

In Search of Mysticism: Oleg Maltsev and the Applied Sciences Association

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ABSTRACT: “Discovered” by Western scholars after it was criticized as a quintessential “cult” by Russian and Ukrainian anti-cultists, the Applied Sciences Association is not, strictly speaking, a new religious movement. Students perceive what its founder, Oleg Maltsev (who earned a Ph.D. in psychology), teaches as part of “science” rather than religion. On the other hand, in addition to a form of psychology based on Soviet scholars of memory and on the Hungarian psychoanalyst Leopold Szondi, and to martial arts and weapon handling techniques (in part derived from the study of the world’s criminal traditions), Maltsev proposes a view of history that includes a reconstruction of what he calls “European Mysticism,” a discussion of different notions of God, and the claim that the ancient, secret religion of the European knights, simply known as “Truth,” can be restored today.

KEYWORDS: Applied Sciences Association, Memory Institute, Oleg Maltsev, Criminal Traditions.

Oleg Maltsev and the Applied Sciences Association

From 2014 on, the group known today as the Applied Sciences Association became a main target of the Ukrainian and Russian anti-cult movements, which branded it as a “pseudo-religious cult” (Fautré 2016; see also Fautré’s article in this issue of *The Journal of CESNUR*). This was somewhat paradoxical, as the Applied Sciences Association is not a religious movement. It is, however, true that the teachings of its founder, Oleg Maltsev, rooted in psychology, extend to the fields of spirituality and mysticism.

Oleg Maltsev was born on April 17, 1975 in Odessa, Ukraine, from Jewish parents. His family moved to Sevastopol, Crimea, when he was only four months old. Ukraine was then part of the Soviet Union. The young Maltsev prepared for a

military career and studied in Moscow at the Moscow Cadet Corps. There, he met Viktor Pavlovič Svetlov (1919–1998), who became his mentor, and taught Maltsev the so called “Pastament doctrine.” Svetlov’s real name was Avraam Michelssohn, and he descended from a distinguished family of Jewish rabbis. “V.P. Svetlov” had been his alias when working for the Soviet intelligence, and he had decided to keep it. He was born in Moscow on September 25, 1919, and would die there on April 27, 1998, in a car accident.

Maltsev was deeply inspired by Svetlov, and to this day, he regards him as the true founder of the various associations he established. In 1992, Maltsev graduated from the Moscow Cadet Corps. He also studied law in Moscow, and practiced law since 2005. He started his own law firm in Ukraine in 2014. Later, on June 26, 2017, he would earn a Ph.D. in Psychological Sciences at Odessa State University.

In the same year of Maltsev’s graduation, 1992, Svetlov established in Moscow TOROSS (Complex Territorial Analytical Consulting Agency), a private consulting company where Maltsev also worked. Maltsev then founded in 1998, in Vienna the Scientific Research Institute “The Russian Science in Europe,” and in 2009, The Crimean Research Base in Sevastopol, which operated until 2014. He moved to Odessa in 2014, with several key disciples, before the Russian occupation of Crimea.

By the time of this move, Maltsev was conducting research and providing courses and seminars on a variety of subjects, from psychology and business to mysticism. The move to Odessa coincided with his first controversies with anti-cultists. It also granted Maltsev a wider national, and then international, audience for its courses, which suggested a reorganization of its activities. In its current incarnation, the Applied Sciences Association of Scientific Research Institutes serves as an umbrella organization for three different institutes, incorporated between 2015 and 2017 under Ukrainian law as private enterprises.

The first is the International Schicksalsanalyse (i.e. “Fate Analysis,” in German) Community Research Institute, founded on April 6, 2015, studying psychology in the tradition of Hungarian psychoanalyst Leopold Szondi (1893–1986). The second is the Memory Institute, established on June 14, 2016, a study and teaching organization for the chivalric traditions, a view of history including an investigation of European mysticism, and spirituality. The third is the Scientific Institute of World Martial Art Traditions Study and Criminalistic

Research of Weapon Handling, founded on January 24, 2017, which studies and teaches martial arts and weapon handling techniques, some of them derived from criminal traditions all over the world. Maltsev serves as the director of the Memory Institute, and is regarded as the leader of the whole movement. Marina Ilyusha is the director of the Schicksalsanalyse Institute and Evgeniya Tarasenko serves as director of the Scientific Research Institute of World Martial Arts Traditions Study and Criminalistic Research on Weapon Handling.

Maltsev considers that the doctrine of Pastament, as well as its tools, applied for task implementation, may offer new useful insights in a wide variety of human fields, including science, history, business, journalism, and the practice of law. As mentioned earlier, he is also a law graduate and a lawyer, and founded with Ukrainian colleague Olga Panchenko the Redut Law Firm. He also inspired the creation of the *Unsolved Crimes* online newspaper, originally devoted to murder cases and now quite active in investigating historical enigmas and fighting anti-cultists and other critics of the Applied Sciences Association.

“Membership” is a concept difficult to define for groups such as the Applied Sciences Association. Participating in the movement means attending seminars and courses, some of them online. Motivations for attending these courses mentioned in interviews realized by the undersigned in Ukraine in 2016 and 2018 include spiritual development, acquiring knowledge that would result in a better quality of life, mastering new skills, becoming more responsible, and even achieving financial independence.

In addition to seminars and courses, those who are part of the inner circle of the movement participate in field research trips Maltsev calls “scientific expeditions,” where he is helped by senior students to perform his archival researches, and at the same time teaches and demonstrates his theory of history through visits to architectural, archeological, and historical monuments. Documentary movies are normally produced summarizing the activities and results of each “expedition.” Between 2013 and mid-2018, “expeditionary forces” completed 28 such trips to Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Spain, Czech Republic, and the United States.

Seminars and courses both in Ukraine and internationally (inter alia, they have been held in Italy, United States, Spain, and Turkey), have been attended by several hundred and, if Web seminars are included, several thousand persons interested in various aspects of the association’s activities. The association is very

active on both YouTube and Facebook. The core “membership” is smaller, but seems to be increasing.

The “Pastament” Doctrine

For the realization of professional and other tasks, Maltsev and his followers teach a doctrine called in Russian “Pastament” (literally, in English: pedestal; the Association in its English-language publications prefers this transliteration to “Postament”). Maltsev claims that he learned this doctrine from Svetlov and that it is part of science rather than religion. “Pastament” is defined as the science about life, suggesting approaches to the solution of tasks that allow the person to be consistently effective (Maltsev 2015a; the reconstruction of the group’s teachings is also based on extensive interviews with Oleg Maltsev and some of its long-time students in 2016, 2017, and 2018). “Pastament” is a science of task implementation, describing the relations of each person with herself and the world, and the interaction between personal and divine structures. It is not directed to self-knowledge, but to self-improvement. It is not about morality, but efficiency: it does not classify the actions as good or bad, but as effective and ineffective.

Each person should perform a plurality of tasks in his or her life. Most lack the adequate skills to cope with multiple tasks, and become dependent on both critical acceleration and critical pressure. Feeling responsible for the tasks increases the pressure, and we are also induced to perform the tasks in increasingly short periods of time. Faced with pressure and acceleration, we need adequate tools, knowledge, and skills. “Pastament” is presented as the answer to this need through sets of tools, called “Rastrub” and “Sector.” “Rastrub” provides logic and orientation (applicable to both individuals and societies), and “Sector” allows to cope with the stress of pressure and acceleration. The Association presents as a more complex and high-level tool its “Full-Diapason Technology,” which includes three components: an informational power systems (IPS), which develops skills and controls critical acceleration; a global spiritual system (GPS), which increases individual power to resist pressure; and a hierarchical spiritual system (HSS), through which real problems are identified and solved and pseudo-problems, deriving from psychological and psychosomatic deviations, are identified and excluded. Maltsev explains that, by using these

three components, or blocks of technology, together, everybody can master the necessary skills, achieve results, and deal with acceleration and pressure.

The main object of this part of Maltsev's research and teachings are skills. Studying skills, however, means studying memory. Maltsev's theory of memory is largely based on the works of Soviet academicians Grigory Semenovich Popov and Alexei Samuilovich Yakovlev, who were active in the USSR from the 1930s and of whom Svetlov was a disciple. Popov and Yakovlev conducted their research for the Soviet military and under a curtain of secrecy, and few details of their biographies are known. However, Maltsev believes that they were instrumental to a great number of achievements of Soviet science.

Fate Analysis

Popov insisted on training speed. Natural hierarchies are created by the time each person needs to master a skill. One can learn how to drive in one month, while another would need a year. Popov believed these differences to be connected to our family and ancestors, and he developed the idea of "ancestral concepts." In this sense, Popov's theories were close to those of Léopold Szondi, of which Maltsev became aware in 2014 through psychologist Mikhail Vygdorichik. In 2017, Maltsev and Vygdorichik went to the Zurich-based Szondi Institute, visited Szondi's museum and grave, and produced a documentary about his life and theories.

Szondi was a Hungarian Jewish psychoanalyst who proposed a third way of deep psychology and memory studies, between Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961). Szondi, befriended and esteemed by both Freud and Jung, was never as famous as they were, although his "Szondi test" is still widely used. It is a driving motion deep psychology test, where pictures of people suffering from mental disorders and "deviants" are shown to the patients and their reactions noted. Szondi became well-known when he was requested by the Israeli judges to test the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann (1906–1962) with his test.

Freud focused on the individual unconscious, and Jung on the collective unconscious. Szondi privileged the family unconscious, claiming that the genes of our ancestors of many generations are also present in our unconscious. In a way,

our ancestors are there and determine many of our choices. However, when we realize this, we can also change our fate and not be totally determined by our ancestors' presence in our psychical field (Hughes 1992; see also the article by Raffaella Di Marzio in this issue of *The Journal of CESNUR*). For Maltsev, the practical importance of Szondi's Fate Analysis lies in the study of a methodology that may help to change human's fate.

It is difficult to disentangle, in Maltsev's approach to psychology, what comes respectively from Szondi and from Popov, and no doubt, he also includes original elements of his own. From Popov's system, Maltsev adopts an approach to memory in four stages: the extraction of an impulse, the extraction of a power component, the converter, and the result.

Maltsev teaches that, observed from outside, memory appears as consisting of blocks, distinguished into dynamic and static. There are four kinds of dynamic blocks: "theater" (responsible for each person's role), "circus" (for skills), "education" (for knowledge), and "religion" (for doctrine). In addition, there are four kinds of static blocks: "library" (quickly accessible for practical problem solving), "archive" (a storage system of all data accumulated during the course of our lives), "museum" (the operational system for working with phenomena), and "gallery" (the operational system for working with emotions).

We mostly manage our memory through a mechanism called *recensor*. The most important managing *recensor* is called RCG, Recensorship Group Core, and is able to work with all memory blocks. Maltsev teaches that the RCG is an impulse component responsible for the skills of each person. Based on RCG, Maltsev distinguishes between three human types, designated for the simplicity of work with the imaginative names of "bandit," "knight" (for men) or "lady" (for women), and "intriguer."

During one of his "expeditions," to Canary Islands, Maltsev concluded that the RCG defines the destiny of a person, the nature of her skills, and her personal way of achievement. At the emergence of an impulse, the memory system automatically addresses those skills it regards as authoritative. There are both automatic and learned skills, but the learned skills predominate over the automatic. Images of authorities are stored in special blocks in the impulse canal of RCG.

Martial Arts and the Study of Criminal Traditions

The second area where the Applied Sciences Association operates is related to martial arts and weapon handling. As mentioned earlier, Maltsev is particularly interested in studying the skills, and regards weaponry as a great field for the historical and technical analysis of methodologies and technologies. For this reason, he privileges certain weapons, whose mastery, he believes, is more psychological than a matter of force. Such are the Italian weapons popular in the Renaissance, including the Venetian stiletto, and the swords and other weapons utilized in traditional Spanish fencing.

Apart from Spanish fencing, however, Maltsev also studied, and includes in his courses, fencing traditions from Italy (Venetian, Palermitan, Neapolitan, and other styles), Germany, Russia, and other countries. He translated into Russian a number of classical treatises about Italian and Spanish fencing. He also researched boxing, and the legendary American boxing manager and coach Constatine “Cus” D’Amato (1908–1985), who launched the careers of champions such as Floyd Patterson (1935–2006) and Mike Tyson. According to Maltsev, who visited the regions of origin of the famous coach and explored local archives, D’Amato’s unique boxing style can be traced back to the same principles of the Spanish fencing called *destreza*, and the Italian Renaissance fencing and weapon handling set of techniques known as the Neapolitan style of Spanish fencing (Maltsev and Patti 2018).

Maltsev also concluded that an ancient and lost wisdom about weapon handling survives where it is rarely sought: in the criminal traditions of several countries, from South Africa (Maltsev 2017) to Russia (Maltsev 2016b) and Italy, from Spain to Mexico (Maltsev and Rister 2017), Argentina, and the Philippines. Countries such as South Africa and the Philippines colored European imports with their peculiar ethnic substratum, but the core of the local criminal traditions came from Europe through colonialism. While obviously not condoning their uses for criminal purposes, Maltsev carries on expeditions all over the world to reconstruct traditions of weapon handlings and combat in the criminal underworld.

European Mysticism

Techniques for handling some weapons, Maltsev concluded, were also developed by certain religious and chivalric orders in the Renaissance and before, and were connected to their secret spirituality. In his later writings, although he had abandoned organized religion, Szondi concluded that faith is necessary for integration and elaborated a theory of spirituality. Maltsev believes that the study of memory may offer the first part of the theoretical basis for this argument. Maltsev has also studied the historical heritage of various Catholic monastic and chivalric orders, and esoteric organizations, such as the Franciscans, the Knight Templars, the Rosicrucians, and the Order of the Knights of Our Lord Jesus Christ (also known as Military Order of Christ). He claims that, through his study of medieval and early modern mysticism, he was able to prove that Catholic religious orders, particularly the Franciscans, had already discovered and taught the main principles about memory and destiny that later Szondi and the pioneers of memory studies formulated in modern scientific terms.

The third area of Maltsev's research and teachings is, in fact, spirituality and mysticism (Maltsev 2016a). He believes that it is impossible to discuss the categories of "God" and "spirit" without considering their interrelation. It is frequent to consider God and the human spirit as entirely separated fields but Maltsev argues, this is not correct and leads to entirely subjective or irrelevant opinions. Before asking questions about God, Maltsev suggests that we ask whether something called "human spirit" exists.

The starting point for answering this question is a linguistic approach. Maltsev believes that Russian is one of the oldest languages in the world and has maintained a uniquely stable structure of expressions and sentences. In Russian, one typical expression refers to the "power of the spirit." From this, it is possible to conclude that the most important trait of the human spirit is its power component. In turn, the first comment we can make about God is that he is believed to be more powerful than humans. In fact, many religions teach that God can and will punish humans for their transgressions. Thus, in our life we experience both our human power and the presence of a power greater than ours, God.

The spirit should not to be confused with the human psyche. The spirit is responsible for power, the psyche for speed: how quickly something happens.

The stronger the person grows, the more manageable her life becomes, *inter alia* through the control of speed. In a way, those more powerful are also more static. Maltsev explains that a strong person does not need to “run,” as all come to her, while a weak one would need to move constantly, because she does not have the power component that would attract others.

Spirit consists of three components: human power, the power of God, and memory. As demonstrated by Jung, memory can also be the source of great power and strength. A good spirituality, Maltsev claims, should increase power and strength. A spirituality whose end result is to make us weaker is useless or worse.

The Three Gods

By asking the further question how we can distinguish in ourselves between the human power and the power of God, we realize, Maltsev teaches, that there are in fact three different Gods, or at least three different notions of God (Maltsev 2015b).

The first is an imaginary God, the individual representation human creates when they look “up,” to the sky. The second is the God in the memory. When we look “back,” rather than “up,” we realize that we were born, before we were taught how to conceptualize these notions, with a sense of justice, compassion, and truth. This is the “spark of God” in human memory. There is, however, also a third God, whom Maltsev calls the “Ship God.” In fact, this God is a system, but we see it through the face of the captain of the ship we call society. Those aboard a ship need the skills of the captain to survive, although the captain is also assisted by a cabin crew including various officers. This model is reproduced time and again, in the family and innumerable businesses and social organizations. It is also reproduced in religion, as the Ship God is the God closest to humans and the one they continuously encounter.

Each person’s perception includes the three Gods, but we are born only with the image of the second, the God of memory. We create the first one with our imagination, and the third is the result of life experiences and teachings by one’s parents or the society. Maltsev notes that triangles and notions of God centered on number three, such as the Trinity, are present in many religions.

Religions, however, normally claim that God exists independently of humans. Maltsev believes that God and humans are inseparable categories. That does not mean that Maltsev's system is atheistic. Rather, humans are part of God, but the part cannot exist without the whole, just as the whole cannot exist without its parts. The divine part of humans is, in fact, the spirit. Strengthening the spirit is important, because it means strengthening the person, and without cultivating the spirit one would lack strength, memory, and skills.

About survival after death, Maltsev maintains that we do not have conclusive evidence and can only speculate. Since we are born with memory and spirit, it would be logical to conclude that they survive. We can also speculate that how they survive is connected to the predominant conception of God each person had in life. Eternal reward or punishment is connected with the first God. The Ship God would call us to board another ship through reincarnation. Moreover, those centering their spirituality on the second God would be happy with the destiny of the hero, i.e. with surviving for a long time in the memory of others.

World Religions and the Mystery of the Jews

Maltsev uses often the word “mysticism,” but with a peculiar meaning. Originally, he argues, mysticism was intended as a system of knowledge about the world, God, and how to achieve power and authority during our lifetime. Mysticism was the science of the ruling classes. It evolved into modern science, while a lesser version, religion, was created for the common people. Building on the work of Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668–1744), Maltsev believes that, since at least the ancient Rome, there were two different forms of spirituality for different social groups. The God of the ruling class and the warriors and the God of the peasants were different, and catered to different needs.

Maltsev is interested in observing the world's religions, and he is often critical of organized religion. In Sicily, in his own Ukraine, and elsewhere, he observed that people often follow two different religions at the same time. They would go to church to be told about the afterlife, but they would also seek tarot readers and clairvoyants to seek help in the practical matters of this life, such as money and health. Christianity, Maltsev observes, is not of great help in solving practical problems. “Christianity, Maltsev explains in one of his documentary movies, does

not teach how to make money. That is why this double standard, double faith, exists all over the world whether we want it or not. Anywhere we go there will be a double standard, double religion” (Maltsev 2017a). This is not unique to Christianity. Maltsev also offers the example of traditional Tibet, where Bon, as the ancient and more secretive this-worldly tradition, continued to coexist with Buddhism as the other-worldly religion.

There is, however, one people that has only one religion, where the other-worldly and this-worldly approaches coexist, the Jews. Maltsev, who is himself Jewish, observes that there is an obvious and very visible distinction between Orthodox Jews, with their traditional garbs, and secular Jews such as himself or his parents. But he goes one step further, and argues that at one stage in European history Jews converted, or pretended to convert, to Christianity and transformed themselves into a large portion of the European knights and aristocrats. He finds traces of this process in the shields and the very names of certain European noble families, which, he claims, acquire their true meaning only when read as if they were written in Yiddish.

When a group of people implements some secret political actions, the Association believes, it is a good approach to create a brand new group of people, “labeling” them with the previous common name, thus distracting public attention from the actions of this “new” group. Simultaneously, the traditional or original group is left out of attention, remains in the shadows, and cater to its needs secretly. Tactically, it means to leave somebody behind, to distract the attention away from the main process. This is, Maltsev claims, what happened with the Jews. The Baal Shem Tov (1700–1760) “created” Orthodox Judaism, which was so colorful that it persuaded many that these were the only “real” Jews. In the meantime, however, the Jewish elite had metamorphosed into the class of the European knights and nobles. And this class after the bourgeois revolutions was not eliminated, nor did it disappear. It transformed once again, into the new class of capitalists and businesspersons (Maltsev 2017a).

Three Traditions: Athos, Rhine, and Venetian

From this observation, and from his study of European history, Maltsev concluded that there are three different traditions at work in human events: Athos, Rhine, and Venetian. Each tradition is a way of both thinking and acting.

The Athos system is centered on the first God, the Rhine on the third (the Ship God), and the Venetian on the second, although only the Venetian is aware of the existence of the three Gods. The Byzantine emperors, who used the first God to control their subjects, created the Athos tradition. Maltsev believes that this tradition today is most clearly at work in the Russian Orthodox Church, whose links with the Mount Athos monastic community in Greece are both old and deep. The Athos attitude is passive, requires mostly faith, and encourages devotees to tremble in fear of their God. By contrast, the Rhine tradition is active, as the Ship God requires concrete, practical actions, on the basis of which humans will be judged. Originally, the Rhine tradition developed within the class of knights, although later it extended to commoners. The great European revolutions were the results of the work of the Athos system, which as a result came to power, but not for a long time, as eventually its sworn enemy, the Rhine system, was always able to react and fight back.

Ultimately, however, both the Athos and the Rhine systems had been created by the Venetian tradition, the only one with a knowledge of how the three Gods logic is at work in human history. The Venetian tradition is the most powerful and merciless. It deals with the second God, the God of memory, and teaches humans how to be powerful, independent, and skillful. Its representatives always preferred to operate in the shadow. The Venetian system became almost completely invisible with the bourgeois revolutions, through a process extending from the 16th to the 18th century, but did not disappear. How it works can be reconstructed by studying certain underground traditions where it survives, including the Sicilian Mafia, not to be confused with the rival criminal tradition of nearby Calabria, known as Ndrangheta, which applies the Rhine rather than the Venetian system. In fact, Italy is a country of particular interest to Maltsev because he believes it keeps traces of all three systems: the Venetian in the north, Athos in the center, and Rhine in the south, while in other countries one system is clearly predominant.

A core observation of Maltsev is that human society is divided into a ten percent who has money and power, and a ninety percent of “trembling creatures,” who have no power whatsoever, and depend on the rich ten percent for their survival. It looks like there are “two factories” producing two very different types of human beings. And in fact these two factories do exist. The

Athos tradition produces the trembling creatures, and the Rhine tradition, behind which hides the Venetian one, produces those who “have rights” and dominate.

The common person who works as an employee, Maltsev argues, goes through “five states of being at work.” She sits and thinks about the fairness and unfairness. She prays that at the end the month or the week she will get her paycheck. She hopes that everything will be fine and she will be given a promotion. Some really try to earn money, but not everybody. And finally, “there are people who just wait for the end of the workday, because they think their paycheck will come automatically.” Common believers go through the same five stages. Few of them focus on practicalities such as making money. Most quarrel about the fairness of unfairness of God, and hope religion will solve their problems miraculously, either here or in the afterlife. This is the fruit of the Athos tradition, producing trembling creatures not very much capable of taking care of themselves (Maltsev 2017a).

Restoring the Religion Called Truth

The Applied Sciences Association claims to be able to lead students out of the flock of the trembling creatures and into the ranks of those who have rights, the Rhine tradition. It does not claim to be able to lead all students to the arcana of the Venetian tradition, which would be much more difficult (Maltsev 2017a).

For this transformation, universities are of limited utility. They mostly prepare good employees. Museums would not necessarily help to understand ancient history either, as Maltsev believes they are full of false artifacts produced in the 19th and 20th centuries to support faulty theories. If religion, the academia and even museums can lie, “the castles and temples do not lie” and “criminal tradition does not lie.” “The criminal world is like a mirror of our society. It is better to say that this is the other side of the mirror” (Maltsev 2017b). Maltsev believes this to be represented in the seal of the Knight Templars, which is also reproduced in palaces and churches of cities once belonging to the Venetian Republic, including Padua, featuring two horsemen riding the same horse: “one is a knight and the other is a criminal,” with the criminal being the Jungian shadow of the knight (Maltsev 2017b).

The knights' own religion was simply called Truth (*Pravda* in Russian). It was a religion without places of worship and without congregations. Maltsev claims that his discoveries and teachings led him to restore the religion of the knights, based on both the Rhine and the Venetian tradition. Truth is also “the game that rules the world” (Maltsev 2016a). In its book *Truth*, Maltsev lists different historical characters who testified that they were told that there is a “great game” in which humans participated, willingly or unwillingly, and that it is connected with a secret religion at least six hundred years old.

They included, among others, French writer Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, better known as Madame de Sévigné (1626–1696), Russian poet Mikhail Muraviov (1757–1807), French state executioner Charles-Henri Sanson (1799–1861), French duelist Domenico Angelo (1716–1802), and Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881). The latter, Maltsev argues, hinted in his novels at the distinction between those who do not realize they are involved in the game and those who play it consciously, and in fact organize it. The literary traces of the game, once decrypted, also show that, for the conscious players, trying to leave the game may be extremely dangerous (Maltsev 2016a, 1–14).

One character Maltsev insists on in this book is French occult master Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1865–1916). He identified Kabbalah as the root of all mathematics and natural sciences, and offered a glimpse of the Truth in assuming that human spiritual development goes through three stages: rationalism, freeing ourselves from self-love, and realizing that we are part of God (Maltsev 2016a, 16–20; on Papus, see André et Beaufils 1995).

Minor Lodge and Grand Lodge

In order to rise from trembling creatures to knights, the Association calls for an understanding of the notions of Minor Lodge and Grand Lodge. These notions may be easily misunderstood. In Maltsev's view, they are in fact “a universal measuring device.” It is something that shows a vertical hierarchy, and is found in the structures of any organization or system, such as a government, a family, a knightly order (Maltsev 2017b). A family is in itself a Minor Lodge, although in the Rhine tradition one has to leave the family to become a knight. “Every new born person ends up in the small lodge, which is your family. What is the difference between that lodge and the business, or bank, or university? The

differences are in the management, knowledge, and abilities. The structure and the rules of the game are all the same” (Maltsev 2017b).

Some psychological concepts derived from Szondi, Popov, and contemporary Israeli-American psychologist Daniel Kahneman (Maltsev 2018a), serve as necessary preambles to approach the notions of Minor Lodge and Grand Lodge. The first concept is replication: we know one logical structure and use this knowledge to understand another logical structure. Based on our understanding of life in the family, we can understand life in the mother’s womb and life in society. This is comparatively easy, as these are three “wombs” with similarities to each other—and Maltsev claims that, interestingly, the etymology of the word “lodge” is also connected with “womb” or “shelter.”

However, there are other more complicated forms of replication. Technology often evolves because we become able to replicate features of human experience. This happened in the creation of computers, as observed by German psychologist Gerd Gigerenzer, a critic of Kahneman whom Maltsev follows only as far as his theory of the evolution of knowledge is concerned. There is also a form of replication that goes well beyond similarity: we can replicate the logical structure of how cars work, and use it to describe how a certain person makes “car-like” moves throughout his or her life.

The second relevant concept, connected with the first, is “counter-projection.” We project our knowledge of one system into another, but we can also make bold and more or less arbitrary assumptions. These are the counter-projections. “You remind me of my first love so much” is an example of counter-projection. The similarity may or may not be real, but the counter-projection would produce important individual and social effects at any rate.

When using replication and counter-projection, we alternate or switch between four different psychological modes: (1) “on my own,” where we try to be ourselves, without masks; (2) “good boy;” (3) “bad boy;” and (4) “judge” (what some call “conscience” but Maltsev prefers to define as “the master of your sense of conscience”: Maltsev 2018a). The person remains the same, but in which mode she is operating is always relevant.

Finally, Maltsev goes back to the classical psychological distinction between automatic skills (which Szondi connected to the ancestral unconscious) and acquired skills. The latter require an authority figure (whom sometimes you can

meet only through a book), a training program, and somebody prepared to learn. The learning process, or the acquisition of skills, is presented in European Mysticism through two archetypal figures, St. George, known in Eastern Christianity as St. George the Victorious, and St. Michael the Archangel. St. George is the model of a journey from the bottom up. Erasmo da Narni, the Italian condottiere known as the Gattamelata (1370–1443), is an example of the St. George way. Born in a poor family, he became a mighty military leader and entered the aristocracy. The St. Michael way goes from the top down, and refers to those who were already born in positions of power and aristocracy.

Interested in fencing as usual, Maltsev mentions Luis Pacheco de Narváez (1570–1640), the great Spanish writer on the art of fencing, as an example of somebody who undertook both the St. George and the St. Michael journeys. Narváez in fact fell from the highest ranks of society to the bottom, but then his mentor, Jerónimo Sánchez de Carranza (1539?–1608?), brought him back to the top. It was Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) who observed that military art can turn a commoner into a king, and a king into a commoner, and the quote returns often in Maltsev's lectures (Maltsev 2018a).

The first order of knights, Maltsev states, was developed in Venice, but its structure was replicated everywhere. In addition, we can find the same structure today in business, in the political life, the military, banks, and criminal organizations. The traditional knightly structure of the Minor Lodge featured four levels or degrees: sentinel, assignee, knight of the bronze (or silver) keys, and knight of the golden keys. Similarly, for example, in the Sicilian Mafia we find the levels of soldier, “caporegime,” underboss, and boss (Maltsev 2016a, 103). In a bank, we would find employees, mid-level managers, directors, and board members (Maltsev 2016a, 99).

The concepts illustrated before are useful for understanding what this Minor Lodge exactly is. The Minor Lodge is at the level of counter-projections of individuality, and its lord, the Lord of the Golden Keys, is St. George. The mode we use to approach the Minor Lodge is the bad boy: we fight, we struggle, we climb, and we try to acquire skills. The “on my own” mode is the one allowing us to own our skills and to connect the Minor Lodge (skills) with the Grand Lodge (knowledge) (Maltsev 2018a). The Minor Lodge “exists” in the sense that it is a model or template replicated in innumerable visible structures, from the family to the commercial company.

Rising from one level to another in the Minor Lodge requires an “initiation,” which goes through the four steps of act, confession, trial, and award. Maltsev illustrates these stages through the example of the Russian novelized autobiography *Aquarium*, authored by former Soviet agent Victor Suvorov. Here, Suvorov demonstrates his military skills (act) and introduces himself to General Ivan Kravsov (1896–1964) in a straightforward way (confession). Kravsov then entrusts him with difficult tasks (trial), where he proves his value and is rewarded by being accepted into an elite military academy (award) (Maltsev 2016a, 74; see Suvorov 1985).

In the traditional orders of knights, the degrees were connected with weapon handling. One started with minor tasks such as cleaning the house or serving the more senior knights. In the second degree, he was allowed to “sharpen the swords,” “put the saddles on the horses, to polish the blades, to work with the armory.” At the same time,

he was given a wooden stick in his hands. So the first weapon that he learns to use is a stick, not a knife or anything like that. Actual stick. And why is it so? Because everything starts with the stick. Knife against the stick, stick with the spear, knife against the stick, stick against the knife, then working with two spears. But in reality we are talking about the Venetian *bastone* (Maltsev 2017b).

The third degree is “the level of the silver keys [where] one is allowed to carry the weapons. He is not yet a knight but he is a very skillful fighter.” Here, “the most important thing is that a person has to stop judging himself” because she would still make mistakes. She should accept to be evaluated by mentors and elders. By allowing this, she would advance to the fourth degree. Becoming a knight (or a lady, for the women) crowns the path of the Minor Lodge, and opens the one of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge’s is a much more exclusive experience, and one most religions ignore, including Christianity. Like the Minor Lodge, it is a “logical model.” Unlike the Minor Lodge, it is invisible (Maltsev 2018a). It includes six degrees: treasurer, knight of the Vault of Heaven, knight of the Rosy Cross, knight of Cloak and Dagger, Master of Hearts, and Worshipful Master of the Right Lodge (Maltsev 2016a, 104). Through these degrees, the knight becomes a king. The king level corresponds to the second God, the memory God, which is also the creator of the physical universe. The knowledge of the king also corresponds to the Venetian system.

Each of these five levels corresponds to a degree of proximity in the distance from God. Nevertheless, what we are talking about is a king. So this God, this idol is someone who has the ability to control other people like God does. A person that has reached the level of God, and the difference between him and God is only in strength, and everything else such as characteristics and qualities are just like God has (Maltsev 2017b).

We may know something about the Grand Lodge through an appropriate interpretation of certain books of the Bible and of the systems of degree in Freemasonry. Its “membership” is limited, and degrees are connected to “request objects,” perhaps the most arcane part of Maltsev’s “discoveries” and teachings.

Request Objects

Maltsev distinguishes between “implementation objects” and “request objects.” Both these “objects” are persons. An implementation object is a person who is *ordered* to do something. A request object is a person who is *asked* to do something. Implementation objects are forced and commanded, while request objects are politely requested. Each person can be alternatively in the position of implementation object and request object. The Athos tradition teaches humans to be commanded and to blindly “submit to the will of God,” i.e. to act as implementation objects. The Rhine tradition is different, as it teaches how to live effectively, die as a “decent hero,” ascend to the Valhalla, and meet other heroes in the afterlife (Maltsev 2018b, which is summarized in this paragraph).

The Rhine concept of the afterlife is connected with 64 request objects who play a particular role. They are figures located in the Grand Lodge, and are part of the ancestral component of our memory structure. In ancient societies, when someone respected as a leader died, his relatives and companions would pray to him. As other similar leaders also died, Maltsev observes, a pantheon was formed. It could be a pantheon for the family, the kin, the clan, the tribe, deposited in the ancestral unconscious. Nevertheless, some were remembered for their deeds and leadership well beyond the circle of their clan and tribe, and came to occupy a deeper position in the collective layer of human memory blocks. When a war occurred, the defeated substituted the pantheon of the winners to their own.

This process, Maltsev claims, created a matrix called “Drafa,” which is common to all religions and precede their theological differences. Hinduism is

obviously different from Christianity, but the matrix is the same. While Hinduism has a pantheon of gods, Christianity has Jesus, the Virgin, and the Saints. We can even find parallels between some Christian saints and their counterparts in the pantheons of the Hindus or the early European pagans. This, Maltsev argues, is not surprising, because the same ancestral concept and the same memory blocks are at work everywhere. Only, at a certain stage, at the time of Charlemagne (742–814), who played the role of “the boundary between these different models,” the simple pantheon structure became the model of the Minor and Grand Lodge, and “the Pantheon of Gods (...) was substituted by European Mysticism” (Maltsev 2018a).

Maltsev is sure that, in the ancestral concept memory layer, there are constantly 64 figures, “no less and no more.” That in some religions there may be 500 gods does not really matter. We are able to interact only with 64. These figures in the ancestral part of memory are request objects. We can ask something from them, and comply with their instructions placing ourselves in the position of implementation objects. In the modern world, after the bourgeois revolutions, contact with these figures in the ancestral unconscious has somewhat been lost. More exactly, they have been secularized and replaced by a new Drafa, a corporate hierarchy where the general director becomes the request object—and beyond him the shareholders and the founders of the company.

In general, two Drafas cannot coexist, and the corporate Drafa has largely replaced the religious one. However, as part of Maltsev’s restoration of the spirituality known as Truth, we can learn the secret names and keys to interact with the 64 request objects in the ancestral unconscious. These request objects are invisible and do not understand human language. However, we can derive significant knowledge about them, learn about access mechanisms to the request objects, and even find their names, by carefully analyzing the books of the Bible’s Ancient Testament.

For example, as mentioned earlier, one of the degrees of the Grand Lodge is Master of Hearts. 24 (out of the total 64) request objects correspond to this degree. In turn, there is a correspondence between these 24 request objects and the Biblical books attributed to King Solomon, eight for each book in the series including the *Book of Wisdom*, the *Proverbs*, and the *Song of Solomon*. And each request object has its own name encrypted in the Old Testament (Maltsev 2016a, 41 and 44).

In order to access the request objects in the Grand Lodge, Maltsev warns, there are three main obstacles to overcome, represented by our own persuasions, the inability to formulate our goals clearly, and the inability to understand “why” we perform certain spiritual practices. However, these obstacles can be overcome and, if we are aware of the Drafa as the original matrix and of how the ancestral memory functions, we would even become able to change our ancestral concept, or create a new or artificial one, on the basis of the principle of counter-projection. Here, the theory of the request objects rejoins Fate Analysis and Popov’s comments on memory. By controlling our ancestral concept, we can change and determine our fate.

Conclusion

One can ask in what category the teachings of the Applied Sciences Association should be classified. From the emic point of view of the Association, these teachings belong to science and derive from the scientific discoveries of Dr Maltsev. At the opposite extreme, for Russian and Ukrainian anti-cultists they are “pseudo-religious” teachings or “heterodox” doctrines (from the point of view of the mainline Orthodox Churches), typical of “cults.”

The etic gaze of the scholars of new religious movements differs from both these approaches. Scholars would argue that notions such as “science,” “spirituality,” “mysticism,” “esotericism,” and of course “cult,” are socially constructed and politically negotiated. Each movement or group tries to persuade others, and society in general, that its self-classification and the way it uses certain term is “correct” and should be accepted. What normally eludes the emic approach, however, is that there is no “true” or “false” definition of these terms. One person’s “science” is another person’s “pseudo-science.” Definitions are *tools*, used to achieve certain cognitive or practical results.

The aim of anti-cultists is to denounce the Applied Sciences Association as dangerous, without doing the homework of studying its (admittedly complicated) doctrines and practices. The Association tries to capitalize on the reputation of “science,” which is still high in post-Soviet countries, while in certain parts of the West whatever is presented as “science” is regarded with some suspicion. The etic approach of scholars of new religious movements, whose attention on the Association was paradoxically attracted by anti-cultists, respectfully notes that

Maltsev does not recognize itself in the category of “esotericism,” while he would accept that at least part of what it teaches is “mysticism.” However, the way in which Maltsev uses the word “mysticism” is not the one commonly accepted by scholars of religion in the 21st century. Consequently, they are left with a difficult choice between “esotericism,” which has the disadvantage of not including the practical matters of “life task implementations” that are important for Maltsev, and a generic “spirituality.” The movement led by Maltsev is somewhat unique. Perhaps, labels are not important. The journey is more important than the narrative, and scholars should first try to reconstruct and describe Maltsev’s teachings and how they interact with the lives and choices of his students, leaving to further studies the task to categorize them.

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