them. (Florensky 2007: 16, translation mine)

⁹ Nowadays this subject is studied at university level as "Communication Skills".

Но есть и среди крестьян отдельные люди, которым ведомо и неведомое. Они ведуны и ведуньи, ведьмаки и ведьмы, ибо они ведают по преимуществу... [...] Одни пользуются своим ведением во благо, другие во зло. Но все они, добрые и злые, прирожденные и выученные, переживают такие времена, когда видят, слышат и всячески воспринимают то, что незримо и непостижимо всем прочим. Все они живут двойною жизнью. Перед всеми ними отверзаются настежь двери потустороннего. (Florensky 2007: 16)

In Florensky's view, a thought, a word and a deed are identical:

A thought and a word, a word and a deed are inseparable – they are the same, identical. [...] When you ponder something, you inevitably prepare to start a series of actions, you strain the muscles in one way or another. The more intense the desire, the more direct the consciousness – the closer the thought, the word and the deed are to each other. In the ecstasy of magic creativity...there is no boundary among them. They are identical. (Florensky 2007: 17, translation mine)

Мысль и слово, слово и дело нераздельны — одно и то же, тождественны. [...] Когда вы обдумываете что-нибудь, вы неизбежно готовитесь начать ряд действий, так или иначе напрягаете мышцы. Чем напряженнее желание, чем непосредственнее сознание, тем ближе друг к другу мысль, слово и дело. В экстазе магического творчества...нет границы между ними. Одно есть другое. (Florensky 2007: 17)

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Ėnergiynost' reveals itself in the internal aspect of communication, in the “interior interconnection”. Florensky relates this energy aspect of language to an “extrasensory overcoming” of sememe, of sense: the speech, being a personal, subjective manifestation, “is characterised by deepest contradictions”:

We believe and recognise that it is not from the conversation that we understand each other, but due to the power of interior interconnection, and that words do contribute to the intensification of consciousness, do contribute to the consciousness of spiritual interchange that has already occurred, but do not themselves produce this interchange. We recognise the mutual understanding of even the subtlest, often quite unexpected, forks of meaning: but this awareness is being established against the common background of a spiritual touch that is already occurring. (Florensky 2008b: 215, translation mine)

Мы верим и признаем, что не от разговора мы понимаем друг друга, а силою внутреннего общения, и что слова способствуют обострению сознания, сознанию уже происшедшего духовного обмена, но не сами

по себе производят этот обмен. Мы признаем взаимное понимание и тончайших, часто вполне неожиданных отрогов смысла: но это понимание устанавливается на общем фоне уже происходящего духовного соприкосновения. (Florensky 2008b: 215)

It can be seen in the previous quotation, and it should be noted, that Florensky's thought itself is contradictory. The contradiction is evident in the way the author understands the use of a word-name. The latter is a representative of “higher beings”, carrying its own “mystical energies”. Florensky gives particular importance to the pronunciation of word-names:

But if the name carries mystical energies, then one can use these energies from the outside. The name brings prosperity and power to a magician – an invocator of someone else's name – when he conjures supreme beings, but this can also cause him a loss. [...] Such are names of diseases, names of the dark forces, “obscene” words. One can call on the name and – not being able to cope with it – can perish. At last, the almighty Name of God gives complete power over all nature, because in this Name, to an invocator, its divine energy and divine help is revealed. (Florensky 2007: 25, translation mine)

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Но если имя несет в себе мистические энергии, то можно пользоваться этими энергиями со стороны. Кудеснику – звателю чужого имени – оно несет благополучие и власть, когда он заклинает высшие существа, но оно же может причинить ему и гибель. [...] Такковы названия болезней, имена темной силы, слова “непристойные”. Можно призвать имя и – не справившись с ним – погибнуть. Наконец, всемогущее Имя Божие дает полную власть над всею природою, потому что в Имени этом открывается звателю Его божественная энергия и божественная помощь. (Florensky 2007: 25)

7. THE SPACE OF THE WORK OF ART

Energy communication reveals itself clearly in the field of artistic and figurative works, to which an energy reading is also applicable. The most vivid example of this is Florensky's energy analysis of the “magic” effects of works of art, seen in the aesthetics of Suprematism, set out in Malevich's *Black Square*, and the aesthetics of the Avant-Garde, reflected in poster art.

In terms of aesthetics, Florensky draws attention to sensitivity to energy communication and energy reading – from the point of view prevalent in

folklore consciousness – of those works of art that he calls “instruments” or “suggestion machines”:

But this kind of instrument already exists. For example, the political manifestos of propaganda are conceived precisely so as to egg on anyone looking at them to certain actions and, indeed, to force people to look at them. In this case, the effect on those present and the [resulting] change in their spiritual life should come about not via meaning, but via an immediate presence of colours and lines. In other words, these manifestos are basically suggestion machines and suggestion is the lowest rung [on the ladder] of magic...[...] Good or bad, a machine is always a machine and not a representation. [...] Unwittingly, the Suprematists and other artists who follow the same direction are conducting experiments in the field of magic... (Florensky 2002: 62)

Такие орудия действительно существуют: так, уже рекламный и агитационный плакат имеют назначением принудить к известным действиям всех на них смотрящих и даже *заставить* смотреть на них. Тут действие на окружающих и изменение в их душевной жизни должен оказать не *смысл*, а непосредственная наличность красок и линий. Иначе говоря, такие плакаты суть машины для внушения, а внушение есть низшая ступень магии. [...] Хороша или плоха машина, она есть машина, а не изображение. [...] Супрематисты и другие того же направления, сами того не понимая, делают попытки в области магии... (Florensky 2000a: 156)

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In contemporaneity the energy reading of a work of art, understood as a means of artistic communication, actualises itself from another point of view, although the essence of perception – what one feels, or what is aesthetic in communication – is the same:

As Malevich envisioned, his legendary *Black Square* was a programmatic work, an expression of suprematist aesthetics... Yet, in our time, after almost ninety years, one can only wonder about Florensky's accuracy of assessment, given that *Black Square* is still being discussed, namely, as a machine for evoking certain emotions in a viewer. (Lubovsky 2013: 88, translation mine)¹⁰

По замыслу К.С. Малевича, его легендарный *Черный квадрат* был программным произведением, выражением эстетики супрематизма... Но в наше время, почти через девяносто лет, остается только удивляться точности оценки П.А. Флоренского, поскольку *Черный квадрат* до сих пор

¹⁰ Lubovsky refers to the similarity between Lev Vygotsky's psychology of art and Pavel Florensky's analysis of the “psychological impact of an artwork”.

обсуждается именно как машина для вызывания у зрителя определенных эмоций. (Lubovsky 2013: 88)

On the other hand, in Florensky's interpretation an icon is the image of what is beautiful and sacred, the image of what the author considers valuable. As a window into a “higher reality”, the holy icon is meant to help a believer experience spiritual seeing, acting as a “bridge” to the other-worldly space.



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The Last Futurist Exhibition of Painting 0.10 (Petrograd, 1915/1916)

Source: <http://www.artic.edu/aic/resources/resource/3031>

In terms of energy reading, we are interested in why some people have certain emotions when reading Malevich's idea of Suprematism, in which “the supremacy of pure feeling in creative art” is implied. In order to attain a “pure artistic feeling” stimulated by perceiving simple, monochromatic geometric shapes, Malevich's “art as method” idea seen in *Black Square* is deliberately symbolic, as the author provokes the viewer at a deep cultural-symbolic level through the place he gives the painting in the room. This level appears to be more intrinsic to energy cognising than, say, a level of pure semiotic interpretations, since human culture is highly conditioned by beliefs, i.e., by the workings of human symbolisation. Human symbolisation

seems to be equivalent to “energy cognition”, corresponding to “pure feelings” in suprematist terms:

When Malevich unveiled the Black Square at The Last Exhibition of Futurist Painting 0.10, held in the newly-named Petrograd in December 1915, he was keen to showcase Suprematism, his new idea, and the Black Square was placed high up on the wall across the corner of the room. Though this position might mean nothing to the average non-Russian viewer today, it was the same sacred spot that a Russian Orthodox icon of a saint would sit in a traditional Russian home – and this likeness wasn't lost on people in Petrograd. (Holtham and Moran 2014)

In an analysis of artistic and figurative works, Florensky surveys the holy icon as a special art form, through which a believer internally perceives a unity of sensory and transcendental perception. In Platonic terms, “the icon is a reminder of a heavenly prototype” (Florensky 2008d: 365).

8. PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL SPACE AND *ÈNERGIYNOST'*

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Florensky is also interested in a sensory-perceptual “world-image” based on the relationship between images (the psyche) and bodily sensations (the physical body). He distinguishes two basic “spaces of seeing”: physical, external, “visible”; and psychical, internal, “invisible”. The latter he relates to dreaming (*snovidenie* in Russian, meaning literally “seeing in dreams”). From the sensory-perceptual point of view, Florensky intuits that there is a certain bodily interconnection between the waking state of the soul (human being), or seeing when one is awake, and the dream state, or seeing in dreams. In the dream state, he additionally distinguishes “deep dreaming”, “a dream within a dream” and a liminal state (convergence point): “half-dreaming, half-waking”. The latter is defined as “the boundary between dreaming and wakefulness”, i.e. “the time-environment of the emergence of dreamlike images” (Florensky 2008d: 326). Florensky is even interested in a “dreaming phantasy” as if it were a sequence of events of a “dreaming drama”, and suggests that a cause and effect relationship is established between these events.

Florensky's presentiments about the permeable boundaries of states of consciousness are corroborated within the modern human sensory-perceptual “world-image”. Today, cognitive linguists study human brain functions, and recognise the interconnections between speech, language (i.e.

a conceptual system based on sensorimotorics [Lakoff and Johnson 1980]), and the mirror neuron system in the cerebral cortex (Lakoff's neural theory of conceptual metaphor). Studies of mirror neurons in humans indicate that certain areas of the cerebral cortex are activated not only when someone performs an action (being physically active), but also when someone *only observes* another performing an action (being physically inactive, passive). The activity Florensky refers to as "seeing in dreams" can be included in these considerations as well.

Experiments on neural activity during sleep also support the hypothesis that there are psychophysiological foundations for dreaming, demonstrating that the "interior activity" of a human being occurs in actuality (according to brain activity studies). Thus, Florensky's presentiments find scientific credibility: some events (thoughts, feelings), are manifested in some sequences of events (during the time of seeing in dreams). Since there is currently no commonly accepted explanation for this, we are inclined to talk about these neurally detected "energy events" – in sleeping and waking states – as symbolisations or metaphorisations, using semantic transfers in everyday story-telling. In other words, as energy beings we transform our individual energy into representations: symbolic, metaphorical communication. Moreover, Florensky considers the interior, symbolised space, and translates its "energy events" into imaginaries in a geometric analysis, as in the example of Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, which is the most discussed part of his work *The Imaginaries of Geometry* (1922).

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It is significant to note that in dream states we usually create images without verbal communication (this is validated by neurobiological data confirming neurobiological events), although this is not always the case. How can we explain cases in which we communicate verbally in a dream? On this basis, scholars still study what came before, and what developed later: the embodiment of thought in physical experience or in speech (language ability). The question about dreaming from a semiotic point of view is considered by Yuri Lotman in his final book *Culture and Explosion* (see Lotman 2009).

It is also significant in this respect to note the analogies Florensky presents in *Organoprojection* (a series lectures given in 1917, and posthumously published in 1969), in which home appliances are compared with the human body in an anatomical sense; namely "electrical phone wires" are compared with the "nervous system" (Florensky 2000b: 416; 2016: 56).

The activation of mirror neurons means that synapses – junctions through which neurons communicate – are formed regardless of whether

an individual performs an action in the physical space (for example, if one person shoots another or addresses another person lovingly and warmly), or just observes an action in the space of an artwork (for example, reading a book or watching a film in which one person shoots another, or addresses another person lovingly and warmly),¹¹ or simply mentally performs a certain action, either while awake (visualisation) or dreaming (seeing in dreams).¹² Florensky's presupposition has been verified by contemporary scientists and scholars, as being founded on what we determine as a symbolisation that is "common to all people, the basis of which is human psychophysiology". (Veršić 2013: 296; Veršić 2014).

9. ENERGY COGNITION

In light of the above considerations, we can study *ènergiynost'* in terms of *energy effects* by proceeding from a language's cognitive activity (from the *energy dimensions of consciousness* in communication). We can find confirmation of this phenomenon in psychophysiology and neurophysiology, since energy is equally recognisable in symbolic representations and neural activity. In this sense, a symbolic-energy perception of reality and space cannot be reduced to a semiotic perception of reality and space within semiotic interpretations, although, thanks to Yuri Lotman and the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School's interest in Florensky's writings (and their rehabilitation of the author), we find the religious philosopher and scientist at the origins of semiotics (see Veršić 2013).

In Florensky's writings, energy itself is not reducible to a sign, or to a pure sign system. This subject deserves more detailed consideration. On this point, we should note that an energy interchange, as Florensky

¹¹ There are many examples of violent, unpleasant energy, both physical and verbal, in today's space of culture. There are scientists who have expanded their cognitive-linguistic interest into new fields, such as in linguistic-wave genetics, researching the subtle relationship between speech (e.g. swear words) and chromosomes working on the principle of quantum nonlocality (i.e. the subtle interconnection between language and quantum healing). See Gariaev, Friedman and Leonova-Gariaeva 2011.

¹² In this regard, it is necessary to highlight the significant difference between "visualisation" and "vision". Visualisation is imaging, creating an image with intent (e.g. in meditation or relaxation). Since a vision is an image, which does not involve a deliberate intention to visualise, this subject deserves further consideration.

understands it, is not reducible to a "semiotic interchange" in the context of Lotman's meta-theory of the semiosphere (Veršić 2013: 293; Florensky 2016: 191). In other words, the energy interchange among people and energy communication sensitivity on one hand, and a meta-language of energy interchange, both among structures of cultural meta-models and within them, on the other, are two different approaches to the issue of energy cognition in the Humanities.

In a new paradigm of growing interdisciplinary approaches, alongside the explainable inclination to meta-theorise, there is a considerable tendency to combine theoretical with practical insights regarding communication knowledge (see Price 2015).

Trying to explain the development of human cognitive abilities,¹³ some scholars corroborate that the emergence of new cognitive abilities – to which we can add the emergence of new forms and types of symbolisation (the use of symbols for representation) – corresponds to the formation of new neural connections. This is the process in which new neural connections emerge and strengthen, while old ones disappear. It is interesting to find, in this sense, an explanation for the relationship between beliefs common to all humankind and the mirror neurons, which have been formed and strengthened over the course of human evolution.

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Here we have in mind outdated beliefs and worldview practices¹⁴ in the space of culture (also known as *noosphere*, *pneumatosphere*, *anthroposphere*, *sociosphere*, *semiosphere*, *technosphere*), which reflect the collective consciousness of humanity on one side, and the role and function of language (verbal and non-verbal) studied by cognitive linguists and neurophysiologists on the other. When it comes to Florensky's study of language, we have in mind the act of giving a name: Florensky approaches language the same way he approaches "the philosophy of name", by historically considering "the name" of a thing. In other words, we have in mind the interrelationship among thinking (worldview), the thing-in-itself, and naming:

Theurgy and magic are as old as humankind. A belief in the power of spells and the world-creating experience extends as far as humans. But since the name is the node of all magic-theurgic spells and forces, one can understand

¹³ Showing an interest in the cognitive development of children, young contemporaries of Florensky's – Lev Vygotsky (developmental psychology) and Jean Piaget (genetic psychology) – made a significant contribution to the field of thought and speech development, which would be further developed in the twentieth century.

¹⁴ As, for example, in the ancient principle "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

that the philosophy of name is the most widely spread philosophy that meets the deepest human aspirations. (Florensky 2007: 21, translation mine)

Теургия и магия столь же стары, как и человечество. Вера в силу заклѣтия и переживание своего мирообразующего творчества простирается так же далеко, как и человек. Но так как имя является узлом всех магико-теургических заклѣтий и сил, то понятно отсюда, что философия имени есть наираспространеннейшая философия, отвечающая глубочайшим стремлениям человека. (Florensky 2007: 21)

A subject that we will leave for further consideration is that of our *energy dimensions of consciousness*, based on which we communicate in a collective cultural space.¹⁵ The functional relationship between *internal* and *external*, or between human creative energy and its *externalisation* (artefacts of material and non-material culture) is undoubted. As Florensky states:

It is up to psychologists to say whether a worldview changes because of changes to the perception of the world, or, on the contrary, the very perception of the world is derivative of the worldview. There is no doubt that there is a functional correspondence between ideas and interior life – between worldview and perception of the world. (Florensky 2007: 9, translation mine)

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Дело психологов решить, мировоззрение ли меняется от изменений в мироощущении, или, напротив, само мироощущение есть лишь производное от мировоззрения. Несомненно то, что существует функциональное соответствие между идеями и внутренней жизнью — между мировоззрением и мироощущением. (Florensky 2007: 9)

CONCLUSION

According to Florensky, *ènergiynost'* is the essence of all being. The contemporary paradigm of quantum reality makes possible a paradigm shift in the broader understanding of human existence and human cultural

¹⁵ These energy dimensions are explainable by the “levels of consciousness” in Wilber’s Integral Theory of Consciousness, and by the “waves of consciousness” in Beck and Cowan’s model of Spiral Dynamics. We note that to each wave or level of consciousness (*Archaic-Instinctual, Magical-Animistic, Magical-Mythic, Conformist, Rational, Pluralistic, Integral, Holistic* etc.) corresponds its specific energy. We also call this the *cognitive-energy dimension of consciousness*.

activity. A broader understanding of *ènergijnost'* as energy communication is possible thanks to contemporary research in all spheres of knowledge, and consequently also in the Arts and Humanities, with an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to language, arts and visual culture (“Introduction to Energy Communication”).

To state some “philosophical positions” in the theory of quantum reality:

- Reality is an inseparable whole;
- The quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is a fundamental reality;
- Consciousness creates physical reality;
- Thought, word and deed are interrelated.

The key intention in this essay is to illustrate that Florensky sees energy readings (energy effects) as proceeding from the energy perception of the world, although the author’s predominant perception in this regard can be recognised as inherent to folk magic and religious consciousness (as compared to the Wilberian classification of consciousness levels). A sensitivity to *ènergijnost'* in any dimension of consciousness in communication is being gradually recognised today, both by scholars and “non-scholars”. Within this recognition is a tendency to relate *ènergijnost'* to an emerging quantum model of reality.¹⁶

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In conclusion, to paraphrase Florensky: the organising of reality depends on which “model of reality” we choose, since it is always a thought model as well as a thinkable model. And a thought is energy – both collective and individual.

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¹⁶ Quantum, energy communication within the cultural thought space is discussed in the paper presented at the 4th International Congress of Fine Literature Translators held in Moscow 8–11 September 2016 (see Veršić 2018).

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