

Title: "Nature as a Death- bearing Force": Nikolai Fedorov's Ecological Thinking  
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Abstract:

Nikolai Fedorov is best known for his radical proposal to forsake procreation and instead to resurrect humankind's ancestors. What often remains undiscussed is the fact that the agricultural crisis and famine of 1891 led to his radical posthumanist ideas. In *Philosophy of the Common Task*, Fedorov situates the need for man to control the forces of nature in the context of Russia's recent devastating drought. He calls upon humankind to realize the purpose of its God-given consciousness, namely, "to study the force that produces crop failures and lethal diseases; that is, to study nature as a death-bearing force and to regard this study as a sacred duty." For Fedorov, the purpose of such study was to produce real-world interventions: he believed that humanity must regulate meteorological processes, and not to do so would be a dereliction of our messianic duty. Fedorov's call to impose rational direction on the blind forces of nature is an alarming proposal to alter the earth's climate for the benefit solely of humankind.

The goal of this paper is to investigate Fedorov's understanding of "nature as a death-bearing force" that must be mastered, and to explicate this ecological aspect of his philosophy as a specifically modernist proposal. Scholars of Russian modernism (e.g., Matich and Masing-Delic) have convincingly shown the widespread influence of Fedorov's ideas about transforming the human on Symbolism and the Avant-Garde. This paper aims to elucidate Fedorov's ecological thinking in order to lay the foundation for future studies of his influence on modernist writers.