

**Милан Томашевић, Космологика. Контекстуализација популарне космологијел**

*ЕИ САНУ. Београд, 2020. 291. ISBN 978-86-7587-105-7*

**[Milan Tomašević, Kosmologic: The Contextualisation of Popular Cosmology. EI SASA. Belgrade. 2020. 291 pp., ISBN 978-86-7587-105-7]**

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Dr. Milan Tomašević's monograph *Cosmologies: The Contextualisation of Popular Cosmology* was published by the Institute of Ethnography SASA in 2020. The book presents the instrumentalisation of scientific theories by considering the use of the modern cosmological narrative in the context of the culture wars taking place in Europe and the United States as an example.

*Cosmologies* consists of ten chapters: 'Introduction', 'Cosmology, Anthropology and Folklore', 'The Cosmogonic Myths and Cosmological Representations of Ancient Cultures', 'Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, Islam and the Middle Ages', 'Modern Science', 'The Formation of Contemporary Relativistic Cosmology', 'The Inflationary Cosmological Model', 'Culture Wars, Religion and Cosmology, Anthropoc Principle and Intelligent Design', with final considerations in the chapter 'And Finally'.

In the 'Introduction', the author presents the basic hypothesis that the popular cosmological narrative can be viewed as a modern myth and a way to understand the image of the world created by modern science. In the opening section, a clear strategy is established to view cosmology as a human product that can be analysed like any other text or narrative.

In the first chapter, 'Cosmology, Anthropology and Folklore', the author explains the meaning of the concepts he uses: a definition of cosmology is offered and its multidimensionality is underlined. The value of cosmogonic myths and cosmological theories in the creation of the worldviews of different communities is especially emphasised, and the relationship between cosmology, mythology and folklore is presented as an important factor in the process of shaping the concepts of reality. Finally, popular cosmology is defined as an accessible way of presenting complex theoretical models.

The second chapter, 'The Cosmogonic Myths and Cosmological Representations of Ancient Cultures', is devoted to a review of the development of the understanding

of the shape of the Earth and the nature of the universe. The chapter begins with a presentation of archaeological sites whose elements can be linked to astronomical knowledge. The cosmogonic ideas of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and India are further considered, as are the cosmotheogony of ancient Greece and Middle Eastern nomads' conception of the world from the first millennium BCE. The chapter presents the long-standing use of cosmological narratives in designing and establishing different value systems and worldviews that require special authority and 'holiness'.

The third chapter, 'Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, Islam and the Middle Ages', is dedicated to the development of representations of the world and the universe from the pre-Socratic philosophers through the Aristotelian imagery of the cosmos to the early Christian understanding of the universe, Islam's role in astronomy and the medieval vision of the universe. The author describes the two dominant models of the solar system that were developed at the end of the first millennium BCE and shows their influence on the Abrahamic religions which indirectly affected the modern world's representations of the universe.

The fourth chapter, 'Modern Science', describes the transformation and development of cosmology after the Copernican revolution, and the establishment of a modern scientific representation of the Earth's position in space, as well as general notions about the size of the universe. The ideas of Copernicus, Bruno, Kepler, Galileo, Newton and Kant are briefly presented. A review of the modern scientific knowledge of the universe has been established up to the formation of contemporary cosmology.

The fifth chapter, 'The Formation of Contemporary Relativistic Cosmology', starts from Einstein's general theory of relativity and presents the formation of what would become the Big Bang theory, highlighting the contribution of alternative theoretical concepts and the importance of quantum physics for cosmogony. The author describes the history of modern cosmology and the key ideas of its genealogy, placing special emphasis on the contribution of theorists such as de Sitter, Friedman, Lemaître and Gamow, who were among the first generation of scientists involved in devising scenarios for the origin and development of the cosmos.

The sixth chapter, 'The Inflationary Cosmological Model', explores the development of ideas that play a key role in the most modern cosmology. From inflation and the rapid expansion of the universe to string, landscape and multiverse theories, the ideas of Guth, Linde, Vilenkin, Witten, Susskind and other theorists who participate in creating the modern image of the universe are presented. The conception of the appearance of the universe *ex nihilo* – i.e. the possibility that it arose without a pre-existing cause – is explored.

The seventh chapter, 'Culture Wars, Religion and Cosmology, Anthropic Principle and Intelligent Design', is dedicated to the cultural context in which modern cosmology plays an increasingly important role. The policy of a number of creationist movements in their efforts to introduce the concept of intelligent design into the cur-

ricula of public schools in the United States is presented; there is also an analysis of how religious institutions instrumentalise science, especially highlighting the role of several Popes who provided religious interpretations of the Big Bang theory during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Special attention is paid to the anthropic principle as an expression of the philosophical thinking of cosmology. The chapter looks back at the debate led by Quentin Smith and William Lane Craig about the possibility of the spontaneous emergence of the universe ex nihilo. At the end of the chapter, the focus turns to the teleological dimension of the relationship between the ideas of intelligent design and the anthropological principle as expressions of the need for science and religion to provide the modern world with answers to questions of meaning, purpose and the value of life in space.

And finally, the chapter ‘And Finally’ refers to further research and the possibilities of analysing cosmology in the context of contemporary culture. The author concludes that the popular cosmological narrative really can be viewed as a modern myth because it testifies to the ‘holy age’ of the beginning of time and space, and contains a whole series of mythological elements that have their own functions within the story.

Milan Tomašević’s monograph *Cosmologies* contextualises the role of cosmology and science in general within the framework of the modern worldview that, at least nominally, dominates the secular West. By anthropological observation of a scientific explanation or a set of theories, the author, in an interesting and very illustrative way, contributes to a better understanding of the role of science in contemporary cultural context and helps to clarify the philosophical and religious dimensions of cosmology.

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