



Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal.  
Philosophical Sciences. Vol. 1(89)

Вісник Житомирського державного  
університету імені Івана Франка.  
Філософські науки. Вип. 1(89)

ISSN: 2663-7650

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## РЕЛІГІОЗНАВСТВО RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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UDC 1:27-31:130

DOI 10.35433/PhilosophicalSciences.1(89).2021.148-157

### THE AXIOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF GNOSTICISM ON THE FORMATION OF THE WORLDVIEW BASIS OF MODERN JOURNALISM

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*The article analyzes the systemic influence of Gnosticism on the formation of worldview and value principles of modern journalism. The paper emphasizes the need to cover the worldview aspects of journalism in the context of the definitions of the creators of Gnostic systems, which led to a critical reflection of the world around us, ignoring important aspects of social life. It is established that in the modern globalized world, when the moral and spiritual values of a person are leveled, a fertile ground appears for the approval of the philosophy of consumerism, hedonism as the main criterion for the meaning of life, the wrongly accepted freedom, permissiveness, the approval of individualism and an egocentric attitude towards nature. The creation of the world in an ideological vacuum can cause a total manipulation of the masses, when the basic concept of truth was torn away from its sources, deprived of a metaphysical, holistic definition, turned into an uncompromising identified historical value. Deideologization of the consciousness of a person, generation or society leads to a new, often manipulative in its consequences for society, ideologization, which propaganda often uses the technique of semantic chaos. The main worldview foundations of modern journalism have become a reflection of the materialistic and philosophical-religious doctrine of Gnosticism, since both phenomena are focused on the experience of knowing the existence, accumulating a certain philosophical weight and ethical principles, affirming stereotypes, ideals, images, life values. Modern journalism shapes the spiritual atmosphere in the country, determines the worldview positions of the nation and the clotting of worldview items in favor of solving procedural problems of text formation, which can lead to a simplified formula for the perception of the world and the desire to adapt the world events and tendencies to the partial knowledge and ideas about it.*

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**Keywords:** Symbolic Production and Exchange, Worldview, Values, Gnosticism, Mysticism, Religious Cult, Journalism.

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## ЦІННІСНИЙ ВПЛИВ ГНОСТИЦИЗМУ НА ФОРМУВАННЯ СВІТОГЛЯДНИХ ЗАСАД СУЧАСНОЇ ЖУРНАЛІСТИКИ

О. Л. Соколовський

У статті проаналізовано системний вплив гностицизму на формування світоглядно-ціннісних засад сучасної журналістики. У роботі підкреслена необхідність висвітлення світоглядних аспектів журналістики у контексті визначень творців гностичних систем, яке призвело до критичного відображення навколишнього світу ігноруючи важливі аспекти суспільного буття. Встановлено, що в сучасному глобалізованому світі, коли нівелюються морально-духовні цінності людини, з'являється сприятливий ґрунт для утвердження філософії споживацтва, гедонізму як основного критерію сенсу життя, хибно прийнятої свободи, всюдозволеності, утвердження індивідуалізму та егоцентричне ставлення до природи. Творення світу у світоглядному вакуумі може спричинити тотальне маніпулювання масами, коли базове поняття правди відривали від його витоків, позбавляли метафізичного, цілісного визначення, перетворювали на безкомпромісну ідентифіковану історичну цінність. Деїдеологізація свідомості людини, покоління чи суспільства призводить до нової, часто маніпулятивної за своїми наслідками для суспільства, ідеологізації, пропаганда якої часто використовує техніку смислового хаосу. На основі аналізу гностичних ціннісних орієнтирів встановлено, що базові світоглядні засади сучасної журналістики стали відображенням матеріалістичної і філософсько-релігійної доктрини гностицизму, оскільки обидва феномени акцентовані на досвіді пізнання буття, акумулюючи певне філософське навантаження та етичні принципи, утверджуючи стереотипи, ідеали, образи, цінності життя. Зокрема сучасна журналістика формує духовну атмосферу в країні, визначає світоглядні позиції нації і згортання світоглядних предметів на користь вирішення процедурних проблем текстотворення, яке може призвести до спрощеної формули світосприйняття й бажання пристосовувати події й тенденції світу до часткових знань і уявлень про нього.

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**Ключові слова:** символічне виробництво та обмін, світогляд, цінності, гностицизм, містицизм, релігійний культ, журналізм.

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**Introduction of the issue.** Worldview issues have always been at the center of philosophical discourse. Only on the basis of an understanding of the fundamental parameters of the worldview, world attitude and world outlook, it becomes possible to study the essential properties of a person of a particular era. It is impossible to imagine how a modern man lives, what are his inalienable and fundamental values and axiological guidelines, how he is going to behave under certain circumstances, if you do not first find out the worldview and ontological prerequisites for his

existence, self-understanding and self-realization.

A thoughtful attitude to history makes it possible to note a number of patterns of development and decline of civilizations. Modern journalism plays an important role in this process, it promotes the emergence of a new type of view by reconstructing the old, ancient, organic worldview, but at a different civilizational level. Today, journalism has a decisive and effective influence on people's worldview and behavior. The specificity of this influence lies in the fact that we are dealing with such a form of

mass information activity which comprehensively reflects the aspects of the life processes of society, helps to understand the complex political, public and social processes of the state and captures them as a historical fact. This means that the role and responsibility of journalism is growing in a statement, above all, of high moral values. Considering that journalism is already philosophical by its nature, it is important to pay attention precisely to the philosophical position of modern journalism.

Journalism is related to both philosophical categories and philosophy as a type of cognition. Thereby, it can be interpreted as the philosophy of everyday life or the philosophy of situational reality. Considering that in the subject field of journalism, the external, visible, earthly, concrete and dynamic worlds are distinguished, this determines the analysis of not only the reflection of the worldview aspects of journalism of different historical eras, but also determines its dependence on the paradigm and value guidelines of spiritual development.

**The aim of the article** is to highlight the significant elements of the worldview of Gnosticism, as well as an analysis of how it was transformed or fit into the general structure of the worldview and value orientations of modern journalism. The modern philosophical discourse is analyzed in the same aspect, after all, the key issue of the modern philosophy of religion is the determination of the systemic influence on the formation of the ideological and axiological guidelines of each person. This is very important because only a person who has a solid worldview foundation and an active value-behavioral life position can self-actualize as an active subject.

**Results and discussion.** In our opinion, the definition of the influence of Gnosticism on the worldview foundations of modern journalism will allow a

methodological analysis of the doctrinal foundations of religious syncretism, which caused a discussion in theological circles. In the context of the stated problematic, we are interested in the inner logic of the religious and philosophical polemics of the period of the functioning and development of the Gnostic movement. We draw your attention to the fact that the coverage of the worldview aspects of journalism remains an important problem in the context of the definitions of the creators of Gnostic systems, which led to a critical reflection of the world around us, ignoring important aspects of social life.

The scientific paradigm has established position that Gnosticism gave a push to the development of irrational philosophical thinking and, thus, had a huge impact on the formation of a general religious and philosophical picture of the world. The gnostic worldview concept led to the development of intuitive methods of reaching the truth and became the basis for the formation of such philosophical streams as mysticism, metaphysics, "philosophy of life", existentialism, personalism which, in turn, pay special attention to the spiritual sphere of human activity. G. Jonas considers the Gnostic worldview as a religious universal entity, a special constant of the religious-mystical worldview, which allows us to speak of gnosticism as an ancient nihilism, and to interpret existentialism as a renewal of Gnostic tendencies [1: 112]. The religious and anthropological crisis of our time contributes to the intensification of interest in gnostically oriented ideologies in the religious and political spheres, as well as in the sphere of mass consciousness.

For a long time, researchers perceived Gnosticism as one of the Christian heresies, however, in the light of new research, this phenomenon appears as a separate religion and its consonance

with Christianity is only external. For Gnosticism, syncretism has become a hallmark. It has never been a monolithic religion, but included a variety of directions. However, all directions of Gnosticism reflected the same basic motives. Thus emerged the problem situation when, on the one hand, researchers note the uniqueness of Gnosticism as a religious and philosophical phenomenon of antiquity and its significant impact on the development of Christian theology in matters of soteriology and Christology [1: 112], and on the other hand, there is still no detailed and systematic study of the Christological character of the Gnostic worldview.

Traditionally, Gnosticism is considered a religious and philosophical movement of the II-III centuries, which arose on the basis of Christianity. It became an example of a religious movement in which Christianity was perceived through the prism of syncretic combination of gnostic worldview, Greek philosophy and ideology of various theosophical movements of Jewish, Oriental and Egyptian origin. Protestant theologian A. Harnak stated the significant influence of Gnosticism on the formation of the basic tenets of Christian doctrine impregnated with Greek religious and philosophical thinking [2: 140]. However, the similarities in the historical development and religious foundations of these two systems were only superficial. The main tenets of Gnostic teaching were based on pagan traditions and ideas which in many positions were opposed to Christian ideology. Therefore, Christian theologians called the religious-soteriological doctrine of the II-III centuries "false knowledge" and in secular scientific circles it was designated by the terms "gnosis" and "gnosticism". In the narrow sense, "gnosis" is a special knowledge gained through revelation and in a broad sense

– the type of worldview in which the possibility of such knowledge is substantiated [2: 4].

The term "Gnosticism" has equivalents in many ancient and European languages, forming abstract nouns that represent doctrines, streams, systems, qualities, tendencies, actions or states, not only the historical-cultural or historical-philosophical direction, but also focuses on the special nature of consciousness, ideology, and so on. In addition, in the Ukrainian language, two versions of the concept of "gnozis" and "gnosis" are widespread without differentiating the specifics of their use. Most often, the concept of "gnosis" is understood as gnostic knowledge, and under the term "gnozis" – Christian knowledge, which has the character of an ontological, inspired and joyful rebirth of man, addressed to all. However, Gnosticism did not form an orthodox doctrine, as a religious and philosophical movement, it contained a large number of streams and directions, each of which had its own interpretation of the core issues of faith.

The ontological aspect of Gnosticism is revealed in the doctrine of the super-existence of Basilides. He categorically denies on fixing the properties of the Absolute, since the fundamental principle does not contain specific semantic forms therefore, reality cannot be expressed in a word which indicates the immanent aspects of being and not on the transcendent essence. Being cannot be formulated as "nothing" or "Absolute" because it embraces all that exists. Basilides interprets being as a "non-existent god", who is nothing as a fundamental principle but contains the beginning of everything. A similar understanding of the fundamental principle can be traced in the teaching of Simon Magus, with using Aristotelian concepts of intention and act, where it is a double fire – a hidden one (one is

inside the other) and an overt one (the other is born from the first) [3: 23].

The ontological concept of Basilides was continued by his student Valentine who used it to develop the doctrine of the origin of the material world, forming the central core of the Gnostic system. The main idea comes down to the absolute fullness of eternal existence or the world of Aeons, from which everything capable of perceiving the truth originates and returns. In the realm of transcendental being, there is a perfect eon – primary "Depth" or "Abyss". It has in itself the irrelevant possibility or potency of all essential and contains the fullness of being. In such an inner, unexpressed state, the idea of "Depth" is called "Silence". The incomprehensible of the "Depth" always remains in the "Silence", while the comprehensible becomes the beginning of all that exists. Thus, in the ontological aspect, the Aeons are sequential emanations of the "Depth" which lose their divine essence by separating from the fundamental principle [4: 320]. The ontology of the Gnostics is reduced to the unity of one common principle, in which the very basis of matter is put, as a substrate for displaying the spiritual, ideal world.

Historical Gnosticism offers a fundamentally new understanding of the Absolute – personalism, the main idea of which is to recognize the person as the primary creative reality and the highest spiritual value, and the whole world is a manifestation of the creative activity of God. This approach assumes that the Absolute is a living person, and not an abstraction. Refuting the position of some scientists, the doctrine of the Gnostics about Aeons cannot be considered as pantheism in which the Absolute is seen as an impersonal force but a certain form of subordinationism present in the deity itself. Gnosticism, as a specific historical phenomenon of the history of religion in the era of late antiquity, is characterized by a

pronounced dualism, which many researchers pay attention to. However, the key question is not in the radical dualism of God and the world, but in its character. The Gnostic paradigm is characterized by a fundamentally different theological concept, which radically distinguishes the views of Gnostic authors from orthodox doctrine despite the desire to reconcile them in some way [5: 57].

According to the Gnostics' doctrine, Aeons constitute the pleroma, i.e. the fullness of divine being. All categories of pleroma are interpreted as the Father's desire to exist for others and be cognized from otherworldliness. Such subordination is closer to the pagan idea of the gods than to the Christian concept of the absolute person. In various Gnostic doctrines, the number of Aeons and their names are different. According to Valentine, there are thirty of them, and according to Basilides, their number corresponds to the number of days in the year. They constitute the fullness of divine being. However, the ontological aspect has complicated the solution of the question of the creation of the world from the divine substance provoking the return of Gnosticism to the pantheism which it had abandoned. The world could not arise as an emanation of God, therefore, the image of Sophia is introduced into the composition of the divine Pleroma in the form of the feminine principle, as the metaphysical basis of cosmic life. Such a doctrine denies monotheism, because its Father does not have his own history and mythology, which arises only in connection with the last Aeon, Sophia, and before that it is replaced by the logic of emanation without the personal development of abstract categories [6: 249]. In a broad sense, Sophia is presented as an objective embodiment of wisdom. Some researchers picture her as not just an abstract speculative form but as a living, concrete, personified image,

while continuing to remain an attribute of absolute knowledge.

The creation of the Demiurge – the creator of the material world – became the presence of the divine essence of Sophia in the matter [7: 145]. All interpretations of the creation of the world are reflected in Gnosticism not by philosophical but by religious and mythological comprehension. Therefore, in most Gnostic works, approaches to the origin of the Demiurge can be tentatively named as "monistic", "mono-dualistic" and "openly dualistic". In archaic myths, he is portrayed as an "unclean force" that arose separately from God [8: 415]. However, immanent to his creation, to most people the Demiurge appears to be a secondary deity and as the essence of absolute being has signs of weakness and relative imperfection. Even the process of creation of the world takes place under the guidance of God and equates to the Fall, and the Creator is portrayed as a rebellious angel endowed with demonic traits. Matter in this process is identified with evil, and its reality is denied. Demiurge, being inferior, tries to imitate the Father, creating similar worlds that do not correspond to the God's highest material goals of the universe. Therefore, the Demiurge rethought his position and expressed a desire to connect with the higher Divine life. However, a similar desire is expressed by the people to whom he gave life. However, the fallen Aeon and human souls cannot ascend to the deity on their own. They need a powerful creature to save them. On the other hand, the Absolute cannot accept this order of things in which the part of higher life is placed in the matter and suffers in it. Thus there is a natural need to save the fallen Aeon, which relied on Christ. Therefore, the main purpose of Christ's coming is to bring people the true knowledge of the Father – because of the lack of true testimony about Him that is possessed by only a few spiritual

chosen ones. At the same time, the Demiurge, as the Creator and Lord of the world, revealed himself not only to Abraham and the prophets, but also to people who cognize him in the act of creation. Understanding the essence of God-Father as the Creator of His children and the Demiurge as the Creator of the material world and their personal responsibility for their activities, actualizes the question of the cause of the origin of evil on earth.

Gnostics interpret the problem of evil in the mainstream of Plato's philosophy, in which it is associated with matter, which acts as a denial of infinite existence. Some Gnostic systems emphasize the monistic tendency in which God, as the sole, infinite, absolute and all-unifying principle presented as the only cause and at the same time the ultimate goal for the sensual and material world. Hence, the existence of matter is reduced to the unity of the existence of the infinite divine spirit in which the ultimate foundations of the real world are concentrated. Therefore, according to the Gnostics, the evil of the world is due to moral reasons and comes down to the inconsistency of the material form with its ideological content.

Based on such considerations in Gnosticism, according to G. Jonas, a preconceived attitude towards God was formed, portraying him as exceeding, denying any of His relation to the creation of the world, therefore His presence in human life is called into question. Cosmos is the creation of lower forces that indirectly originate from Him, however, they do not know the true God and hinder the knowledge of Him in cosmos. Genesis of lower forces, archons, and the whole order of existence outside of God in general, including cosmos is the central theme of the Gnostic systems. The transcendent God is hidden and unknown in the world. Knowing Him requires supernatural revelation and even then he

can only be expressed in negative terms [9: 58–59]. As a Spirit, God begets spiritual beings. That is why He is the Father not only of His Son, but also of all people, who live in the material world, but are born of the Spirit. He is both the transcendent Absolute and the perfect Person. He is not the source of evil, and that is why He does not create and cannot create the material world. He is unfamiliar to the creation and, accordingly, is not responsible for it. Finding out this truth is entrusted to a person which is a microcosm that consists of spirit, soul and body, reflecting the three principles of the universe of God, demiurge and matter. In this regard, the Gnostics distinguished three classes: pneumatics in which the divine spirit prevailed; psychics in which the spiritual and material principles were mixed; somatics, in which the material principle prevailed. The theological doctrine of the origin and ultimate goals of man determined the ethical views of the Gnostics: moral requirements and practical rules of human behavior were addressed to the psychics, who had the opportunity to change their middle position, unlike pneumatics who were intended for rescue or somatics who were doomed to a lifetime death.

However, in the process of salvation, knowledge plays the main role, and not the objective substance of man. Cognition (self-cognition) of the Gnostics, as a striving for perfection, appears to be the only significant cosmic process. The solution to these questions is essential for the Gnostic. Personally, it brings salvation. But, at the same time, it is not the goal and aspiration itself that is important, but the path to it, for cognition is self-cognition of the Absolute that is, the only thing for which the universe exists. If we talk about the very nature or attribute of Gnostic cognition, then it is fundamentally different from scientific one. Gnosis is, in essence, similar to revelation. For the Gnostic,

cognition is a genuine being. They constantly oppose gnosis (true cognition) to false knowledge that is an analytical model of the world, which is, in their view, inextricably linked with its absurdity. Gnostics prefer the irrational cognition to the rational one, which is limited only to the material world. In fact, gnosis is a mystical experience or some meditative reflection on the essence of the world and man.

According to Clement of Alexandria, some people bear a share of the higher spiritual world which can be awakened by wisdom and then the ascent becomes probable, because the chosen ones, realizing their spirituality, are able to escape from bodily captivity. The chosen ones know who they are, and this is the beginning of a new being, indicated by modesty in food and abstinence from sexual activity, which leads to liberation from the material shell and return to the world of spirit [10: 61]. In the knowledge and asceticism that purifies the soul, according to A. Harnak, the perfect Gnostic arises as a spirit who, possessing himself, lives in the Absolute and, having abandoned the world, prepares for eternity. Cognition is real life, and it depends on the abstinence and submission to the major Christ mysteries in which there is a purification of the spirit from sensuality [11: 143–144]. Examining the history of theology, the Swiss B. Heggund proves that salvation, according to the teachings of Gnosticism, comes through a higher understanding, to which the Gnostics have access, – mystical wisdom, which gives knowledge about the prelude and about the way to it. Participation in the mysteries, among which the most important are baptisms and communions, is essential for salvation [12: 24–25].

The essence of Gnostic knowledge is defined by G. Khlebnikov, who considers the liberation of "inner", "pneumatic man" from the grip of the world and

return to the eternal realm of light as a goal of Gnostic aspirations, a prerequisite for which is human knowledge of the supernatural essence God and man himself [13: 54]. That is, it is about the Gnostic's awareness of his closeness to the Absolute.

The gnosiological, cosmological and ontological foundations of Gnosticism are based on the principles of allegory which they turned to as a method of interpreting the external facts of history, human life, revelation. Allegory is the basis of gnosis. By recognizing all the external life of history, man, the entire cosmos as a phantom, a ghost, covering the manifestations of pure spirit in which the ultimate metaphysical meaning of cosmic life is laid, the Gnostics looked at the material entity through the prism of symbols. The allegory of the Gnostics traces Plato's philosophical idealism in a new interpretation. They quite consistently, from their point of view, rejected the literal meaning of human history and the revelation of God itself. The text of the Holy Scripture is only a sensory shell, in which the very core of the truth is hidden, the truth which can be correctly interpreted and comprehended only by people under the guidance of the highest spiritual insight – pneumatic people. Therefore, the spirit of prophetic inspiration was always granted to the Gnostics, and their works were turned into apocalyptic and symbolic stories. The Gnostics took out from the sacred books of Christianity everything that related to the empirical person of Christ, establishing His living connection with humanity and its history.

The ideology of the Gnostics found a peculiar reflection in asceticism, which characterizes the external image of man's behavior – his morality. Gnostic asceticism has a purely negative meaning. Its ultimate essence is in the complete suppression and denial of everything that does not apply to the

pure spirit. The foundations of gnostic asceticism do not lie in the moral personality of the Christian but in the personality itself – in the cosmic forces of material origin. Ascetic life is not an expression of the victory of a person's moral personality over the lower strivings of his nature, but rather a sign of human weakness which only with the complete abandonment of the laws of material life can achieve the liberation of the spirit. Therefore, the very process of the liberation of the spirit in the asceticism of the Gnostics is reduced to the level of a simple mechanical act. Pneumatic morality determines their hostility to the world and contempt for all worldly relations, on the basis of which two forms of behavior arise: asceticism or immorality. The first one is motivated by the need for further desecration by the fallen world and the desire to reduce contacts with it to a minimum. The second one is related to the fact that the possession of gnosis gives "the right to absolute freedom of action" [13: 55].

As a reflection of religious demands in Gnosticism, the idea of salvation comes to the fore, idea which is embodied through gnosis as transcendental knowledge. Gnosis is revealed through revelation and the spiritual quest of the Gnostic consists in a constant, unbroken pursuit of truth. Salvation has the ultimate goal of man's aspirations, which he accomplishes through knowledge. Hence, gnosiological attempts are in close organic connection in relation to soteriological conversions. The theory of salvation in gnostic systems is abstract, built on theoretical knowledge. All external cult attitudes according to the concept of the Gnostics have knowledge only through the purification of the human spirit in it and the exposure of intuitive abilities.

**Conclusions and research perspectives.** After analyzing the main provisions of the doctrinal teaching of Gnosticism on the basis of which the

worldview form of purposeful reflection of reality was built, let us define the practical conclusions of the Gnostics that meet the criteria of modern journalists. First of all, it is a negative attitude towards matter as an imperfect creation, dismissive of basic moral standards as the laws of a proud and evil creator, violation of the social aspects of the functioning of society, by which the creator shackles man, etc. Each Gnostic system put on this myth in its own colors, introduced its own features and characteristics. However, in general terms, the Gnostic worldview remains unchanged in modern journalism.

Gnosticism can be considered as a worldview phenomenon, which, overcoming the time frame, concerns the most pressing issues of our existence. The similarity between religious and mystical teaching and journalism is the depiction of an imperfect and evil world. At the same time, humanity, which found itself in this world, became a hostage of imperfection. Therefore, the mission of salvation was to reveal to people the true knowledge and to free them from the power of the creator. The Gnostic view of the world has penetrated all spheres of modern culture today, directly or indirectly influencing journalism, literary studies, linguistics, physics, etc. Modern journalism is preventive, it strengthens national and civil immunity, promotes thinking in the categories of an independent state and thus neutralizes threats on a national scale. Within it, the style of total debunking gives way to the style of asceticism which is much closer to the worldview of Gnosticism than to such a transparent concept as professionalism.

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Receive: March 17, 2021

Accepted: April 18, 2021