Memory and wholeness
in the work of
Andrei Platonov, Valentin Rasputin and Andrei Tarkovskii

Chiara Mayer-Rieckh

School of Slavonic and East European Studies
University College London

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Declaration

I, Chiara Mayer-Rieckh, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis explores how wholeness (*tselostnost'* or *tsel'nost'*), a central theme and impulse of Russian nineteenth-century philosophy, is expressed in the work of three different twentieth-century Russian artists. *Tselostnost'* is understood here as Russian philosophy's enduring preoccupation with the essential, original wholeness of the universe, an ideal state from which the human world has fallen and which man seeks to regain. Particular attention is paid to the way in which this idea was taken up and developed by a range of nineteenth-century Russian thinkers: Petr Chaadaev, Aleksei Khomiakov, Ivan Kireevskii, Nikolai Fedorov, Vladimir Solov'ev and Fedor Dostoevskii. In their works, the vision of the universe as an ideal *tselostnost'* is connected with a number of key concepts from Russian philosophy, among which are: *tsel'noe znanie*, *sobornost'*, and *vseedinstvo*.

The main body of the thesis bases its analysis on selected writings by Andrei Platonov (1899-1951) and Valentin Rasputin (1937-), and on the cinematic oeuvre of Andrei Tarkovskii (1932-1986). It explores how in the work of all three artists, *tselostnost'* is repeatedly linked with the theme of memory, framing the worldviews they express and influencing their aesthetic. The work of these three men, crossing two artistic media and realised with different levels of complexity, also spans a historical period which stretches from the 1920s to the present. The choice of these three very different artists to explore these ideas is integral to the wider aim of this study, which is to investigate the pervasiveness and longevity of the ideal of the whole in Russian culture, as well as the consistency with which it has been expressed. In addition, the examination of the three artists' work is a contribution to the wider critical discussion about the close links between the Russian philosophical and literary traditions.

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Introduction

'Russkaia literatura filosofichna,' wrote the émigré philosopher Boris Vysheslavtsev, 'v russkom romane, v russkoi poezii postavleny vse osnovnye problemy russkoi dushi.'[1] The peculiarly philosophical nature of Russian literature has, since the nineteenth century, been widely asserted both in literary criticism and in histories of Russian thought. In his recent study, *Slovo i molchanie: Metafizika russkoi literatury*, Mikhail Epshtein posits this preoccupation with philosophical ideas as the great 'dolgaia mysl'' of the Russian literary tradition, one which has been passed down through generations of writers from Pushkin to the present day. Epshtein also draws attention to the view of the pre-revolutionary critic A.S. Volzhskii in 1906: '"Russkaia khudozhestvennaia literatura - vot istinnaia russkaia filosofiia, samobytnaia, blestiashchaia filosofiia v kraskakh slova"'.[2] This conception of Russian literature as actually constituting a particularly Russian mode of philosophising informs most of the major histories of Russian thought. Vysheslavtsev begins his *Vechnoe v russkoi filosofii* (1955) with two chapters on the conceptions of freedom to be found in Pushkin's poetry. Both Vasilii Zen'kovskii and Andrzej Walicki devote chapters of their histories of Russian philosophy to Fedor Dostoevskii and Lev Tolstoi.[3] In Zen'kovskii's assessment 'V istorii russkoi filosofii L.N. Tolstoi zanimaet (kak i Dostoevskii) osoboe mesto.' If Tolstoi was both a great writer and a profound, though one-sided, thinker, Dostoevskii 'prinadlezhit stol'ko zhe literature, skol'ko i filosofii'.[4] Nikolai Losskii's *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* makes extensive references to Dostoevskii and Tolstoi and also includes a chapter on the symbolist poets as philosophers: Andrei

[1] B.P. Vysheslavtsev, *Vechnoe v russkoi filosofii*, New York, 1955.
[2] M.N. Epshtein, *Slovo i molchanie: Metafizika russkoi literaturoi*, Moscow, 2006, pp. 9-10.
[3] V.V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1991. Each volume of this edition consists of two books, which will be referred to as follows: I-1 and I-2; II-1 and II-2. Zen'kovskii's discussion of Tolstoi and Dostoevskii is to be found in I-2, pp.184-244. Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka, Oxford, 1980, pp. 309-48.
[4] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-2, p. 194 and p. 220.

Belyi, Viacheslav Ivanov, N.M. Minskii, D.S. Merezhkovskii and V.V. Rozanov.[5]

In *Fiction's Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy*, Edith Clowes offers a persuasive and insightful account of the origins of the historical overlap between literary and philosophical traditions in Russia.[6] She sees as central the fact that the development of Russian philosophy was taking place in parallel with the explosion in Russian literary culture from the 1820s. As Clowes argues, a resistance to the European tradition of systematic, abstract philosophy led Russian thinkers to seek a mode of philosophizing which would be both uniquely Russian and capable of coming close to some eternal truth in a way which they felt that Western abstract philosophy could not.[7] In Clowes' interpretation, this search was part of a wider discussion in Russian culture on what she terms the relative 'truth value' of different and competing discourses: philosophy, religion, literature and the natural sciences.[8] Philosophy in Russia at this time was a 'discourse among discourses', an 'integral, creative part of Russian writing culture in general'.[9] This interpretation provides a particularly interesting and fruitful way of thinking about the porous boundaries between literary and philosophical traditions in Russia.

In the debate about how to find a new, Russian and better way of investigating 'truth', philosophising in nineteenth-century Russia took place across a range of discourses and employed a variety of linguistic styles. From the later works of Petr Chaadaev and the writings of Aleksei Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii, Russian religious thinking became an enduring source of inspiration for a Russian speculative philosophy. This stream of philosophical thought, which is frequently referred to as 'Russian religious philosophy',

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[5] N.O. Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 427-38.
[6] Edith W. Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy*, London, 2004.
[7] This is the spirit behind Ivan Kireevskii's article 'O neobkhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novykh nachal dlia russkoi filosofii' (1856), discussed below in Chapter One. I.V. Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 2 vols, Farnborough, 1970, i, pp. 223-64.
[8] Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat*, p. 32.
[9] Ibid., p. 42 and p. 7.

should be distinguished from the more well-known tradition of radical political thought in nineteenth-century Russia associated with Aleksandr Gertsen, Nikolai Chernyshevskii and Mikhail Bakunin among others.[10] For Clowes, it was Vissarion Belinskii's assertion of the superior 'truth value' of literature over traditional philosophical tracts which secured philosophy its place in Russian poetry and fiction.[11] One could also argue that the opposite is true: it is this conception of the greater truthfulness of poetic language that influenced the important role of the poetic mode of expression in Russian philosophy, which is as 'literary' as Russian literature is 'philosophical'. Dostoevskii and Solov'ev are perhaps the best examples of the way in which this led to an intermeshing of the philosophical and literary discourses. The writings of both men display an interest in experimenting with genre and language in the attempt to approximate an ultimate 'truth'. In the case of Dostoevskii, both *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma* (1860) and *Zapiski iz podpol'ia* (1864) offer a consideration of the relative merits of 'objective' scientific discourse and 'subjective' personal narrative.[12] Solov'ev's entire philosophical system of *vseedinstvo* is an attempt to provide a final answer to the issue of discourse, language and truth. In order to reach the absolute, divine Word, Solov'ev envisaged a synthesis of all the different human cognitive languages - of philosophy, science, religion and literature. Moreover, as Clowes notes, his concern with the truthfulness of language is reflected in his use of different genres to express philosophical ideas. Both in his essay 'Smysl liubvi' (1892-94) and in his mystical poetry, he uses poetic language to discuss philosophical ideas.[13] On another front, the writings of Nikolai Fedorov integrate religious discourse with scientific theories.

If one looks across the range of critical studies which are focused on the philosophical aspect of Russian fiction and poetry, two main tendencies can be identified. The first of these interprets the texts in question as actually

[10] See Clowes' discussion of the historical emphasis on radical political thought in Western histories of Russian philosophy, ibid., pp. 8-9.
[11] Ibid., p. 39.
[12] Ibid., p. 90.
[13] Ibid., p. 104.

constituting a kind of philosophy, echoing Volzhskii's idea.[14] The second tendency is to understand the *filosofichnost'* of the literary texts in terms of their expression of certain concepts from Russian or indeed European philosophy.[15] The approach adopted in this thesis belongs to this second tendency. The aim of this study is to explore how wholeness (*tselostnost'* or *tsel'nost'*), a central theme and impulse of Russian nineteenth-century philosophy, is expressed in the work of three different twentieth-century Russian artists. The following analysis is based on selected writings by Andrei Platonov (1899-1951) and Valentin Rasputin (1937-), and on the cinematic oeuvre of Andrei Tarkovskii (1932-1986). It explores how in the work of all three artists, *tselostnost'* is repeatedly linked with the theme of memory, framing the worldviews they express and influencing their aesthetic. For all three twentieth-century artists, memory becomes a way of seeking wholeness in a world which is perceived as fragmented and divided. This is a phenomenon which must be considered against the background of the very different historical and cultural contexts of the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries in Russia which this thesis spans.

With the exception of the theories of Nikolai Fedorov, memory does not figure as a theme in the work of the nineteenth-century Russian philosophers discussed in this thesis. However, the broader concept of historical and cultural memory acts as an important context for the understanding of their work and of their development of *tselostnost'* as an idea. As will be seen, their theories were inspired by a shared vision of an ideal, pre-Petrine and authentically 'Russian' past. This essentially romantic view of the past, springing from a rejection of Western modernity, contrasts with and was a reaction to the pragmatic, 'Westerniser' view which found its voice in the radical political thought of the

[14] See, for example: James P. Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, London, 2002. This same approach characterises Igor' Evlampiev's approach to Andrei Tarkovskii's films. Igor' Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, St Petersburg, 2001.
[15] See, for example: Thomas Seifrid, *Andrei Platonov: Uncertainties of Spirit*, Cambridge, 1992.

time. These thinkers envisaged a modern Russia which would cast off its feudal past and join the 'civilised' world.[16]

In his seminal essay on the binary character of Russian culture, Iurii Lotman argues that each new period in Russian history has been understood traditionally as a 'radikal'noe ottalkivanie ot predydushchego etapa', yet 'Dvukhstupenchataia struktura kul'tury okazalas' znachitel'no ustoichivee, chem liubye konkretnye ee realizatsii.'[17] Lotman's discussion is based specifically on Russian cultural history 'do kontsa XVIII veka', but its modelling of the complexities of the dynamic of historical change is one which can be usefully applied to the 1917 Revolution as a turning point in Russian twentieth-century history.[18] Whatever arguments may be advanced for the existence of underlying continuities in Russia's literary and philosophical traditions between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is clear that the Revolution represented a definitive break in notions of memory. In effect, the entire Soviet project was founded on a 'radikal'noe ottalkivanie' of cultural and social memory. The new Soviet polity, Soviet society and culture defined themselves through a categorical negation of the pre-Revolutionary past. This, moreover, is a dynamic which can be seen to characterise the transitions between the different periods which constitute the Soviet era as a whole, although the complexion and severity of this negation changed over time. The Stalinist period is without doubt the starkest example of this phenomenon. Stalin consolidated his position as Soviet leader by destroying traces of the immediate past, which he achieved by eliminating large parts of the political and artistic elite of the early Soviet period, along with enormous numbers of

[16] For a detailed discussion of the Slavophile and Westerniser positions in nineteenth-century Russia, see the chapter 'Slavophiles and Westernizers' in Andrei Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusieska, Oxford, 1975, pp. 394-455.

[17] Iu.M. Lotman, 'Rol' dual'nykh modelei v dinamike russkoi kul'tury do kontsa XVIII veka', in Iu.M. Lotman, *Istoriia i tipologiia russkoi kul'tury*, St Petersburg, 2002, pp. 88-116 (p. 90 and p. 111).

[18] Given the problems associated with expressing an unorthodox view of the Revolution at the time when Lotman was writing, it is quite possible that he did indeed see the radical historical turning point of the Revolution in precisely this light.

ordinary citizens.[19] Moreover, those whom Stalin sent to their death were not simply physically obliterated, but their memory was wiped out and their names written out of official history books. In the case of prominent political figures like Ezhov, their images were even carefully erased from official photographs.[20] In less extreme terms, however, the transitions from Stalinism to the Khrushchev era, as well as from the Khrushchev era to the 'developed socialism' of Brezhnev and his two short-lived successors, and then finally from them to Gorbachev and perestroika – all of these transitions were marked by an attempt to negate the era which preceded them. The history of the text of Andrei Platonov's *Dzhan* (1935), discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, provides just one example of the way in which this destruction of collective memory from above resonated across Soviet culture. In the post-Stalinist period, Platonov's references to Stalin were removed and replaced by various other formulae.[21]

In this connection, it is important to emphasise that the different periods of Soviet history were marked by attempts to wipe out, but also to manipulate memory. The inclusion under Stalin, for example, of certain pre-Revolutionary writers, historical figures or historical events in the canon of official Soviet history can thus be understood less as a retreat from the severity of earlier ideological positions vis-à-vis the past, than as a pragmatic reinterpretation of Soviet 'pre-history' to legitimise the more mature Soviet state.[22] To return to Lotman's theory, this selective appropriation of elements of cultural memory

[19] For a discussion of Stalin's Terror, see Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within*, Cambridge, MA, 1993, pp. 183-204.
[20] See the two versions of the well-known photograph of Voroshilov, Molotov, Stalin and Ezhov by the Moscow-Volga Canal. In the second version, Ezhov's image is absent, having been removed after he fell out of favour with Stalin in 1938 and was subsequently executed in 1940. For a reproduction of the two photographs, see Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*, ed. and trans. Harold Shukman, London, 1991, between pp. 292-93.
[21] For a detailed discussion of the 'Stalin text' of *Dzhan*, see Chapter Two in section III of Part Two.
[22] See, for example, Ludmilla Trigos's discussion of Soviet official attempts to 'stake a claim on Pushkin' around the time of the Pushkin centennial in 1937. Ludmilla A. Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth in Russian Culture*, Basingstoke, 2009, pp. 120-21. See also Vladimir Sharov's discussion of the prominence accorded to Peter Pervyi and Ivan Groznyi as historical figures under Stalin. Vladimir Sharov, 'Mezh dvukh revoliutsii: Andrei Platonov i russkaia istoriia', *Znamia*, 2005, 9, pp. 174-92 (p. 188).

can be interpreted in the light of his contention that actual historical reality in Russia has never stood in as stark a binary opposition to the previous era as has often been claimed. On the level of cultural and historical memory as determined and influenced 'from above' by the ruling elite, then, it is clear that the interplay between continuity and discontinuity is a complex one. This is an area which is manifestly beyond the scope of the present discussion. On the level of the experience of the individual member of Soviet society, however, the Soviet period of Russian twentieth-century history was, in Platonov's words, an era of 'vseobshchee zlobnoe bespamiatstvo'.[23] Throughout the entire period, millions of Soviet citizens were compelled to deny publicly and suppress privately memories of their families' past and were thus unable to mourn properly those who had been 'repressed'. As Catherine Merridale has noted in her study of the mechanics and consequences of this forced collective amnesia, this was a situation where grief had to be so private that many people did not even share it with their own children: 'It was dangerous, after all, to mourn the passing of an enemy of the people, and compromising even to be related to one.'[24] In terms of the philosophical ideas of Nikolai Fedorov, the Soviet period was in effect the macabre antithesis of Fedorov's 'obshchee delo' with its call to man to bring about collective salvation by a meticulous remembrance of each and every one of his ancestors.

Another aspect of this forced negation of the past, and one which is relevant to all three artists discussed in this thesis, is the way that the experience of *bespamiatstvo* inscribed itself on the places and landscapes of the Soviet Union. Most obviously there were the many mass graves, whose exact location was known only to the security forces. Their very 'mass' nature made them the most terrible expression of *bespamiatstvo*, and prevented proper remembrance of the individual victims even after the end of the Soviet Union, something which Merridale describes vividly.[25] One could also mention the way in which pre-Revolutionary buildings and monuments became part of the Soviet

[23] Andrei Platonov, 'Dzhan', in Andrei Platonov, *Proza*, Moscow, 1999, pp. 437-533 (p. 450).
[24] Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Russia*, London, 2000, p. 8.
[25] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

architectural landscape. These were visual symbols and repositories of the past which were no longer attached to their original meaning. Palaces and churches became museums, orphanages, sanatoriums or planetariums, and houses belonging to one family were simply taken over by others. The unmooring of memory from the physical evidence of it, and the human problems resulting from this disjunction, is an issue which is refracted in the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii.[26]

All this underlines the radical differences that existed between pre- and post-Revolutionary conceptions of memory. There is, however, an important nineteenth-century parallel to the Soviet state's repression of collective memory – the fate of the Decembrists. It is a paradox that although the Decembrists were feted in Soviet historical accounts as fathers of the 1917 Revolution, Nicholas I's reaction to them as historical figures prefigures Soviet policy in a striking manner. As Ludmilla Trigos argues,

> Immediately after the Decembrists' sentencing, Nicholas forbade their mention in all public media. […]. Nicholas strove to erase the conspirators' names and actions from history and their memory from the public consciousness.[27]

Exiled well out of sight to Siberia, and as 'state criminals' stripped of their titles and rank, for Nicholas I the Decembrists quite simply ceased to exist.[28]

The decision to focus on three so clearly different twentieth-century artists is integral to the wider aim of this study, which is to investigate the pervasiveness and longevity of the ideal of the whole, *tselostnost'*, in Russian culture, as well as the consistency with which it has been expressed. The work of these three men crosses two artistic media, is realised with different levels of

[26] For an interesting discussion of space and memory in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, see Cathy A. Frierson, 'Dilemmas of Post-Soviet Identity in Vologda: A Sacred Landscape in Moscow's Political Shadow', and also Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, 'Place, Memory and the Politics of Identity: Historical Buildings and Streetnames in Leningrad – St Petersburg', both in Mark Bassin, Christopher Ely, Melissa K. Stockdale (eds.), *Space, Place and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History*, DeKalb, IL, 2010, pp. 218-42 and pp. 243-59.
[27] Trigos, *The Decembrist Myth*, pp. xxi-xxii.
[28] Anatole G. Mazour, *The First Russian Revolution, 1825: The Decembrist Movement. Its Origins, Development and Significance*, Stanford, CA, 1961, p. 240.

complexity, and spans a period which stretches from the 1920s to the present. Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii represent very different 'corners' of the Soviet experience. Their different artistic and political sensibilities were shaped by their generation, but also by their temperament and the particular circumstances of their lives as Soviet citizens. Platonov, born into a poor family in the provincial city of Voronezh in 1899 was in many ways a true 'child' of the Revolution. The son of a railway worker, Platonov left school at the age of fifteen in order to support his many younger siblings.[29] An engineer who worked on land improvement projects in the countryside, Platonov was from his youth deeply committed to the communist ideal. He was a typical communist of the early Soviet period, born out of the poverty and injustices of Tsarist Russia. Yet, like that of so many of his contemporaries, a life which began in the euphoria of the realisation of communism ended with the painful awareness of the betrayal of this ideal. To use the words of Wolfgang Leonhard in his extraordinary account of his experiences as a German communist during the same period, he was to discover that the Revolution, or at least the Soviet one, 'dismisses its own children'.[30]

Rasputin, born in 1937 at the height of Stalinism, clearly comes from quite another Soviet generation. The son of a *kolkhoznik*, Rasputin was also of humble origin, yet by the late 1940s and 1950s educational opportunities for ordinary Soviet citizens had improved dramatically. Unlike Platonov, Rasputin both finished school and went on to study at university.[31] Furthermore, the parallel which exists in the provincial origins of both men paradoxically serves to underline the enormous difference in the historical eras in which they grew to maturity. On one level, in the 1920s, Platonov left the Voronezh literary scene behind him in order to make his way as a Soviet writer in the 'centre', Moscow. Rasputin, by contrast, has spent his entire life and career in Siberia. Of greater significance, however, is that Rasputin's regional focus is bound up with the

[29] For an account of Platonov's childhood, see Thomas Langerak, *Andrei Platonov: Materialy dlia biografii 1899-1929 gg.*, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 10-13.
[30] Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder*, Cologne, 1990.
[31] Günther Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben in der Prosa Valentin Rasputins*, Wiesbaden, 1990, p. 12.

sense of disillusionment with the communist ideal expressed by many members of the intelligentsia from the late 1950s on. This disillusionment was focused on the perceived failure of the highly centralised structure of state power to take into account the wishes of local communities, which were, in the case of the ones Rasputin lived in, immeasurably far away from Moscow. The fact that Rasputin's championing of the regional against the centre was accompanied by a strong sense of the local as the 'real' Russia also emphasises the vast gulf which separates this post-Stalinist era from the early Soviet period of Platonov.

Tarkovskii presents quite another face of the Soviet twentieth-century experience. Born in 1932, and thus of a generation with Rasputin, Tarkovskii was brought up and spent most of his working life in Moscow. The son of a poet, he came from an educated family and enjoyed the privileges of an elite education, first at the Institut Vostokovedeniia and then at the prestigious film school VGIK. He too was disillusioned with the Soviet system, primarily, it seems from considerations of restrictions on his freedom as an artist, and this led to his emigration to the West in 1984.

These different experiences of the Soviet period are reflected in the work of all three men, and particularly in the way that memory appears, or does not appear, in their writing. On the most general level, the work of both Rasputin and Tarkovskii is driven by a rejection of modernity and imbued with a vision of a better past. As will be seen, in Rasputin's writing the theme of memory reiterates the nineteenth-century Slavophile longing for a *tselostnyi* and thus properly Russian past. This is a longing sharpened and transformed by the twentieth-century Soviet experience of industrialisation and modernisation, with its negation of a more traditional mode of life and rejection of the pre-Soviet past. In Tarkovskii's writings and films, the argument against modernity is framed as a fear that materialism and rationalism have triumphed over the *tselostnost'* of a spiritual worldview, a worldview in which memory plays a central role. Reflecting the more international background of Tarkovskii's life and work, his understanding of memory and *tselostnost'* is not fixed to a vision of a remembered Russian past, but is rather part of a philosophical inquiry into

the enigma of the universe, which he longs as an artist to capture in all its wholeness.

Seen from this angle, Platonov's position seems to be entirely antithetical to those of Rasputin and Tarkovskii. Platonov was a man who both intellectually and emotionally fully embraced modernity. In its aim to introduce mass education, industrialise and harness advances in science to improve the lot of normal people, the Soviet communist project represented for Platonov a unique historical attempt to 'enact' modernity across a society and polity. Instead of nostalgia for a pre-modern, pre-rational era, one finds in Platonov's writings the vision of a utopian future, a 'New Jerusalem' built on earth. In this connection, David Bethea's study of the apocalyptic theme in modern Russian fiction is of particular interest in providing a context which frames all three figures' reaction to modernity.[32] As will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four, both Rasputin and Tarkovskii share a certain apocalyptic view of the world as being at the endpoint of modernity, and they look, in Bethea's words, 'from the "presents" of their contexts *back* to a pre-history'.[33] Bethea argues that the concepts of apocalypse and utopia can in fact be seen as different faces of the same human preoccupation:

> The utopian urge […] is essentially a 'secularisation', a placing within a human-centred *saeculum*, of the original apocalyptic urge to see the end of time. The two urges are of course not distinct, but genealogically bound; indeed, in one important respect they may be viewed as the *same* urge as it has developed through history.[34]

Furthermore, in his discussion of Platonov's novel *Chevengur*, Bethea makes the case for seeing Platonov's writing as a unique crossover between the apocalyptic and utopian impulses, representing 'the collision of the Christian apocalyptic and Marxist utopian models, of meaning coming from "without" as opposed to from "within" history.'[35] Although Platonov remained committed to the ideals of communism to the end of his life, and to the project to modernise

[32] David M. Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*, Princeton, NJ, 1989.
[33] Ibid., p. xvi.
[34] Ibid., p. 145.
[35] Ibid., p. 147.

and industrialise, his writings show him as increasingly aware of the shortcomings of the Soviet Union as an embodiment of these ideals. This too, is a response to modernity, but one from 'within' which is thus far more complex and tortured than Rasputin's or Tarkovskii's. For all the absence of a sense of the past and memory in his deeply idealistic commitment to 'building communism', Platonov's writings display a vision of a better world which is increasingly 'utopian' and far from Soviet reality, and in which, paradoxically, memory plays an important role. This is a dream of a better world defined by its *tselostnost'*, a place and time where all men, animals and objects will be sheltered from the elements and all the living and the dead will be faithfully remembered.

One finds then in the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii an imprint of some of the different physical and intellectual spaces and times of the Soviet twentieth-century, an imprint in which memory plays a vital but always different role. It is the argument of this thesis that, for these reasons, the three figures form a particularly 'productive' combination, a prism for investigating the themes of memory and wholeness in twentieth-century culture which is revealing of different responses to the changes in Russian culture, society and polity over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On one level, this thesis is a contribution to the history of an idea, and examines how the nineteenth-century philosophical concept of *tselostnost'* migrated into the work of, and was understood by, these three twentieth-century artists. Chapter One of this study traces the origins and development of *tselostnost'* as an idea in nineteenth-century Russian philosophy by looking at the work of Petr Chaadaev, Aleksei Khomiakov, Ivan Kireevskii, Nikolai Fedorov, Vladimir Solov'ev and Fedor Dostoevskii. In positing *tselostnost'* as a central impulse of nineteenth-century Russian religious thought, the argument of this chapter builds on the views outlined by Zen'kovskii in his *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* and also on the opinions expressed by the contemporary philosopher Sergei

Khoruzhii.[36] It does so by discussing and comparing specific ways in which the texts of these philosophers articulate and express the concept of *tselostnost*'. Chapter One concludes with a consideration of the ways in which wholeness as a nineteenth-century idea may have been transmitted to Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii.

The three chapters which make up the main body of this thesis offer separate, close readings of the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii within their individual artistic and historical contexts. This part of the study is consciously non-comparative, and aims to elucidate the different ways in which the themes of *tselostnost'* and memory appear in the fiction and films of the three artists on their own terms. The exploration of key works by Platonov in Chapter Two contributes to a well-established tradition in Platonov scholarship devoted to exploring both the generally philosophical nature of Platonov's prose, and the influence of certain Russian philosophers on his work. Although the reading of Platonov presented here also asserts the key role of Fedorov's philosophy in Platonov's work, it adds to and even departs from existing critical interpretations in several respects. For the most part, studies addressing the link between Fedorov and Platonov focus on questions surrounding the source of this influence, the links between Platonov's and Fedorov's view of nature as a hostile force for man, and the identification of various allusions made by Platonov in his texts to elements of Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*.[37] In the first place, Chapter Two presents a more detailed and integrated examination of these allusions across Platonov's major texts by focusing on the theme of *bezottsovshchina* and also on what will be termed the 'gathering' and 'mutual remembrance' motifs. Fedorov's influence on Platonov's *bezottsovshchina* and the 'gathering' activities of some of his heroes (but not the idea of mutual remembrance) have received some mention in critical

[36] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, and Sergei Khoruzhii, 'Neopatricheskii sintez i russkaia filosofiia', in Sergei Khoruzhii, *O starom i novom*, St Petersburg, 2000, pp. 35-6. For a discussion of their views, see the opening of Chapter One below.

[37] Two books which take this approach are Ayleen Teskey's *Platonov and Fyodorov: The Influence of Christian Philosophy on a Soviet Writer*, Avebury, 1982, and Thomas Seifrid's *Andrei Platonov: Uncertainties of Spirit*. For a fuller discussion of critical interpretations of the link between Fedorov and Platonov, see Part One of Chapter Two below.

literature to date, and the discussion in Chapter Two takes this further by providing an integrated appraisal of this important aspect of the expression of Fedorov's ideas by Platonov.[38] Secondly, Chapter Two is premised on an interpretation of Fedorov's thought which departs from the standard view of his ideas which underlies previous critical writings in this area. This interpretation, discussed in Chapter One, posits *tselostnost'* as the idea which inspires and frames Fedorov's 'obshchee delo' to achieve universal resurrection by the gathering and remembering of all dead matter. By examining the connection between Fedorov and Platonov from this new angle, Fedorov's ideas appear as the central dynamic of the entire view of man and the world which Platonov expresses in his texts. Seen through this prism, the urge to preserve the wholeness of the universe in Platonov's stories through a Fedorov-inspired remembering of each human, plant and thing can be understood as a direct answer to an equally Fedorov-inspired vision of nature as a fragmenting and eroding force which destroys *tselostnost'*.

Rasputin's writing, which forms the subject of Chapter Three, has frequently been connected with the theme of memory, and in particular the evocation of a vanishing traditional way of life and worldview in the Siberian countryside.[39] Since the mid-1980s, Rasputin has also been connected with Russian nationalist politics, and his writings judged through the prism of his 'Neo-Slavophile' position.[40] Chapter Three builds on these different critical opinions to suggest that Rasputin's earlier works, written in the 1960s to mid-1980s, can be linked to the writing of his later, 'nationalist' phase through the themes of memory and wholeness. The *tselostnost'* of the traditional peasant worldview, whose passing Rasputin mourns in his earlier *povesti*, issues from

[38] See, for example, Seifrid on the theme of *bezottsovshchina* in Seifrid, *Platonov*, pp. 114-15, and Natal'ia Duzhina on 'gathering' in N. I. Duzhina, 'Putevoditel' po povesti A.P. Platonova *Kotlovan*', unpublished manuscript, Moscow, pp. 75-79.
[39] See, for example, Kathleen Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past*, Princeton, NJ, 1992.
[40] See, for example, Parthé's discussion in Kathleen Parthé, 'Russian Village Prose in Paraliterary Space', in Arnold McMillin (ed.), *Reconstructing the Canon: Russian Writing in the 1980s*, pp. 225-41.

the same nineteenth-century Slavophile thought which inspires his later interpretation, or even appropriation, of *tselostnost'* for a nationalist agenda.

In the extensive body of scholarship which has grown up around Tarkovskii's work, memory is a theme which is consistently associated with the rich visual worlds of his films and their distinctive use of dream and vision sequences.[41] Many critics also attribute a generally 'metaphysical' quality to Tarkovskii's filmmaking, seeing in the complexities of his style and narrative concerns a 'cinema of ideas' created by a 'philosophical' director.[42] The only full-length study to investigate the influence on Tarkovskii of Russian and European philosophy is Igor' Evlampiev's *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, mentioned above as an example of what one could call the 'artist as philosopher' approach. As a scholar of the history of Russian philosophy, Evlampiev offers an erudite approach to examining the philosophical influences on Tarkovskii's work, and connects him with a wide range of Russian and European philosophers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter Four of this thesis is premised on a different way of reading the philosophical text of Tarkovskii's work. Evlampiev's assessment of Tarkovskii as a 'khudozhnik-filosof' involves the reading into Tarkovskii's films of a highly complex philosophical system based on the ideas of various Russian and European philosophers. By contrast, the discussion in Chapter Four takes as its starting point a serious and detailed consideration of the complex and often contradictory body of Tarkovskii's diaries, writings on cinema, and other statements. *Tselostnost'*, it is argued, is central to the personal worldview expressed by Tarkovskii in these texts, and also to his cinematic aesthetic as he describes it. This is then followed by an examination of how this vision of the ideal wholeness of the universe, from which the world has fallen, is expressed in the narratives of Tarkovskii's films. By approaching Tarkovskii's work through the philosophical framework of his own

[41] See, for example, Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue*, Bloomington, IN, 1994, pp. 236-42, and Natasha Synessios, *Mirror*, London, 2001, pp. 70-79.
[42] See, for example, Rafael Llano, *Andrei Tarkovskii: Vida y obra*, 2 vols, Valencia, 2002, i, p. 18.

mirovozzrenie, new aspects of his complex artistic world are revealed. A new dimension is added to the understanding of Tarkovskii's cinematic aesthetic, for as the discussion in Chapter Four demonstrates, Tarkovskii's entire project to recreate a truthful image of reality on screen is understood by him as the eternal human problem of man's perception of the *tselostnost'* of the universe. This approach also offers new insights into Tarkovskii's films themselves, where Tarkovskii's concerns with the divisions of the modern world echo the arguments about the loss of *tselostnost'* expressed in nineteenth-century Russian philosophy.

The readings of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii's work provided in the second, third and fourth chapters of this study suggest that the nineteenth-century philosophical concept of *tselostnost'* continued to be an influential idea in twentieth-century Russian culture. Despite the different experiences of the Soviet era which informed the writing of these three artists, and their different attitudes to the past, they share a vision of the world as an ideal whole, and a belief that memory can restore the fragmented world to its original *tselostnost'*. The Conclusion to this thesis explores the interplay of parallel and contrast that exists in the three artists' expression of *tselostnost'* and memory and considers it in the broader context of Russian twentieth-century culture.

Chapter One

Tselostnost' in the Russian philosophical tradition

In the introduction to his *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, Zen'kovskii identifies *tselostnost'* as a defining characteristic and pivotal concept in the Russian philosophical tradition:

> В неразрывности теории и практики, отвлеченной мысли и жизни, иначе говоря, в идеале "целостности" заключается, действительно, одно из главных вдохновений русской философской мысли. Русские философы, за редкими исключениями, ищут именно целостности, синтетического единства всех сторон реальности и всех движений человеческого духа. Именно в историческом бытии – более, чем при изучении природы или в чистых понятиях отвлеченной мысли, – лозунг "целостности" неустраним и нужен. Антропоцентричность русской философии постоянно устремляет ее к раскрытию данной и заданной нам целостности.[43]

Wholeness is thus, one could argue, not just a prominent theme of Russian philosophy, but even one of its most powerful dynamics. With their understanding of the ideal as an overarching unity of all things, the writings of Russian thinkers are marked by a striving towards the fullest perception and achievement of the whole. Moreover, as Zen'kovskii has argued, it is precisely this strong synthetic impulse which has led to the classical criticism of Russian philosophical thought as 'unoriginal' and merely an eclectic mix of borrowed ideas. For Zen'kovskii, this is completely to misunderstand the synthetic dynamic which is central to the systems of most Russian thinkers.[44]

Traditionally, histories of Russian thought have offered two different and apparently distinct interpretations of the origin of this guiding vision of the whole. Both Zen'kovskii and Evlampiev argue that the concept of the world as an ideal whole or 'all-unity' stems from the wider European philosophical tradition, starting with Plato and reaching up to the philosophical systems of German idealist thinkers like Schelling and Hegel, who were direct influences

[43] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-1, pp. 17-18.
[44] Ibid., p. 18.

on Russian thinkers who emerged from the 1820s.[45] For Evlampiev, the Russian philosophical tradition represents a distinct interpretation of this idea:

> Характерная для русских философов версия концепции всеединства в качестве своего неявного центра включала представление об идеальном состоянии всего мира, состоянии, в котором была бы преодолена его раздробленность, отчужденность его отдельных элементов друг от друга. […]. По отношению к этому идеальному состоянию наличное состояние мира необходимо признать глубоко 'ущербным', несовершенным […].[46]

Others have seen Russian philosophy's preoccupation with the wholeness of being as having a specifically Russian source, stemming from Russian Orthodox theology and particularly the writings of the Church Fathers. In his discussion of Kireevskii, Losskii notes that:

> Способ мышления, найденный Киреевским у отцов восточной церкви ('безмятежность внутренней цельности духа') […], был воспринят вместе с христианством. […] Основные черты древнерусской образованности – цельность и разумность.[47]

In fact, as the contemporary Russian philosopher Sergei Khoruzhii has argued, these two sources of wholeness are inextricably linked. Khoruzhii demonstrates how the idea of all-unity from Ancient Greek philosophy was passed down into a Christian theology which already contained a conception of this idea from St Paul's teaching on the Church as a 'body of many parts'. Further to this,

> После эпохи патристики тема всеединства сопутствует всем этапам классической западной традиции, развиваясь у Эригены, Николая Кузанского, Лейбница, используясь во многих мистических учениях и находя завершение у Шеллинга и Гегеля.[48]

In this respect, the concept of *tselostnost'* in Russian religious philosophy was inherited both from Western philosophy and from patristic thought. As Khoruzhii argues,

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[45] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, II-2, pp. 180-81.
[46] Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, p. 11.
[47] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, pp. 37-38.
[48] Khoruzhii, 'Neopatricheskii sintez', p. 41.

> Интуиции православного миросозерцания, входившие в ее истоки и корни, и онтологическая база классической западной традиции сошлись и встретились в философеме всеединства.[49]

Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856)

In her study of the influence of concepts of *tselostnost'* and *sobornost'* on Dostoevskii, Sarah Hudspith argues that: 'The notion most important to Slavophile thought […] is unity: what true unity means and how it may be achieved on a personal, societal and spiritual level.'[50] As will be discussed below, the writings of Kireevskii and Khomiakov represent the earliest and most extensive philosophical discourse on the essential *tselostnost'* of the world and being, one which finds an echo in the works of all of their successors in the tradition of Russian religious philosophy. The importance of the writings of Petr Chaadaev to this discourse should, however, not be underestimated. As James Edie and other critics have argued, Chaadaev's thought was perhaps the single most important influence on the way the Russian philosophical tradition developed from the 1820s:

> In his concern with unity in all aspects of life, in his condemnation of egoism, in his emphasis on history, and in his view of Russia as having a God-given mission, Chaadaev formulates the fundamental concern of the intellectual life of nineteenth-century Russia, that of his immediate successors, both Slavophile and Westerniser, as well as that of many thinkers of the latter half of the century.[51]

The concept of the unity of existence is central to Chaadaev's thought, albeit understood in a different sense from Kireevskii and Khomiakov's idea of the whole. It is significant that the term Chaadaev employs most frequently is *edinstvo*, and not *tselostnost'*. Zen'kovskii identifies as the fundamental theological idea behind Chaadaev's philosophy the 'ideiia Tsarstva Bozhiia, poniatogo ne v otryve ot zemnoi zhizni, a v istoricheskom voploshchenii, kak

[49] Khoruzhii, 'Neopatricheskii sintez', p. 41.
[50] Sarah Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness: A New Perspective on Unity and Brotherhood*, London, 2004, p. 6.
[51] James M. Edie et al (eds.), *Russian Philosophy*, 3 vols, Chicago, 1965, i, p. 105.

Tserkov''.[52] It is the Christian idea of the Universal Church, inspired by St Paul's teaching on the Church, which forms Chaadaev's image of an ideal *edinstvo*. In his emphasis on the historical aspect of Christianity, Chaadaev sees the Church as the great universal force for unity, a 'zhivotvornoe nachalo edinstva', a carrier of what he terms the 'ideiia vseobshchnosti'.[53] If Christ brought to the world 'otvrashchenie ot razdeleniia' and a 'strastnoe vlechenie k edinstvu', then the historical divisions of the Church represent a catastrophic destruction of this unity, an inevitable retreat from the Christian goal of 'sliianie' and the achievement of 'nebo na zemle'.[54] Instead of the rebirth of Christianity, the Reformation returned the world to the 'razobshchennost' iazychestva' and reinstated what he calls 'osnovnye individual'nye cherty natsional'nostei, obosoblenie dush i umov, kotorye Spasitel' prikhodil razrushit'.'[55] In his interpretation, the Roman Catholic Church is the sole inheritor of the Universal Church, uniting Europe through a common language for prayer and common feast days, with the Papacy as 'vidimyi znak edinstva […] i znak vossoedineniia'.[56]

It is against the background of this ideal of unity that Chaadaev's influential and initially very unpopular critique of Russia is to be understood. The parlous state of Russia, for Chaadaev, is a direct result of Russia having 'turned its face to Byzantium' and thus cut itself off from the Universal Church. The analysis of Russia's situation which Chaadaev sets out in his 'Pis'mo pervoe' (1836) centres on the idea of the social, political and historical disintegration and fragmentation arising from this lack of *edinstvo*:

> Разве что-нибудь стоит прочно на месте? Все – словно на перепутьи. […]. В домах наших мы как будто в лагере; в семьях мы имеем вид пришельцев; в городах мы похожи на кочевников, хуже кочевников, пасших стада в наших степях, ибо те более привязаны к своим пустыням, нежели мы – к своим городам.[57]

[52] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-1, p. 169.
[53] P.Ia. Chaadaev, *Sochineniia*, Moscow, 1989, pp. 26-27 and p. 110.
[54] Ibid., p. 138.
[55] Ibid., p. 110.
[56] Ibid., p. 112.
[57] Ibid., p. 19.

With no sense of its past nor its future, Russia, for Chaadaev is a country of rootless, homeless and feckless wanderers who lead a senseless existence restricted to the immediate present, divorced from their 'vidovoe tseloe' and divided among themselves.[58]

Aleksei Khomiakov (1804-1860) and Ivan Kireevskii (1806-1856)

Walicki has described Slavophilism as a 'reply to Chaadaev', and this captures the nature of Chaadaev's influence on what Walicki calls the 'classical' Slavophile thinkers like Kireevskii and Khomiakov.[59] In essence, the analysis of Russia's situation to be found in the writings of Kireevskii and Khomiakov adopts the parameters set by Chaadaev and then gives them an opposite interpretation in terms of the East-West axis. Russian Orthodoxy, not the Roman Church, is the only properly 'catholic' church and the inheritor of the Universal Church. It is the West, not Russia, which is associated with division and alienation, and Russia's problems stem from the pernicious influence of Western culture on its innately 'sobornyi' traditions. Zen'kovskii identifies Khomiakov's main concern as the 'postroenie tsel'nogo mirovozzreniia na osnove tserkovnogo soznaniia, kak ono slozhilos' v Pravoslavii'.[60] This comment illuminates the absolute centrality of *tselostnost'* as an idea to the different areas of both Khomiakov and Kireevskii's thought. *Tselostnost'* is fundamental to both thinkers' philosophy of history, to their anthropology, to their epistemology and even to their aesthetics. In all of these areas, the conception of Russia and the West as opposing forces – cultures, societies, religions and philosophies – frames and shapes the development of their ideas.

In the critique of Western society and philosophy developed by Khomiakov and Kireevskii, it is Western Europe's historical abandonment of the 'pure Christianity' of the Universal Church at the Schism which emerges as

[58] Ibid., p. 23.
[59] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 91.
[60] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-2, p. 5.

the root of the perceived crisis of the Western world, one where an ideal *tselostnost'* has been replaced by division and fragmentation. In his treatise 'Po povodu Gumbol'da' (1849), Khomiakov argues that this crisis is fundamentally one of a loss of faith, caused by the failure of both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to embody the unity of the Christian ideal. If Christianity in its original sense represents 'idei edinstva i svobody', the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches are characterised by their *odnostoronnost'*: the former having given priority to the 'zakon vneshnego edinstva', while 'Protestantstvo uderzhivalo ideiu svobody i prinosilo ei v zhertvu ideiu edinstva'.[61] For Khomiakov, it is Russian Orthodoxy which is the 'vessel' of pure Christianity with its essential *mnogostoronnost'*, and for this reason it has a messianic role to play at this turning point in Western history:

> […] всемирная история, осудив безвозвратно те односторонние духовные начала, которыми управлялась человеческая мысль на Западе, вызывает к жизни и деятельности более полные и живые начала, содержимые нашей Святой Русью.[62]

For Khomiakov, Russia's ancient communal traditions, or *obshchinnost'*, were particularly compatible with the ideal of *sobornost'* which he identifies with the Universal Church.[63] *Sobornost'* expresses the original Christian idea of 'edinstvo vo mnozhestve'. This is the Church as St Paul envisioned it, a 'edinstvo mnogochislennykh chlenov v tele zhivom', and for this reason *sobornost'* has often been translated as 'free unity'.[64] This idea is underlined by Khomiakov's insistence on 'sobornyi' as the proper translation of the Greek description of the Church as 'catholic', and not 'vsemirnyi', which he associates with the idea of external unity.[65] The Church on earth is an 'organic union' rather than the monolith represented by Roman Catholicism.[66] Edie has described *sobornost'* as a 'primarily theological notion' from which 'the

[61] A.S. Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 4 vols, Moscow, 1873-82, i, pp. 148-49.
[62] Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, pp. 156-57.
[63] Ibid., p. 151. See also: Peter Christoff, *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Slavophilism: A Study in Ideas. Volume I: A.S. Khomiakov*, The Hague, 1961, p. 152.
[64] Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 279 and p. 39. See, for example, Walicki's use of the term 'free unity' for *sobornost'*. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 95.
[65] Ibid., pp. 277-79.
[66] Christoff, *A.S. Khomiakov*, p. 137.

Slavophiles drew both epistemological and ontological conclusions'.[67] It is a concept which underpins the thinking of both Khomiakov and Kireevskii – as well as many subsequent thinkers – on a wide range of issues, where it is repeatedly equated with an essentially Russian wholeness.

Kireevskii's analysis of the crisis of European culture in 'O kharaktere prosviashcheniia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosviashcheniiu Rossii' (1852) follows a basically similar line of reasoning to the one displayed by Khomiakov. In Kireevskii's discourse, however, the contrasting worldviews of Russia and Europe, their relative *mnogostoronnost'* and *odnostoronnost'* are more explicitly expressed as the contrast between the image of an ideal *tselostnost'* and its opposite *razdvoenie*. Like Khomiakov, Kireevskii characterises Western European culture as 'Roman', defined by an exterior and superficial formality and a 'naruzhnaia rassudochnost', instead of a 'vnutrenniaia sushchnost''.[68] In all its characteristics it is the complete opposite to the 'vnutrenniaia tsel'nost' bytiia' represented by the original Christian idea.[69] In Western culture:

> Римская отрешенная рассудочность уже с 9-ого века проникла в самое учение богословов, разрушив своею односторонностью гармоническую цельность внутреннего умозрения.[70]

Kireevskii contrasts this with Russian culture, which he sees as predominantly influenced by the true Christianity expressed in the writings of the Church Fathers with its striving for a 'vnutrenniaia tsel'nost' razuma', as opposed to the conviction of Western thinkers that 'dostizhenie polnoi istiny vozmozhno i dlia razdelivshikhsia sil uma, samodvizhno deistvuiushchikh v svoei odinokoi otdel'nosti.'[71] These opposing dynamics are reflected in the distinct social and political structures of Western Europe and Russia. Kireevskii illustrates this by describing the contrasting situations in the two areas during feudal times. Feudal Europe was characterised by persistent warring between factions:

[67] Edie, *Russian Philosophy*, i, p. 162.
[68] Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 186.
[69] Ibid., p. 188.
[70] Ibid., p. 189.
[71] Ibid., p. 201.

individual knights with their fiefdoms, free cities, kings and the Church. Russia on the other hand was made up of a 'beschislennoe mnozhestvo malen'kikh obshchin', all forming their own complete worlds based on the harmonious 'edinomyslie' of ancient and self-regulating collective traditions.[72]

In his article 'O neobkhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novykh nachal dlia filosofii' (1856) Kireevskii begins by arguing that Western philosophy, having taken 'ratsional'noe samomyshlenie' as its focus for the three and a half centuries since the Reformation, has now reached an endpoint in its development.[73] This has resulted in what Kireevskii terms the 'gospodstvo ratsionalizma', a state in which rational thought and religious faith seem irrevocably divorced from one another.[74] As has been seen, Kireevskii and Khomiakov's philosophy of history is based on the idea of a loss of the 'true' faith of the Universal Church. Integral to this discourse are their theories on truth and knowledge, and their vision of man. Kireevskii's development of these ideas is based on his concepts of *tsel'noe znanie* or *tsel'noe poznavanie* and the related idea of *tsel'nost' dukha*. For Kireevskii, the essential epistemological problem of Western philosophy is its failure to acknowledge man's 'pervoestestvennaia tsel'nost'' from which man first fell at Eden, and which he must constantly strive to regain, for 'dlia tsel'noi istiny nuzhna tsel'nost' razuma'.[75] The idea that man can only perceive the whole truth by employing all his different faculties, argues Kireevskii, is central to Orthodox thinking and the concept of the 'veruiushchii razum', where reason and faith work together in cognition of the whole, and where 'vse otdel'nye sily slivaiutsia v odno zhivoe i tsel'noe zrenie uma'.[76] As Zen'kovskii has argued, Kireevskii's vision of how this 'utrachennaia tselostnost'' can be regained echoes the thinking of the Church Fathers on the achievement of 'inner focus': it is a '"sobiranie" sil dushi'.[77]

[72] Ibid., pp. 206-07.
[73] Ibid., p. 223.
[74] Ibid., p. 225.
[75] Ibid., pp. 250-51.
[76] Ibid., pp. 248-49.
[77] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-2, p. 15.

In Europe, by contrast:

> Раздробив цельность духа на части и отделенному логическому мышлению предоставив высшее сознание истины, человек в глубине своего самосознания оторвался от всякой связи с действительностью и сам явился на земле существом отвлеченным, как зритель в театре.[78]

In choosing to rely exclusively on rational thought with its pretension to complete cognition of the truth, Western philosophy, and Western society as a consequence, remain limited by their essential *odnostoronnost'*, inevitably lost in abstractions and cut off from the possibility of fuller perception of the wholeness of truth. For Kireevskii, the results of this path are everywhere to be seen in the overwhelming divisions which characterise every sphere of the Western world and which he at every turn contrasts with opposing traits in Russian society, philosophy, polity and history:

> […] там раздвоение духа, раздвоение мыслей, раздвоение наук, раздвоение государства, раздвоение сословий, раздвоение общества, раздвоение семейных прав и обязанностей, раздвоение нравственного и сердечного состояния, раздвоение всей совокупности и всех отдельных видов бытия человеческого, общественного и частного; - в России, напротив того, преимущественное стремление к цельности бытия внутреннего и внешнего, общественного и частного, умозрительного и житейского, искусственного и нравственного.

He concludes by asserting the basic opposition between Western European and ancient Russian culture as one of 'razdvoenie' against 'tsel'nost', and 'rassudochnost'' against razumnost''.[79]

In the writings of both Kireevskii and Khomiakov, the perception of Russian culture through Orthodoxy as the inheritor of the original spirit of Christianity with its *tsel'nost'* and *razumnost'* underpins the conviction that Russia must lead the way in a new and genuinely Christian enlightenment in Europe. Khomiakov concludes his 'Po povodu Gumbol'da' by pointing to Russia's future role:

[78] Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 245.
[79] Ibid., p. 218.

> История призывает Россию стать впереди всемирного просвящения; она дает ей на это право за всесторонность и полноту ее начал, а право, данное историей народу, есть обязанность, налагаемая на каждого из его членов.[80]

For Zen'kovskii, Kireevskii's vision of the new 'era' which will begin with a 'flowering' of Orthodox culture is understood in terms of a universal 'vostanovlenie "tsel'nosti"'. This is particularly true of Kireevskii's project to create a 'new' philosophy, which is central to his vision of Europe's cultural and social renewal, and is based on the idea of the restoration of wholeness as a condition for 'realism' in the theory of knowledge.[81] Employing his theories on the need to reunite faith and reason for a *tsel'noe zrenie uma* to achieve *tsel'noe znanie* or *poznavanie*, Kireevskii envisaged a new departure in philosophical practice. Instead of remaining an abstract academic exercise, philosophy would, through 'zhivoe ubezhdenie', become reconnected to reality and hence truth. [82]

Losskii has argued that Kireevskii and Khomiakov's 'ideal tsel'nogo poznaniia' became the foundation on which many subsequent prominent Russian thinkers built their ideas. In his opinion, Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Berdiaev, Frank, Karsavin, Losev, and Il'in are among those who: 'Opiraias' na tsel'nyi opyt, […] pytalis' razvit' takuiu filosofiiu, kotoraia by iavilas' vseob''emliushchim sintezom.'[83] Indeed, one could argue that Kireevskii and Khomiakov's philosophical articulation of the ideal of *tselostnost'* became and remained a touchstone for all thinkers in the Russian religious philosophical tradition. In particular, as will be shown in the following discussion, it is the classical Slavophile development of *tselostnost'* as the basic principle of epistemology and philosophy of history, and the messianic conclusions which were drawn from this for Russia, which are echoed repeatedly by later Russian thinkers.

[80] Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 174.
[81] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-2, pp. 25-26.
[82] Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 254.
[83] Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, pp. 514-15.

Nikolai Fedorov (1828-1903)

In critical literature, the philosophy of Nikolai Fedorov has often been deemed to stand outside or at least to occupy a unique place in the Russian philosophical tradition. However, the perception of his ideas as 'strange' or at best deeply 'original' stems primarily from what is indeed a unique vision of universal scientific resurrection, which has tended to overshadow the shape and substance of many of the arguments made in his *Filosofiia obshchego dela* (1906).[84] As Zen'kovskii argues, a more profound analysis of this complex collection of Fedorov's ideas suggests rather 'kak tesno i gluboko sviazan Fedorov s samymi razlichnymi techeniiami v istorii russkoi mysli'.[85] Most obviously, Fedorov's thought shares both the religious and what Zen'kovskii has called the 'anthropocentric' character of much of Russian philosophy as it developed from the 1820s.[86] Fedorov's central idea is of a universal resurrection to be accomplished by man himself, following the example set by Christ. This unorthodox interpretation of Christian salvation has often been criticised as a distortion of Christian doctrine which 'treats spiritual truths as projects for the material world.'[87] However difficult it might be to reconcile some aspects of Fedorov's thought with traditional Christian theology, it is without doubt that his entire philosophy is based on the central Christian idea of universal salvation, and inspired by a particularly 'siiaiushchee videnie Tsarstva Bozhiia v polnote i sile' to be realised as 'heaven on earth'.[88]

On a more detailed level, the critique of the contemporary world and the proposed solution to this offered in Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela* clearly echo many of the basic themes and concerns found in classical Slavophile thought. Like other Russian thinkers, Fedorov perceives the crisis of the modern world in terms of division and conflict. His theories are centred on

[84] See for example Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 386, and Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, II-1, p. 134.
[85] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, II-1, p. 135.
[86] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-1, p. 16.
[87] George M. Young, *Nikolai F. Fedorov: An Introduction*, Belmont, MA, 1979, p. 147.
[88] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-1, p. 150.

what he terms the *nerodstvennost'* and *nebratstvo*, in effect the lack of relations or kinship, existing on all levels in the human world. Individuals and countries are in conflict with each other. Societies are divided by wealth and education into the 'learned' and 'unlearned'.[89] Generations are divided into the 'sons' and the 'fathers' by the failure to remember the dead properly. Man has forgotten his proper relationship to nature and is thus constantly at the mercy of it as a 'slepaia sila', rather than uniting with other men to control it for the common good.[90]

The contours of Fedorov's interpretation of European history owe much to Kireevskii and Khomiakov's ideas. In the case of Western Europe, argues Fedorov, 'rozn' sostavliaet narodnuiu, otlichitel'nuiu chertu'.[91] The disintegration of Europe into Catholicism and Protestantism is viewed by Fedorov as a direct result of Europe having 'divided itself off' from the 'centre', which is Constantinople.[92] As George Young argues, Fedorov's interpretation of the key traits of the different religions reiterates the classical Slavophile conception of Catholicism as a 'false unity without freedom', Protestantism as 'freedom without unity' and Orthodoxy as a 'synthesis of freedom and unity'.[93] Fedorov's philosophy of history also assigns Russia a messianic role in the project to 'resurrect' Europe. His list of the particular qualities which make Russia suited to this role includes, among others, 'rodovoi byt' and the *obshchina*, and stresses the 'sobornyi' character of Russian life.[94]

In an echo of the Slavophile idea that *tsel'nost' dukha* is necessary for *tsel'nost' znaniia*, Fedorov's criticism of Western philosophy is similarly based on the partiality of its approach to truth.[95] The 'vneshnii razlad' associated with the conflict and divisions of *nerodstvennost'* is, for Fedorov, the natural result of a 'vnutrenii razlad' where knowledge is isolated from feeling, and intellect

[89] See, for example, N.F. Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 60-61.
[90] See, for example, ibid., pp. 58-59.
[91] Ibid., p. 246.
[92] Ibid., p. 247.
[93] Young, *Fedorov*, p. 134.
[94] Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, p. 304.
[95] See in particular his critique of Kant: ibid., pp. 533-38.

separated from the will.[96] Similarly, one could cite his view on the division of knowledge and action as expressed in the fragmentation of society into the 'learned' and the 'unlearned': 'Iz vsekh razdelenii raspadenie mysli i dela […] sostavliaet samoe velikoe bedstvie'.[97]

Fedorov's solution to the general disharmony and conflict of the human world is a vision of the reestablishment of the whole in all respects. In reuniting the intellect with feeling and will, and knowledge with action, man can re-establish a proper *rodstvennost'* with his fellow men and with nature and thus open the way to the most important task of all: the recreation of *rodstvennost'* with the forgotten dead to reach what Fedorov calls 'Konets sirotstva: bezgranichnoe rodstvo'.[98] Fedorov calls man's duty to remember the 'fathers' 'supramoralism', or 'vseobshchii sintez' and 'vseobshchee ob''edinenie'. This is grounded in the synthesis of 'theoretical' and 'practical' reason, the three objects of reason (God, man and nature) and the synthesis of science, art and religion.[99] Fedorov's description of man's task to prepare for universal resurrection of the dead is both a spiritual and material vision of an ideal *tselostnost'*. Man is charged with gathering up each and every particle which remains from each person, however scattered in the dust they might be, in order to reassemble them in their physical entirety for resurrection. The *rodstvennost'* in human relations which is a precondition for this is in effect an ideal harmony or state of *sobornost'* between men, and between man and nature. The resurrection itself is the final image of synthesis, in which death as the great divider is banished, and the true Covenant of Christianity is achieved 'imenno v soedinenii nebesnogo s zemnym, bozhestvennogo s chelovecheskim'.[100]

[96] Ibid., p. 67.
[97] Ibid., p. 61.
[98] Ibid., p. 528.
[99] Ibid., p. 473.
[100] Ibid., p. 94.

Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900)

Vladimir Solov'ev, one of Fedorov's earliest admirers, is widely considered to be the most systematic and the most influential of Russia's nineteenth-century philosophers, a pivotal figure in the history of Russian religious thought. The body of his work is both extensive and complex, covering not only all the main branches of philosophical thought, but also many other subjects: religion, sociology, political theory and history.[101] He is the originator of perhaps the most well-known philosophical construct associated with *tselostnost'*: *vseedinstvo* (all-unity). Zen'kovskii describes *vseedinstvo* as the 'sintez religii, filosofii i nauki, - very, mysli i opyta', and it became the central and guiding principle of Solov'ev entire philosophical work.[102]

As a student of philosophy in Moscow, and during the early years of his academic career as a lecturer in St Petersburg, Solov'ev was strongly influenced by classical Slavophile thought, was connected with Slavophile and Pan-Slavic circles and published his writings in Ivan Aksakov's journal *Rus'*. Solov'ev later distanced himself from political Slavophilism, and in 1883 he switched his allegiance from *Rus'* to the journal of the 'Westernisers', *Vestnik Evropy*. [103] Kireevskii and Khomiakov's concept of *tsel'nost'*, however, remained an important influence on Solov'ev, shaping his project to establish a philosophy of *vseedinstvo*. The lectures on his concept of godmanhood, 'Chteniia o bogochelovechestve', which he gave in St Petersburg in 1878, are an example of this. In common with all of the philosophers discussed above, Solov'ev also understood the crisis of Western philosophy in terms of the triumph of rationalism, where reason and faith had become alienated. In 'Chteniia o bogochelovechestve', Solov'ev begins by identifying the loss of religion as the key to the conflict and division which characterise modern society. 'Religiia […] est' sviaz' cheloveka i mira s bezuslovnym nachalom'. It is only religion which can bring about 'edinstvo, tsel'nost' i soglasie v zhizni i soznanii

[101] Edie, *Russian Philosophy*, iii, pp. 55-57.
[102] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, II-1, pp. 20-21.
[103] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 373.

cheloveka'. In modern society, however, instead of religion being 'vsem vo vsem' it has become confined to one corner of man's being, one amongst many other interests.[104] The result of this is the state of intellectual and moral 'razlad' existing in society as a whole and in the heart of each individual. This situation is, however, untenable for man who will always seek what Solov'ev calls a 'ediniashchee i sviazuiushchee nachalo'. Solov'ev sees evidence for this in contemporary Western society, which, having rejected religion, strives to find a substitute 'sviazuiushchee nachalo' for life and mind in socialism and positivism, which represent respectively the spheres of 'practical life' and 'theoretical knowledge', and both of which are inadequate on their own.[105]

In 'Chteniia o bogochelovechestve', both religion as the way to the 'bezuslovnoe nachalo' and the resulting ideal state of *vseedinstvo* reflect the Slavophile ideal of *sobornost'*. Solov'ev writes:

> Религия есть воссоединение человека и мира с безусловным и всецельным началом. Это начало, как всецельное или всеобъемлющее, ничего не исключает, а потому истинное воссоединение с ним, истинная религия не может исключать, или подавлять, или насильственно подчинять себе какой бы то ни было элемент, какую бы то ни было живую силу в человеке и его мире.
>
> Воссоединение, или религия, состоит в приведении всех стихий человеческого бытия, всех частных начал и сил человечества в правильное отношение к безусловному центральному началу, а через него и в нем к правильному согласному отношению их между собой.[106]

Religion as 'vossoedinenie' is understood as the achievement of 'free unity', and the relationship between the different elements of the unity is one of perfect 'solidarity' and 'brotherhood'. Although Solov'ev understands the 'bezuslovnoe nachalo' in traditional Christian terms as the Divine, the Logos, his originality lies in his exploration of the nature of this 'nachalo' as an ideal unity of constituent parts. Solov'ev defines the 'bozhestvennoe nachalo' as the Absolute, and the 'all'. This 'all' is an all-embracing 'vsetselost'', a 'vseobshchaia ideia' which he identifies as love:

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[104] V.S. Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1989, ii, pp. 5-6.
[105] Ibid., pp. 6-14.
[106] Ibid., p. 14.

> Безусловная любовь есть именно то идеальное все, та всецелость, которая составляет собственное содержание божественного начала. Ибо полнота идей не может быть мыслима как механическая их совокупность, а именно как их внутреннее единство, которое есть любовь.[107]

This emphasis on love recalls the central importance of what Khomiakov called the 'nravstvennyi zakon vzaimnoi liubvi' to Slavophile conceptions of *sobornost'* as the original Christian idea of 'edinstvo vo mnozhestve', which is free unity.[108] Similarly, Solov'ev also describes this ultimate unity as a 'living organism' and compares it to the theological concept of the Trinity. Like St Paul's vision of the Christian Church, it is 'universal'nyi' yet 'individual'nyi', while always being more than a sum of its constituent parts.[109]

As part of this ultimate *vseedinstvo*, man, for Solov'ev, is also to be understood as both individual and universal, forming a 'vsechelovecheskii organizm':

> Как божественные силы образуют один цельный, безусловно универсальный и безусловно идивидуальный организм живого Логоса, так все человеческие элементы образуют такой же цельный, вместе универсальный и индивидуальный организм – необходимое осуществление и вместилище первого – организм всечеловеческий, как вечное тело Божие и вечная душа мира.[110]

Man too cannot be understood as a sum of constituent parts, a 'riad sobytii i gruppa faktov' but as an 'osobennoe sushchestvo, neobkhodimoe i nezamenimoe zveno v absoliutnom tselom'.[111] Man's uniqueness lies in the fact that he forms the link between the divine and the natural worlds, being a part of both of them, and this idea is crucial to Solov'ev's *vseedinstvo*, which in effect is the realisation of the unity of heaven and earth and even the establishment of heaven on earth. Edie identifies *bogochelovechestvo* as Solov'ev's 'fundamental and essential principle', providing him with 'the necessary link to

[107] Ibid., p. 56.
[108] Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 148; A.S. Khomiakov, *Sochineniia bogoslovskie*, St Petersburg, 1995, p. 279.
[109] Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, ii, pp. 97-107.
[110] Ibid., pp. 118-19.
[111] Ibid., p. 119.

achieve his philosophical aim, a philosophy of total-unity embracing all aspects of reality and uniting science and philosophy on the one hand and theology on the other in the ultimate synthesis which is reality.'[112] For Solov'ev, the significance of the Incarnation is specifically the uniting of God and man to achieve *vseedinstvo*, which man cannot bring about on his own. Christ is the 'second Adam' in that both are the *vseedinaia lichnost'* embodying the totality of mankind:

> всеединая личность, заключающая в себе все природное человечество, так и второй Адам не есть только *это* индивидуальное существо, но вместе с тем и универсальное, обнимающее собою все возрожденное, духовное человечество.[113]

The manifestation of *bogochelovechestvo* is the Church as the body of Christ, which began as small groups of early Christians but which will at the end of time 'obniat' soboiu vse chelovechestvo i vsiu prirodu v odnom vselenskom bogochelovecheskom organizme.'[114]

Both Solov'ev's analysis of the divided state of contemporary Christianity, and the solution he proposes differ significantly from those offered by Khomiakov and Kireevskii. If the Catholic Church distorted and rejected Christian truth, the Eastern Church preserved this truth 'in the soul' but failed to realise it in terms of creating a Christian culture. The conclusions which Solov'ev draws from the split of the Church into these two opposing interpretations of Christian truth are deeply synthetic. Both the Eastern emphasis on a narrow preservation of the divine and the Western prioritisation of the human at the expense of the divine are essential, for:

> истинное богочеловеческое общество, созданное по образу и подобию самого Богочеловека, должно представлять свободное согласование божественного и человеческого начала.[115]

[112] Edie, *Russian Philosophy*, iii, p. 58.
[113] Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, ii, p. 152.
[114] Ibid., p. 160.
[115] Ibid., p. 168.

Moreover, as the concluding passage of 'Chteniia o bogochelovechestve' suggests, the historical divisions of the Church are also seen by Solov'ev as integral to the attainment of *vseedinstvo*:

> В истории христианства представительницею неподвижной божественной основы в человечестве является церковь Восточная, представителем человеческого начала – мир Западный. И здесь, прежде чем стать оплодотворяющим началом церкви, разум должен был отойти от нее, чтобы на свободе развить все свои силы, и после того как человеческое начало вполне обособилось и познало затем свою немощь в этом обособлении, может оно вступить в свободное сочетание с божественною основою христианства, сохраняемою в Восточной церкви, и вследствие этого свободного сочетания породить духовное человечество.[116]

This vision of the synthesis of the divine and the human, to be achieved through the reuniting of the Eastern and Western churches, throws into relief two important aspects of Solov'ev's particular development of *tselostnost'* which one can trace throughout his writings. In the first place, Solov'ev's interpretation of wholeness is universal in spirit. With *vseedinstvo*, Solov'ev moved beyond the more national focus of Kireevskii and Khomiakov in an attempt to establish an all-embracing philosophical system based on the idea of synthesis, which, however, was still inspired by the Slavophile idealisation of the early Church as representing a perfect kind of unity in *sobornost'*. Secondly, Solov'ev's philosophy is characterised by the idea of the return to an original and ideal whole as the dynamic of the world. In 'Chteniia o bogochelovechestve', Solov'ev argues that in falling from an original, divine unity, the natural world has become a 'khaos razroznennykh elementov.'[117] However, even in this fragmented state, the natural world always contains the potential for 'ideal unity' and will thus always strive towards it: 'Postepennoe osushchestvlenie etogo stremleniia, postepennaia realizatsiia ideal'nogo vseedinstva sostavliaet smysl i tsel' mirovogo protsessa.'[118] Similarly, in his unfinished 'Filosofskie nachala tsel'nogo znaniia' (1877), Solov'ev envisages

[116] Ibid., pp. 169-70.
[117] Ibid., p. 133.
[118] Ibid., p. 134.

historical evolution as the development from a state of 'undifferentiated unity', through a phase of 'differentiation' where the whole fragments into its constituent parts, and then finally to 'reintegration' into a 'free unity'.[119]

The assessment offered here of Solov'ev's contribution to the idea of *tselostnost'* is necessarily limited and cannot do justice to the manifold and complex ways in which Solov'ev's writings develop the idea of the whole. It is clear, however, that Solov'ev's thought represented a new level of philosophical investigation into the ideal of the whole in Russian thought.[120] His concept of *vseedinstvo* formed the point of departure for an entire generation of Russian religious philosophers in the first half of the twentieth century. Semen Frank (1887-1950), Lev Karsavin (1882-1952), Pavel Florenskii (1882-1937) and Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) can be seen as the main theorists of what Zen'kovskii calls the 'metafizika vseedinstva'.[121] A further important figure is Aleksei Losev (1893-1988), to whose extraordinarily extensive and diverse philosophical oeuvre the idea of *vseedinstvo* is fundamental.[122]

Fedor Dostoevskii (1821-1881)

Dostoevskii occupies a particular place in the history of *tselostnost'* as an idea. Even within the more inclusive tradition of philosophical thought in Russia, with its use of different genres and discourses, it is clear that the body of Dostoevskii's writing is difficult to compare directly with any of the thinkers discussed above, even those who are not as systematic as Solov'ev. Here it is important to move beyond the fundamental debate about whether Dostoevskii

[119] Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 376.
[120] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, II-1, p. 69.
[121] For his account of their articulation of *vseedinstvo*, see Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii,* II-2, pp. 144-226. For a particularly interesting discussion of Frank's creation of a unified philosophical system based on the idea of Solov'ev's *vseedinstvo*, see Philip Boobbyer, *S.L. Frank: The Life and Work of a Russian Philosopher, 1877-1950*, Athens, OH, 1995.
[122] For a discussion of Losev's articulation of synthesis, see Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat*, pp. 211-34. For an example of Losev's investigation into Solov'ev's concept of *vseedinstvo*, see his early work 'Vysshii sintez kak schast'e i vedenie', in A.F. Losev, *Vysshii sintez: Neizvestnyi Losev*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 13-33.

should be considered a philosopher proper, even in the Russian sense, or 'merely' a philosophical writer.[123] The study of Dostoevskii's thought in its entirety is outside the scope of this analysis, but at least in terms of his interaction with the ideal of the whole, the fundamental difference between Dostoevskii's writings and those of the thinkers discussed above is that Dostoevskii did not develop *tselostnost'* as a philosophical concept. Instead, in both his fiction and non-fiction, Dostoevskii voices with characteristic brilliance earlier conceptions of the whole. It should be noted that in spite of the mutual admiration and interest which appears to have existed between Dostoevskii, Fedorov and Solov'ev, it is Kireevskii and Khomiakov's conceptions of *tselostnost'*, as well as some of Chaadaev's ideas, which are reflected in Dostoevskii's writings.[124] Dostoevskii's expression of these ideas should be seen within the context of his adoption of a more generally Slavophile position in philosophy as well as in politics. However complex Dostoevskii's relationship with the political Slavophilism of his time may have been, the writings of the classical Slavophile thinkers remained an important influence on Dostoevskii throughout his life. Khomiakov and Kireevskii's views on Russia's past as the source of European renewal were a theoretical affirmation of conclusions Dostoevskii reached during his period of exile in Siberia: that Russia's salvation depended on a return of the Westernised elite to the original Russian values of the 'people'.

The following analysis of the expression of *tselostnost'* in Dostoevskii's writing is necessarily highly selective, and takes its examples from parts of his non-fictional work: *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiakh* (1863) and *Dnevnik pisatelia* (1873-1881), including his famous 'Pushkin speech' of 1880. In this context, Sarah Hudspith's study *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness: A New Perspective on Unity and Brotherhood* is an important source. Hudspith examines the links between Dostoevskii and Slavophilism by

[123] For two different discussions of Dostoevskii as a 'philosopher', see: Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat*, pp. 83-99, and Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, pp. 1-13.
[124] For the link between Dostoevskii, Fedorov and Solov'ev, see the following studies: Anastasiia Gacheva, *F.M. Dostoevskii i N.F. Fedorov: Vstrechi v russkoi kul'ture*, Moscow, 2008; Marina Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision*, London, 1997.

tracing the concepts of *sobornost'* and *tsel'nost'* through his journalism, his novels and stories and his conception of the artistic process. Of particular interest is her identification of Dostoevskii's idea of *obosoblenie*, which he employs to describe 'the fragmentation of a society or an individual', as the opposite of *tsel'nost* and *sobornost'*. The concept of *obosoblenie*, one could argue, forms the central idea in Dostoevskii's critique of the effects of rationalism on Western and Russian society. Hudspith translates *obosoblenie* as 'dissociation', but notes that it also conveys isolation and alienation. This is the sense of Dostoevskii's description of Western Europe as brutally individualistic and lacking in any proper 'brotherhood' in *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiakh*. The 'anthill' of capitalist society in London represents, for Dostoevskii, the

> упорная, глухая и уже застарелая борьба, борьба на смерть всеобщезападного личного начала с необходимостью хоть как-нибудь ужиться вместе, хоть как-нибудь составить общину.[125]

Bourgeois French society, while claiming to live under the banner of socialism's 'Liberté, égalité, fraternité', is, Dostoevskii argues, no better, as its *svoboda* and *bratstvo* are an empty pretence.[126] True brotherhood, cannot be 'created' as it is part of the national character, and notably absent from the individualistic Western European nature. Against this Dostoevskii sets a vision of a 'bratskaia obshchina', which echoes the Slavophile ideal of the peasant commune as a perfect expression of *sobornost'*.[127] Dostoevskii describes as his ideal the 'free unity' of a collective based on principles of Christian love and self-sacrifice:

> самовольное, совершенно сознательное и никем не принужденное самопожертвование всего себя в пользу всех есть […] признак высочайшего развития личности […], высочайшей свободы собственной воли.[128]

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[125] F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols, Leningrad, 1972-90, v, p. 69.
[126] Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, v, p. 79.
[127] See Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 56 and also Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865*, London, 1986, pp. 243-44.
[128] Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, v, p. 79.

Further, Dostoevskii argues that this 'potrebnost' bratskoi obshchiny' is specific to certain nations: one must be born with it or have acquired it as a habit from time immemorial.[129]

These same ideas are expressed in two entries from Dostoevskii's *Dnevnik pisatelia* for March 1876 entitled 'Obosoblenie' and 'Mechty o Evrope'. Dostoevskii talks of the contemporary period as an 'epokha vseobshchego "obosobleniia"' in which all common links are rejected in favour of individual thoughts and feelings.[130] Further on, he describes the 'chrezvychainoe […] khimicheskoe razlozhenie nashego obshchestva na sostavnye ego nachala', and a situation where all are '"sami ot sebia i sami po sebe"'.[131] Russia's Westernised elite, whom Dostoevskii criticised throughout his career for alienating themselves from the 'people', is likened here to a bunch of old and weak twigs which, as soon as their bond breaks, are carried off in different directions by the wind.[132] In Europe, however, the situation is far graver and beyond repair:

> Там же, в Европе, уже никакой пучок не свяжется более; там все обособилось, не по-нашему, а зрело, ясно, и отчетливо, там группы и единицы доживают последние сроки.[133]

In France, for example, the process of the *obosoblenie* of political parties is so far advanced that the 'organizm strany' is irreparably damaged and people are sustaining themselves with an 'illusion of wholeness'.[134]

Hudspith has argued that the themes of *obosoblenie*, *tsel'nost'* and *sobornost'* are particularly important to the whole of Dostoevskii's *Dnevnik pisatelia* for 1880, including the Pushkin speech itself, its preface and its commentary. It provides 'the most complete statement of Dostoevskii's interpretation of the central concerns of Slavophilism', and synthesises many of

[129] Ibid., p. 80. See also Zen'kovskii's opinion that Dostoevskii was strongly influenced by Fedorov's conception of the *nebratstvo* of contemporary society: Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-2, pp. 238-39.
[130] Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, xxii, p. 80.
[131] Ibid., p. 83.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., p. 84.
[134] Ibid., p. 85.

his previous arguments.[135] The speech alone expresses in the opposites of Pushkin's characters Aleko and Onegin, on the one hand, and Tat'iana and Pushkin himself on the other, the contrasting poles of *obosoblenie* and *tsel'nost'*. Aleko appears to Dostoevskii as the perfect embodiment of the 'neschastnyi skitalets v rodnoi zemle' who is an inevitable result of Russia's educated society which had cut itself off from the 'people'.[136] Dostoevskii's description of Aleko and Onegin echoes Chadaaev's image of Russians as rootless wanderers in their own country. Of Aleko he writes 'on ved' v svoei zemle sam ne svoi […]. On poka vsego tol'ko otorvannaia, nosiashchaiasia po vozdukhu bylinka.'[137] Equally, Onegin is 'kak by u sebia zhe v gostiakh', and 'U nego nikakoi pochvy, eto bylinka, nosimaia vetrom.'[138] Tat'iana, by contrast, has 'nechto tverdoe i nezyblemoe, na chto opiraetsia ee dusha'. Her existence stands firmly on a complete foundation which comes from her roots in her native land, her native people and all their sacred values.[139] She has taken what Dostoevskii calls elsewhere the 'spasitel'naia doroga smirennnogo obshcheniia s narodom'.[140]

Pushkin's genius, for Dostoevskii, stems from the same connection with the people and their culture. Unlike most of his educated contemporaries, Pushkin 'nashel […] svoi idealy v rodnoi zemle' and therefore in his work he was able to express the 'spirit' of the People.[141] In the 'Pushkin speech', the figure of Pushkin appears as an image of a Russian capacity for *tselostnost'* which echoes classical Slavophile ideas of the *tsel'naia lichnost'*. Dostoevskii describes Pushkin as a complete, integrated organism who was uniquely capable of 'vsemirnaia otzyvchivost'', which is the 'glavneishaia sposobnost' nashei natsional'nosti'.[142] Pushkin expresses the universal nature of the Russian spirit, which constantly strives towards 'vsemirnost'' and

[135] Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 83.
[136] Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, xxvi, pp. 137-38.
[137] Ibid., p. 138.
[138] Ibid., p. 140 and p. 143.
[139] Ibid., p. 143.
[140] Ibid., p. 138.
[141] Ibid., p. 137 and p. 144.
[142] Ibid., p. 145.

‘vsechelovechnost’’.[143] Through their special ability to respond to other nations throughout their history, the Russian people have shown their readiness to accomplish what Dostoevskii calls ‘vseobshchoe obshchechelovecheskoe vossoedinenie’. In Russia, one finds the truly universal person (‘vsechelovek’), represented by Pushkin, and for this reason Russia’s mission must be a universal one.[144] In Dostoevskii’s description of the nature of this mission, one finds a vision of the reconciliation of the divided and ‘obosoblennyi’ societies and nations of Europe into a harmonious, brotherly union which represents the *sobornost’* of true Christianity. To be truly Russian, Dostoevskii writes, it is necessary to:

> стремиться внести примирение в европейские противоречия уже окончательно, указать исход европейской тоске в своей русской душе, всечеловечной и всесоединяющей, вместить в нее с братской любовию всех наших братьев, а в конце концов, может быть, и изречь окончательное слово великой общей гармонии, братского окончательного согласия всех племен по Христову евангельскому закону![145]

Zen’kovskii describes Dostoevskii’s thought as having ‘great dialectical power’, and it is from this point of view that one can best understand the importance of Dostoevskii to the history of *tselostnost’*. Dostoevskii may not have developed the ideas he inherited from Kireevskii and Khomiakov, but his writings offer a powerful expression of these ideas which has had a far-reaching impact on twentieth-century Russian philosophy and culture, as will be discussed in the next section.

The transmission of the concept of *tselostnost’* from nineteenth-century Russian philosophy to twentieth-century Soviet culture

As the above analysis has demonstrated, *tselostnost’* was a central theme of Russian speculative philosophy as it developed in the nineteenth

[143] Ibid., p. 147.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., p. 148.

century. The vision of being as an ideal whole, set against the fragmentation of the 'fallen' human world, is fundamental to all the thinkers discussed. Moreover, *tselostnost'* and its opposite – whether *razdvoenie*, *raspadenie*, *razlad* or *obosoblenie* – form the axis along which these thinkers theorise over a wide range of philosophical questions. It is pivotal to their understanding both of man in general, and of human cognition. It shapes their interpretation of the historical relationship between Russia and Western Europe. *Tselostnost'* is at the heart of their theorising about the distinctive Russian identity they sought to affirm philosophically, culturally, socially and even politically. The ideal invoked for *tselostnost'* is the same in all of these thinkers: the *sobornost'* of the true Universal Church, inspired by St Paul's vision of the Church as a body with many parts.

In attempting to account for how these ideas may have been transmitted from their origins in nineteenth-century philosophy to the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii, it is important to consider first the way in which the 1917 Revolution affected the development of Russian philosophy in general. Overall, the picture is one of the rupture of a tradition which, under the relaxed censorship after the 1905 Revolution, had begun to flourish as never before. As Stanislav Dzhimbinov has noted, the period from 1905 to 1918 saw the publication of an unprecedented quantity of important works by philosophers of the period such as Florenskii, Frank, Berdiaev, Bulgakov and Evgenii Trubetskoi, as well as of works by the nineteenth-century thinkers discussed above, whose books had in some cases, as with Chaadaev, been banned prior to 1905.[146] Many of these works were printed by the two most prominent philosophical publishing houses set up during this period, Put' and G. Leman and S. Sakharov.[147] A two-volume edition of Chaadaev's *Sochineniia i pis'ma* was published by Put' in Moscow in 1913-14. Khomiakov's writings appeared in an eight-volume *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* in Moscow in 1900-06, and also

[146] Stanislav Bemovich Dzhimbinov, 'The Return of Russian Philosophy', in James P. Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism: The Recovery of a Philosophical Heritage*, London, 1994, pp. 11-22 (pp. 13-15 and p. 17).
[147] Ibid., p. 14.

in a six-volume *Sochineniia* in Petrograd in 1915. In 1911, Put' brought out a two-volume *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* of Kireevskii's works. None of Fedorov's extensive body of writings was published during his lifetime. After his death in 1903, a three-volume edition of his work entitled *Filosofiia obshchego dela: Stat'i, mysli i pis'ma Nikolaia Fedorovicha Fedorova* was prepared for publication by his friends and followers. Of the three volumes, only the first two were actually printed: Volume One in 1906 in Vernyi, and Volume Two in 1913 in Moscow. Finally, Solov'ev's works appeared in a ten-volume *Sobranie sochinenii* in St Petersburg in 1911-14.

Following Lenin's deportation of Russia's most prominent non-Marxist philosophers in 1922, among whom were Berdiaev, Bulgakov, Frank, Losskii, Ivan Il'in, Karsavin and Boris Vysheslavtsev, the tradition of Russian religious philosophy in effect ceased to exist in the Soviet Union, and continued only in exile, primarily in Paris.[148] From this time until the 1980s, the works of Russia's religious philosophers were simply not published in the Soviet Union. Even the Thaw in the late fifties and early sixties had little effect on this situation. Although Losskii's and Zen'kovskii's histories of Russian philosophy appeared in 1954 and 1956, albeit in small print runs with a limited distribution, the works of the nineteenth-century philosophers discussed in this chapter were republished only in the 1980s.[149] The tradition of idealist philosophy which had developed in Russia in the nineteenth century represented a direct challenge to the new Soviet state's espousal of dialectical materialism as the official 'philosophy'. Indeed, in the 1920s, philosophy as a discipline was regarded by many of those committed to the Soviet project as an outmoded, decadent and superfluous pursuit which, along with religion, could have no place in Soviet culture. As Clowes notes, this view of conventional idealist philosophy is reflected in Platonov's damning review in 1922 of Karsavin's *Noctes*

[148] Ibid., p. 15.
[149] Ibid., p. 16. The following is a list of the first editions of these philosophers' work to appear after the Revolution: P.Ia. Chaadaev, *Stat'i i pis'ma*, Moscow, 1989, and *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pis'ma*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1991; A.S. Khomiakov, *O starom i novom: Stat'i i ocherki*, Moscow, 1988; I.V. Kireevskii, *Kritika i estetika*, Moscow, 1979, and *Izbrannye stat'i,* Moscow, 1984; N.F. Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, Moscow, 1982; V.S. Solov'ev, *Sochineniia*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1988.

Petropolitanae, a review which was cited as evidence against Karsavin when he was arrested that year.[150]

In this, as Dzhimbinov has pointed out, the fate of pre-Revolutionary Russian philosophy after 1917 was very different to that of nineteenth-century Russian literature.[151] Publication of Tolstoi's collected works in ninety volumes began in 1928 and continued until completion in 1958, and the fourteen-volume edition of Gogol''s writings was printed in the period from 1937 to 1952. As was mentioned in the Introduction, the centenary of Pushkin's death in 1937 was marked by official attempts to reinterpret the poet as part of the Soviet literary heritage and followed by regular republications of his works, including the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* in seventeen volumes (1937-59). The marked difference in the publication history of works of nineteenth-century philosophy and works of nineteenth-century literature in the Soviet period is of particular importance to the present discussion as Dostoevskii, like Tolstoi or Pushkin, but unlike the other thinkers discussed in this chapter, was published throughout the Soviet era. As Mary Mackler has noted, starting with Lenin and Gor'kii's pre-Revolutionary critique of Dostoevskii as 'reactionary and obscurantist', Dostoevskii's works did not fit well with Soviet literary ideals, yet even in the period from the 1920s to Stalin's death in 1954, his writings continued to appear in various editions, although some of his works were published more frequently than others.[152] The first Soviet edition of Dostoevskii's collected works, *Polnoe sobranie khudozhestvennykh proizvedenii*, was brought out in thirteen volumes from 1926-30 and included both *Besy* and *Dnevnik pisatelia*, both works which, as already mentioned above and also in Chapter Three below, are particularly expressive of a Slavophile position and which were published much more rarely than, for example, *Bednye liudi*, *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* or *Unizhennye i oskorblennye*.[153] These

[150] Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat*, pp. 235-37.
[151] Dzhimbinov, 'The Return of Russian Philosophy', pp. 11-13.
[152] Mary Mackler, 'Introduction', in Leonid Grossman, *Dostoevsky: A Biography*, trans. Mary Mackler, London, 1974, pp. xv-xxii (p. xvii).
[153] Dostoevskii's *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniiakh* was included in the ten-volume *Sobranie sochinenii* edited by Leonid Grossman which appeared shortly after Stalin's death in

latter works appeared in various editions even during the period from 1935 to 1954 when Dostoevskii's reputation was at its lowest ebb during the Soviet period, following the plan to publish *Besy*, 'the filthiest libel against the Revolution', as a separate edition in 1935.[154]

Data on the official publication of the nineteenth-century thinkers central to this thesis, in both the pre-Revolutionary period from 1905 to 1917 and throughout the Soviet era, could be said to be more illuminating of the changes in official ideology than revealing of how twentieth-century Soviet artists might be exposed to these pre-Revolutionary philosophers' ideas. This, however, is a misleading view, as it was the pre-1917 editions of these books which formed the basis of any knowledge of these philosophers in the Soviet period. In the pre-samizdat context in which Platonov lived, his much discussed personal copy of Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela* must have been the 1906 edition.[155] Moreover, according to Vladimir Smirnov,

> the pre-1917 editions of Russian philosophy had actually always been freely available in the public libraries; they never formed part of the special depositories and, what is more, in the years following the Second World War these pre-1917 editions could also be bought in second-hand bookshops.[156]

Equally, the samizdat copies of works by the nineteenth-century religious philosophers which were in circulation amongst the Soviet intelligentsia of

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1956-58. For a complete account of Soviet publications of Dostoevskii's writings from the Revolution to the 1960s, see V.V. Akopdzhanova et al (eds.), *F.M. Dostoevskii: Bibliografiia proizvedenii F.M. Dostoevskogo i literatury o nem, 1917-1965*, Moscow, 1968.

[154] David Zaslavskii, a journalist, in an article in *Pravda*, 20 January 1935, quoted by Mackler. Mackler, 'Introduction', p. xix.

[155] See the discussion in Chapter Two below: Part One, Section I.

[156] Quoted by Galin Tikhanov in 'Continuities in the Soviet Period', in William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (eds.), *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 311-39 (p. 322). This appears to have been in contrast to the situation concerning the works of the émigré twentieth-century Russian religious philosophers like Berdiaev which were published in exile. Where available, these works formed part of the 'special archives' of Soviet libraries and could be consulted only be certain privileged scholars. See, for example, Piama P. Gaidenko, 'The Philosophy of Freedom of Nikolai Berdiaev', in Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism*, pp. 104-20 (p. 104).

Tarkovskii's and Rasputin's generation from the late 1950s would also have been based on pre-Revolutionary editions.[157]

The above discussion outlines the context within which Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii would have gained access to the texts of those nineteenth-century philosophers who were preoccupied with the idea of *tselostnost'*. It is, however, also essential to consider the issue of transmission of this idea from the pre-Revolutionary to the Soviet context in the light of the vagaries in the influence of the individual philosophers at different points during the Soviet era up to the relaxation of censorship under Gorbachev's policy of glasnost. Here, the picture presented is a more complex one which does not always match up to the general impression of a philosophical tradition which disappeared from view after 1917, losing all intellectual, political and social influence, until it was rediscovered on an unofficial level from the late 1950s onwards and finally 'returned' officially in the late 1980s. The different philosophical sources from which Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovksii drew their conception of wholeness are an illustration of the complexity of this picture. Thus, for example, although in the first part of the Soviet era the ideas espoused by the nineteenth-century religious philosophers played no active role in Soviet culture and society, Fedorov's theories were extraordinarily influential, particularly during the 1920s. His ideas were taken up by a wide range of writers, scientists and thinkers, all of whom were committed to the Soviet project.[158] The discussion of Fedorov's influence on Platonov in Chapter Two is illuminating of the way that Fedorov's ideas acted as a strange moment of continuity between pre- and post-Revolutionary periods, although his philosophy, like that of the other thinkers discussed above, had a religious base and his work was equally banned from publication. Of central importance in explaining this situation are Fedorov's scientific ideas for the improvement of man's natural environment and his dream of man taking his mortality in his own hands, ideas which set him apart from his fellow thinkers in the nineteenth

[157] For a discussion of the development of samizdat, see Stephen Lovell, *The Russian Reading Revolution: Print Culture in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras*, Basingstoke, 2000, pp. 109-13.
[158] See Chapter Two, Part One below.

century. As is the case with Platonov, it was precisely these ideas which were so influential on early Soviet intellectual debate, and the Christian origin and framework of Fedorov's system was effectively ignored. This, as Vladimir Sharov has argued, was made easier by the fact that Fedorov's philosophical system, while clearly religious in spirit and focus, is centred on a theologically highly unorthodox revision of the essential relationship between man and his Creator, in which universal resurrection becomes a human, and not a divine task.[159] In this connection, it is interesting to note Sharov's theory that the 'eskhatologicheskii kharakter' of Soviet communism as it emerged from the Civil War owes far more to Fedorov's vision than Marxist ideas.[160] He argues

> деятельный, жизнеутверждающий атеизм большевиков с не меньшим основанием, чем из Маркса, я бы выводил и из федоровской *Философии общего дела*. И впрямь, если ждать Христа больше не нужно, все необходимое для спасения человеческого рода он уже дал – остальное мы можем и должны делать сами, своими руками […]. Надо работать, денно и нощно работать, и не ждать милости ни от Бога, ни от природы.[161]

Conversely, Rasputin and Tarkovskii's interest in the idea of *tselostnost'* can be mapped onto the more straightforward context of the growing influence of the Russian nineteenth-century religious philosophers on an unofficial level from the late 1950s. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, on one level the renewed interest in these thinkers went hand in hand with the rise of the Russian nationalist debate from this period, and the expression of the concept of *tselostnost'* in Rasputin's work can be understood as emerging from this particular part of the rediscovery of Russian nineteenth-century philosophy. It is worth mentioning that the ideas of the nineteenth-century thinkers, and particularly the classical Slavophile thinkers Kireevskii and Khomiakov, were transmitted to this particular context indirectly as well as directly from the original texts. Of particular importance here is the twentieth-century émigré religious philosopher Ivan Il'in (1883-1954). The theme of *tselostnost'* in Il'in's

[159] Sharov, 'Mezh dvukh revoliutsii', p. 187.
[160] Ibid., p. 186.
[161] Ibid., p. 187.

thought is inspired primarily by the classical Slavophile conception of it, mediated in part by the influence of Dostoevskii for whom he had great admiration.[162] His understanding of Russian identity is rooted in Russian Orthodoxy's embodiment of true Christian mutual love as opposed to the more rationalistic approach to religion in the Western churches. His argument that 'russkaia ideia est' ideia svobodnogo sozertsaiushchego serdtsa' echoes Kireevskii's idea of the 'tsel'noe zrenie uma' as the 'inner focus' of Orthodox theology.[163] Moreover, his prophetic vision of the disintegration of the 'living organism' of Russia into the chaos and conflict of a 'gigantic Balkans' after communism clearly reflects the classical Slavophile understanding of Russian history.[164] Another, even more potent channel through which Slavophile conceptions of *tselostnost'* were transmitted to the post-Stalinist nationalist context is to be found in Dostoevskii's writings, which, as has been discussed, were openly available during the entire Soviet era. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, many late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century Russian nationalists (or 'neo-Slavophiles' as they have sometimes been called) received Khomiakov and Kireevskii's ideas primarily through Dostoevskii's 'redaktsiia' of them.

Given Dostoevskii's role as an enduring influence on Russian literature and culture from his lifetime to the present day, it is not surprising that his work was an equally important conduit of nineteenth-century philosophical conceptions of the whole for other intellectual circles active in the rediscovery of pre-Revolutionary religious philosophy. Debate in these circles was inspired by a more general interest in finding a renewed source of artistic and even personal inspiration in the rich past of pre-Revolutionary Russian philosophy and culture, eschewing a political, nationalist interpretation of these ideas, and it is within this context that Tarkovskii's interest in *tselostnost'*, discussed in Chapter Four, can be understood. Tarkovskii's lifelong fascination with

[162] Iu.I. Sokhriakov, *I.A. Il'in: Religioznyi myslitel' i literaturnyi kritik*, Moscow, 2004, p. 31.
[163] Ivan Il'in, 'O russkoi idee', in I.A. Il'in, *Nashi zadachi: Stat'i 1948-1954*, 2 vols, Paris, 1956, i, pp. 312-21.
[164] Ivan Il'in, 'Chto sulit miru raschlenenie Rossii', in Il'in, *Nashi zadachi*, i, pp. 245-55.

Dostoevskii and repeated attempts to make a film about him are well known, and his diaries bear witness to this preoccupation.[165] They also reveal his search for inspiration through knowledge of the great thinkers of the Russian philosophical tradition.[166] The spirit of Tarkovskii's intellectual dialogue with these nineteenth-century thinkers is, moreover, beautifully encapsulated in his quotation in *Zerkalo* (1974) of Pushkin's letter in response to Chaadaev's 'Pis'mo pervoe'. This text, in which the beginnings of Russian philosophy and Russian literature intersect in a discourse about Russian history, is presented by Tarkovskii untrammelled by any nationalist interpretation, forming a sophisticated allusion to the richness and complexity of the pre-Soviet past.[167]

[165] See the discussion of Dostoevskii's influence on Tarkovskii in Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 254-58. In Tarkovskii's diaries, see his discussion in an entry for 30 April 1970 concerning the making of a film about Dostoevskii with Solonitsyn in the lead role. Andrei Tarkovskii, *Martirolog: Dnevniki 1970-1986*, Florence, 2008, p. 17.
[166] See, for example, his diary entries for 30 April 1970 and 23 August 1981. Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 17 and p. 349.
[167] Letter written by Pushkin to Chaadaev on 19 October 1836. For the full text of this letter translated from the original French into Russian, see A.S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 17 vols, Moscow, 1937-59 [reprinted Moscow, 1994], xvi, pp. 392-93.

Chapter Two

The struggle to restore *tselostnost'* in a disintegrating world: Andrei Platonov

Introduction

Memory is not a theme that one might immediately associate with Andrei Platonov. His humble origins and technical education, coupled with his sincere commitment to the communist ideal and to science as the way to improve human life meant that this was a man whose gaze was firmly fixed on the future. His faith in the unerring forward dynamic of progress is palpable in his early article 'Proletarskaia poeziia' (1921), where he confidently asserts:

> Мы топчем свои мечты и заменяем их действительностью. […]
>
> История есть путь к спасению через победу человека над вселенной. И мы идем к бессмертию человечества и спасению его от казематов физических законов, стихий, дезорганизованности, случайности, тайны и ужаса.[168]

This orientation towards the future is reflected in the narratives of the greater part of his prose. Platonov is probably most frequently defined through his two most famous works, the novel *Chevengur* (1927) and the *povest' Kotlovan* (1930), both of which deal with the dream of building a communist utopia. However, even if one surveys the span of the numerous stories he wrote from the early 1920s to the late 1940s, their protagonists share dreams of a better world. This is as true, for example, in the early science fiction stories like 'Potomki solntsa' (1922), 'Lunnaia bomba' (1926) and 'Efirnyi trakt' (1926), as in 'Epifanskie shliuzi' (1926) set in Petrine Russia or in 'Sokrovennyi chelovek' (1927). In these stories, and in *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, the past

[168] Andrei Platonov, 'Proletarskaia poeziia', in Andrei Platonov, *Sochineniia*, ed. N.V. Kornienko, *Tom I: 1918-1927*, ed. E.V. Antonova, Moscow, 2004, *Kniga 2*, pp. 162-67 (p. 162). [To date only the first volume of the *Sochineniia*, comprising two books, has been published. Henceforth the two books will be referred to as *Sochineniia*, I-1 and *Sochineniia*, I-2.]

barely features, seemingly pushed to the margins of Platonov's literary world by the all-consuming vision of the future.

Equally, *tselostnost'* is not a term that one would immediately associate with Platonov's literary portrayal of the world. Indeed, man and nature in Platonov's prose are evoked in opposite terms of decay and fragmentation. In spite of these impressions, however, both memory and wholeness are ideas which play a significant, if more subtle role in Platonov's prose. In this chapter, it will be argued that Platonov's vision of humanity in his prose is informed by Russian philosophy's understanding of the universe as an ideal whole which is fragmented in the human world. As will be shown, the world of man in Platonov's prose is marked by the same two, opposing dynamics, integrative and disintegrative. Moreover, in common with Andrei Tarkovskii's films and Valentin Rasputin's stories, memory appears here too as man's way of rediscovering the whole.

It is the contention of Chapter Two that in Platonov's writing, both the theme of memory and the concepts of wholeness and fragmentation are shaped by the ideas of Nikolai Fedorov. The chapter begins with a discussion of Fedorov's influence on Platonov, together with an examination of how philosophical ideas are expressed in Platonov's prose. An assessment of the wider sources and context of Fedorov's influence on Platonov suggests that in absorbing Fedorov's ideas often indirectly through various different channels, Platonov was also exposed to the wider debate around concepts of the whole from the Russian philosophical tradition.

The second part of this chapter is an examination of Platonov's expression of the human condition in his prose through readings of 'Rodina elektrichestva' (1926), *Kotlovan*, *Chevengur* and *Dzhan* (1935). Man, in Platonov's world, is involved in a constant struggle to survive in the face of the erosive forces of the natural world. This vision, it will be argued, owes much to Fedorov's conception of man's tragedy as his *nerodstvennost'* with both nature and his fellow man. In Platonov's stories, it is the essential materiality of Fedorov's ideas which inspires his vision of human existence. Fedorov's

preoccupation with man's eternal return to dust is reinterpreted by Platonov as the literal disintegration of his characters into matter. Platonov also evokes the human condition as one of existential isolation. This is expressed in his stories through the theme of *bezottsovshchina*, which itself can be understood as an elaboration on Fedorov's insistence on the duty to remember the fathers.

Part Three investigates the integrative role played by memory in the narratives of Platonov's stories. This analysis is based on readings of *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan*, 'Reka Potudan' (1937) and most importantly *Dzhan*, which represents Platonov's most important narration of a restoration of the whole through memory. The act of remembering emerges in Platonov's prose as essential to human survival in a disintegrating world. It is memory which, in gathering together each and every part of existence, past and present, dead or alive, can preserve it in its *tselostnost'*. This dynamic is expressed in Platonov's stories through two important motifs: the 'gathering' motif and the 'mutual remembrance' motif. These motifs, it will be argued, are informed by the role accorded to memory in Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*, in which man is called to remember the fathers through a gathering up of the remains of the dead fathers to reassemble them in their intact state for resurrection.

During the last fifteen years what is known in Russia as 'Platonovedenie' has developed with astonishing rapidity. This process has been driven by the absolute determination of two dedicated groups of researchers at respectively the Institute of World Literature in Moscow (IMLI RAN) and the Institute of Russian Literature (IRLI RAN) or Pushkin House in St Petersburg. The primary objective of both groups is the ongoing and complex project to restore the integrity of Platonov's texts, many of which were published with significant cuts and alterations after his death. Two of the most important achievements in this field have been the publication of texts of *Kotlovan* and *Dzhan* which are true to Platonov's final manuscripts, both of

which were used for the readings of these stories in this chapter.[169] As will be seen in Parts Two and Three, the cuts to the text of *Dzhan* in particular erased significant parts of Platonov's narration of memory and his theme of *bezottsovshchina*.

Under the leadership of Natal'ia Kornienko, the IMLI group is also working on the publication of a much-needed *Sobranie sochinenii*. This is an enormous task, given that Platonov was a prolific writer not only of prose but also of articles on a huge number of topics – science, technology, philosophy, literature and politics – many of which are dispersed in the archives of regional newspapers. To date, only the first volume has appeared, encompassing his articles, poetry and stories from the early period 1918-1927.[170] Although only covering this early period, the two books of this volume are an indispensable resource for the researcher. The detailed notes provide a meticulous account of the various contexts of each item, covering biographical, social and political background and literary and philosophical allusions. This is particularly useful given that there is still no full account of the chronology of Platonov's life, let alone a proper biography. Sources on Platonov's life remain frustratingly scarce. He does not appear to have written a diary, and although his working notebooks, published in 2000, throw some light on his creative process, they are quite schematic.[171] To date, very few of his letters have been published as they were held by his daughter. This situation is likely to change as, following her death, the family archive has been acquired by IMLI RAN. In due course, it is to be hoped that they will be published as part of the *Sobranie sochinenii*.[172] As

[169] Andrei Platonov, *Kotlovan: Tekst, materialy tvorcheskoi istorii*, St Petersburg, 2000; Andrei Platonov, 'Dzhan', in Andrei Platonov, *Proza*, Moscow, 1999, pp. 437-533.
[170] Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-1 and *Sochineniia*, I-2.
[171] Andrei Platonov, *Zapisnye knizhki: Materialy k biografii*, Moscow, 2000.
[172] As this thesis was being concluded, the first of a series of books containing materials from Platonov's family archive was published. It covers three types of archive material: manuscripts and working documents relating to Platonov's stories, letters, and documents relating to Platonov's life and work. These are all accompanied by detailed commentaries. Even the materials in this first book provide extraordinary and entirely new insights into Platonov's life and work. Of particular interest is the complete correspondence with his wife Mariia Aleksandrovna Platonova for the period from 1921-1945, including all his letters from Central Asia. In addition, the third section of the book contains all the correspondence and official

far as Platonov's prose is concerned, the publication of his novels, *povesti* and many stories in one place and in a definitive form is an essential and long-overdue task. Many of his texts still exist only in a distorted form, and sadly, even those which have been restored like *Kotlovan* and *Dzhan* are still being published in popular editions using the old and incorrect versions of the texts. Indeed, the full text of *Dzhan* is at present impossible to get hold of.

The work of the research groups in Moscow and St Petersburg has also led to the publication of an astonishing number of articles and books on Platonov's work, particularly in the last ten years. The lively critical debate on all aspects of his writings – their context, allusions, style, influences – to date consistently produces new insights into the work of this writer, about whom there appears to be so much more to learn. It is hoped that the following discussion of the themes of *tselostnost'* and memory in Platonov's stories will contribute to these efforts to achieve a more thorough and nuanced understanding of Platonov as a writer.

Part One: Andrei Platonov and Nikolai Fedorov

The question of the intellectual influences shaping Platonov's vision of the world has long been the focus of critical debate. A. Kiselev's early article on *Kotlovan*, appearing in the wake of the story's first publication in the West in 1969, was the first to suggest the ideas of Nikolai Fedorov as a significant influence on the writer.[173] Following this, both Ayleen Teskey and Elena Tolstaia-Segal undertook more extended and detailed analyses of Platonov's philosophical origins, both of which established Fedorov as central to an

documents relating to the great tragedy of Platonov's personal life: the arrest of his son Platon in 1938. N.V. Kornienko (ed.), *Arkhiv A.P. Platonova: Kniga 1*, Moscow, 2009.

[173] A. Kiselev, 'O povesti *Kotlovan* A. Platonova', *Grani*, 77, 1970, pp. 134-43. *Kotlovan* was published for the first time in *Grani* in 1969. (See *Grani*, 70).

understanding of Platonov's work.[174] Since the appearance of these early studies, the debate has been broadened and deepened in books and articles by a whole range of critics such as Natal'ia Duzhina, Natal'ia Kornienko, Thomas Langerak, Nina Malygina, Thomas Seifrid and Valerii V'iugin, all of which acknowledge Platonov's debt to Fedorov.[175] These same critical works also connect Platonov with what can seem a bewilderingly wide range of other thinkers – with Solov'ev, Florenskii, Tsiolkovskii, and Bogdanov, to name but a few.[176]

This somewhat confusing picture of Platonov's intellectual origins is the point of departure for the following discussion, which looks at the different ways in which Fedorov's ideas may have been transmitted to Platonov. This approach aims to unravel some of the complexities surrounding the issue of Platonov's philosophical background. It also suggests that in his absorption of Fedorov's ideas through a multitude of different channels, Platonov was de facto indirectly influenced by a far wider range of ideas from the Russian thought tradition than is immediately apparent. This is followed by a discussion of the spirit and style of Platonov's interaction with philosophical ideas in his prose, which provides a context for the textual analysis in Parts Two and Three of this chapter.

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[174] Teskey, *Platonov and* Fyodorov, and Elena Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty Platonova', reprinted in N.V. Kornienko and E.D. Shubina (eds.), *Andrei Platonov: Mir tvorchestva*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 47-83.

[175] See Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', pp. 135-36; N.V. Kornienko, 'Istoriia teksta i biografiia A.P. Platonova (1926-46)', *Zdes' i teper'*, 1993, 1, pp. 1-320 (pp. 20-22); Langerak, *Platonov*, pp. 45-46; N. Malygina, 'Obrazy-simvoly v tvorchestve A. Platonova' in N.V. Kornienko (ed.), *"Strana filosofov" Andreia Platonova: Problemy tvorchestva*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 162-84 (p. 163); Seifrid, *Platonov*, pp. 20-24; V.Iu. V'iugin, 'Povest' "Kotlovan" v kontekste tvorchestva Andreia Platonova', in Platonov, *Kotlovan*, pp. 5-18 (p. 17).

[176] On Solov'ev, see Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', pp. 104-06; Kornienko, 'Istoriia', p. 23; Malygina 'Obrazy-simvoly', pp. 163-68. On Florenskii, see Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', pp.104-06 and pp. 118-29. On Tsiolkovskii, see Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty', pp. 58-59. On Bogdanov, see Teskey, *Platonov and Fyodorov*, pp. 24-28.

I The sources of Fedorov's influence on Platonov

It has long been an established fact that Platonov studied Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela* in detail: a copy of the work, with his comments in the margins, was found among his personal books and papers.[177] Furthermore, recent research suggests that he may have learnt about Fedorov's ideas indirectly before he read his *Filosofiia obshchego dela*. Apparently, Fedorov had a particularly wide following in Voronezh at the turn of the century, significantly for Platonov 'sredi dukhovenstva, intelligentsii, tak i sluzhashchikh zheleznodorozhnikh masterskikh'.[178] Beyond this, however, the lack of letters and diaries means that there is disappointingly little material showing Platonov's personal reaction to the philosopher: the main source for this remains his prose and his journalism.

Tolstaia-Segal is one of a number of critics who have speculated that Platonov may also have absorbed Fedorov's ideas through other sources and other thinkers.[179] These arguments are highly plausible given the profound and extraordinarily wide-reaching influence Fedorov's ideas seem to have had on prominent philosophers and writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lists of those considered to have been influenced by Fedorov's philosophy commonly include Solov'ev and other religious philosophers like Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Berdiaev and Pavel Florenskii; scientific thinkers like Konstantin Tsiolkovskii, Aleksandr Bogdanov and V.I. Vernadskii; and finally writers and poets: Fedor Dostoevskii and Lev Tolstoi, Maksim Gor'kii, Velimir Khlebnikov and Vladimir Maiakovskii.[180] The fact that Fedorov's ideas seem to have resonated with writers and thinkers from such a variety of literary and philosophical affiliations is significant. As Tolstaia-Segal points out, the major literary groupings at the time when Platonov was developing as a writer were all inspired by Fedorov to some extent, in that their members were familiar with

[177] Kornienko, 'Istoriia', pp. 20-22.
[178] Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-1, p. 486.
[179] See, for example, her discussion of Fedorov's influence on Bogdanov and Tsiolkovskii. Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty', pp. 298-300.
[180] Svetlana Semenova, *Filosof budushchego veka: Nikolai Fedorov*, Moscow, 2004, p. 8.

his ideas and in many cases attracted to them. Thus the Symbolists, LEF and Proletkul't can all be said to have assimilated some elements of Fedorov's thought, and Platonov has been associated more or less directly with all of these groups.[181]

Platonov has also been linked to Russian cosmism, which is in effect the tradition of Russian thought considered to originate with Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*. Russian cosmism is usually understood to consist of two distinct groups: the 'scientific' cosmists like Bogdanov, Tsiolkovskii, Vernadskii and Chizhevskii, and the 'religious-philosophical' cosmists who include Solov'ev, Bulgakov, Berdiaev and Florenskii.[182] Natal'ia Poltavtseva sees Russian cosmism as being defined by two 'general ideas': the 'ideia nauki' associated with the first group, and the 'ideia vseedinstva' which inspired the second group. Poltavtseva views both these ideas as essential to an understanding of Platonov's philosophical worldview, and discusses the influence of the individual thinkers on Platonov. It is the legacy of Solov'ev's *vseedinstvo*, however, which she considers of particular relevance to Platonov: what she terms Russian modernism's 'favourite idea' – 'total synthesis'. Other critics, too, have discerned the traces of Solov'ev's ideas in Platonov's writings. Malygina sees Solov'ev's ideas as having come to Platonov primarily via symbolism, and argues that the writer's vision of the world is characterised by Solov'ev's idea of a tragic 'nesovershenstvo'.[183] The most thought-provoking analysis is made by Heli Kostov, who makes the intriguing suggestion that Platonov's idiosyncratic visions of the revolution and communism are informed by Solov'ev's understanding of the world:

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[181] On Platonov and Symbolism, see Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty', p. 50. On Platonov and LEF, see Langerak, *Platonov*, p. 84. On Platonov and Proletkul't, see ibid., pp. 23-24.

[182] See Anastasiia Gacheva, 'Religiozno-filosofskaia vetv' russkogo kosmizma (1920-1930-e gg.)', in Anastasiia Gacheva et al (eds.), *Filosofskii kontekst russkoi literatury 1920-1930-kh godov*, Moscow, 2003, pp. 79-125 (p. 79) and Natal'ia Poltavtseva 'Tema "obydennogo soznaniia" i ego interpretatsiia v tvorchestve Platonova' in N. V. Kornienko (ed.), *"Strana filosofov" Andreia Platonova: Problemy tvorchestva. Vypusk 4*, Moscow, 2000, pp. 271-81 (p. 275).

[183] Malygina, 'Obrazy-simvoly', p. 163.

> Революционный переворот мыслился Платоновым не столько как событие политическое, сколько как событие космологическое и эсхатологическое, после которого наступит эра ‘царства Божья’ на земле, эра вечной гармонии, единства всего сущего. Представлению Платонова о гармоническом существовании, единстве человека и остального космоса соответствует соловьевская концепция ‘богочеловечества’, абсолютного единства, которое противостоит хаосу, а чаемый платоновскими героями *коммунизм*, по сути, представляет собой реализацию соловьевской идеи ‘всеединства’: в платоновской концепции именно коммунизм является тем ‘окончательным фазисом исторического развития’, когда образуется ‘всецелая жизненная организация’, ‘цельная жизнь’ человечества […].[184]

In many respects Russian cosmism seems the ideal context in which to place Platonov. It combines, as does his work too, a belief in the power of science to transform the world and a spiritual vision of man's part in a greater, mystical unity of being which he can only guess at. It should be stated, however, that the term 'Russian cosmism' itself needs to be used with care. The term is a modern one, and appeared in Soviet discussions of philosophy in the 1970s.[185] It seems to have been conceived as an 'umbrella' term to describe what was clearly a vigorous, if exceedingly diverse, tradition of peculiarly Russian philosophy. Most accounts of Russian cosmism seem to be taken up with a description of the differences between the thinkers, particularly between the scientific and religious branches. Comments on what unites these thinkers are brief by comparison and do not convey a sense of a common direction.[186] A. Aleshin concludes that

> Феномен [Russian cosmism, C. M-R] скрывает за собой не единую, прочную и философски проработанную традицию, а характерную культуре настроенность и убежденность в своеобразном выпадении человека из должного места в космосе […].[187]

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[184] Heli Kostov, *Mifopoetika Andreia Platonova v romane 'Schastlivaia Moskva'*, Helsinki, 2000, p. 51.
[185] A. Aleshin, 'Russkii kosmizm' in A.I. Abramov et al (eds.), *Russkaia filosofiia: Malyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, Moscow, 1995, pp. 274-82 (p. 274).
[186] See, for example, Gacheva, 'Religiozno-filosofskaia vetv'', and Svetlana Semenova, 'Russkii kosmizm', in S.G. Semenova and A.G. Gacheva (eds.), *Russkii kosmizm: Antologiia filosofskoi mysli*, Moscow, 1993, pp. 3-33.
[187] Aleshin, 'Russkii kosmizm', p. 282.

Moreover, Aleshin characterises the contemporary study of Russian cosmism as at least in part an attempt to synthesise the very different views of the thinkers precisely in order to justify the concept of Russian cosmism as an integrated philosophical system.

To say, then, that Platonov was influenced by Russian cosmism is perhaps to say very little, since the entire phenomenon is more a construction after the fact than a real unity of thought and tradition. On the other hand, even if one doubts the validity of Russian cosmism as a bona fide philosophical tradition, it raises some interesting issues with respect to Platonov's place in a wider literary-philosophical tradition. The links made between the 'scientific' and 'religious-philosophical' directions of cosmism by its advocates may be tenuous, but there is little dispute that each of the separate branches represents a continuity which stretches from the latter part of the nineteenth century, through the Revolution and into the 1920s and 1930s, and that Fedorov's thinking was an important source for both of them. As has been seen, both these philosophical streams left their imprint on the main literary movements of the early twentieth century in Russia: on symbolism, LEF and Proletkul't. Indeed, the attempt to trace the sources of Platonov's contact with Fedorov's ideas, beyond his direct knowledge of the *Filosofiia obshchego dela*, is illuminating of Platonov's exposure to a far broader range of Russian philosophical thought than one might assume, not just Fedorov's particular vision of the world, but the impulse to *vseedinstvo* as expressed by Solov'ev and his inheritors.

A case in point here are the ideas behind the project to create a new proletarian culture put forward by Bogdanov, Proletkul't's leading ideologist, and Anatolii Lunacharskii, who shared many of Bogdanov's views on the remaking of culture and society. Bogdanov's influential ideas, in the field of culture and in his 'organisational' science, as put forward in his *Vseobshchaia organizatsionnaia nauka (Tekhtologiia)*, (1913-1929), are widely considered to

have been an important influence on the young Platonov.[188] According to E.V. Antonova, Bogdanov and Lunacharskii interpreted the past in the following terms:

> Индивидуалистическая культура прошлого, оставаясь оторванной от массовой жизни и ее трудовых ритмов, породило 'дробление' (А. Богданов) жизни, культуры и человека. Идеал – 'целое социалистическое человечество' (А. Луначарский) – находится в прошлом и в будущем. В далеком прошлом человечество было единым, затем в силу ряда причин произошло 'дробление человека' – отделение 'головы' от 'рук', повелевающего от повинующегося, и возникла авторитарная форма жизни. Раздробленное состояние оказалось неестественным, оно не было, по Богданову, преодолено индивидуалистической культурой, в высших проявлениях которой выражена тоска по 'цельному' человеку.[189]

This understanding of historical development clearly owes much to the ideas of earlier Russian thinkers, particularly the Slavophiles and Solov'ev. The Slavophiles, it should be recalled, looked to the 'sobornyi' character of pre-authoritarian, pre-centralised Russia as an ideal that was to be the model of the future, driven by what they considered the innate longing of man for 'tselostnost''. In this context, it is worth noting Lunacharskii's statement that:

> Нераздельная жажда жизни и жажда свободы […] может найти свое законченное выражение лишь в идеале совершенной целостности и внутреннего единства настоящего субъекта общественного бытия – коллектива […].[190]

The idea expressed here that the ideal can be achieved only through the perfect 'tselostnost'' and inner unity of the collective recalls Kireevskii's elaboration of his principles of the 'tsel'naia lichnost'' and 'tsel'noe znanie', both of which are the only ways to achieve the ideal state of perfect unity as the Slavophiles envisaged it. It is clear that Bogdanov and Lunacharskii's understanding of this vision of the whole has a very different colouring to that of the Slavophiles and their pre-Revolutionary inheritors. The central religious

[188] See for example Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty', p. 53, and Teskey, *Platonov and Fyodorov*, pp. 24-27.
[189] Cited in Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-1, p. 488.
[190] Quoted in Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', p. 146.

element to Slavophile thinking is absent, and the 'droblenie' of society with its severing of 'head' from 'hand' owes more to the Marxist concept of the alienation of labour in capitalism than St Paul's vision of the Church as complete and indivisible yet made up of different parts. Finally, whereas the Slavophiles called on Russians to turn back from Western ideas to a pre-Petrine, whole society, Bogdanov and Lunacharskii envisage the proletariat as the ideal 'collective' for the future which has a unique ability to 'organize' itself, society and nature. Moreover, in terms of the proletariat's role in the 'organization' of culture, it is seen as the 'sobiranie cheloveka'.[191] In this connection, Duzhina argues that:

> И для Богданова, и для Луначарского наиболее важным в идее 'коллектива' как субъекта истории и 'коллективизма' как творческого приципа пролетарской литературы является возможность 'цельности', 'целостности', 'единства'.[192]

The likely mechanisms of transmission of Fedorov's ideas are a useful reminder of the porous boundaries between pre- and post-revolutionary Russia, but also between seemingly disparate literary groupings, and indeed between thinkers of two apparently opposite philosophical traditions – the 'scientific' and the 'religious-philosophical' – which is what has clearly prompted the attempt to synthesise the two. The fact that Platonov seems to have been influenced by both of these traditions, which, according to Gacheva, were expressed in one, 'gluboko i tsel'no', only in Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*, might be taken to indicate how faithfully he followed Fedorov's vision, what Seifrid has called 'a peculiar hybrid of epistemological and eschatological goals.'[193] Further than this, however, it suggests that one should see Platonov as part of a Russian literary-philosophical tradition informed and influenced by the philosophical debates of the nineteenth century which continued in the new Soviet context.

[191] Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-1, p. 488.
[192] Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', p. 146.
[193] Gacheva, 'Religiozno-filosofskaia vetv'', p. 79; Seifrid, *Platonov*, p. 26.

II The expression of philosophical ideas in Platonov's prose

Tolstaia-Segal has described Platonov as an '"ideologa", zhadno vosprinimaiushchego i aktivno pererabatyvaiushchego ideinyi material svoei i predshestvuiushchei epokhi'.[194] This captures an essential truth about Platonov: not only was he familiar with and interested in a huge range of ideas, as has been indicated above, but he seems to have conducted a life-long personal dialogue with different ideas which he absorbed and then expressed in his prose in his own idiosyncratic way. This is true of Fedorov's ideas as well as those of many other thinkers.

Recent research into Platonov's early articles, written in his Voronezh period, indicates that this tendency characterised Platonov from the very beginning of his career in the early 1920s.[195] The huge number and extraordinary breadth of scope of these articles has meant that, to date, no comprehensive analysis has been made of this body of work. For this discussion, however, its most significant feature is precisely its diversity, consisting of:

> Эстетические этюды о пролетарской культуре, партийная публицистика, актуальные критические выступления, рецензии, политические портреты вождей революции Ленина, Троцкого и Луначарского, специальные производственные и инженерные статьи, памфлеты, сообщения и сводки об организации производственных работ в уездах губернии, исторические и философские очерки и.т.д.[196]

During this period, Platonov was an active member of the Voronezh writers' club 'Zheleznoe pero', where debates covered a similarly wide range of issues: political, social, philosophical as well as literary. Records indicate that Platonov participated in virtually all these debates, and that his contributions exhibited a keen interest in and engagement with an entire spectrum of theories, philosophical and otherwise. Antonova notes that Platonov's arguments freely

[194] Tolstaia-Segal, 'Ideologicheskie konteksty', p. 48.
[195] See also Kornienko on the wide subject range of Platonov's personal library. Kornienko, 'Istoriia', pp. 20-23.
[196] Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-1, p. 484.

employed the philosophical concepts and terminology of the time, and, furthermore:

> Доказательства черпаются им отовсюду: из работ А. Богданова и К. Маркса, И. Канта и Н. Бердяева, А. Бергсона и Ч. Дарвина, В. Розанова и О. Шпенглера, стихов А. Пушкина и политических речей В. Ленина и Л. Троцкого, *Философии общего дела* Н. Федорова и статей А. Блока о кризисе культуры, выступлений К. Тимирязева и сказок, новейших математических и философско-лингвистических исследований и.т.д.[197]

All this attests to a life-long attempt to work out a unique, ontological position, fuelled by an unusually lasting openness to new and different ideas, an openness which is also reflected in the way in which Platonov expresses these ideas in his texts. Malygina makes the interesting point that:

> В творчестве писателя в целом и в каждом отдельном его произведении постоянно действуют прямо противоположные идеи, герои, образы, которые находятся между собой в состоянии напряженного диалога.[198]

Furthermore, according to Malygina:

> Платонов допускает возможность превращения любой идеи в свою противоположность и сохраняет за противоположными идеями равное право на существование.[199]

In effect, Platonov's prose demonstrates a genuinely polyphonic approach to different ideas, which accounts in some part for the perceived 'ambivalence' on the level of individual works and indeed within the works themselves, which allows multiple meanings to be generated on the level of image, symbol and plot.[200] It is an intriguing feature of Platonov's texts that the ideas which form this polyphony are frequently expressed in such a compressed form that they are difficult to identify, or appear almost as vague traces of the original. Duzhina's excellent and sadly unpublished 'Putevoditel' po povesti A.P. Platonova *Kotlovan*' is dedicated to the task of elucidating the dense web of

[197] Ibid., p. 485.
[198] Malygina, 'Obrazy-simvoly', p. 176.
[199] Ibid., p. 180.
[200] See, for example, Kostov, *Mifopoetika*, p. 52, and Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', p. 147.

political, social, philosophical and literary allusions of *Kotlovan*. She makes the interesting point that:

> Выявить, а тем более доказать источники многих платоновских идей бывает очень непросто, в том числе из-за их компилятивности. Вероятно, таковыми являются и приведенные нами размышления Вощева о своем единстве с миром – соедиенением идей русских религиозных философов, комплексом положений метафизики всеединства.[201]

In addition to the 'compiled' or composite nature of Platonov's ideas, they are frequently expressed in such a succinct manner as to further complicate a reading of them. Duzhina attributes this to the essentially poetic character of Platonov's language:

> Свой творческий путь Андрей Платонов начинал как поэт. Поэтом он остался и в прозе, которая сохранила черты, в большей степени свойственные поэзии: стройную композицию, ритмическую организацию текста и его необычную для прозаических произведений семантическую 'плотность'.[202]

Research into the manuscripts of Platonov's works, particularly *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, has shown convincingly that this density of meaning is a direct result of Platonov's creative method, which he uses even in his earliest works, and which reaches its highpoint in *Kotlovan*. V'iugin describes this process as a 'reduction in form', consisting of two stages:

> The first is the production of a simple, lucid narrative in which the author's main ideas are shown in full detail. […]. In the second stage, he transforms the text into a completely different narrative, blacking out many passages and leaving only key words referring to the old main ideas.[203]

The resulting text therefore contains the original ideas, but in a compressed shape, forming what V'iugin has called Platonov's 'poetika zagadki'.

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[201] Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', p. 104.
[202] Ibid., p. 139.
[203] Valerii V'iugin, 'Andrei Platonov: The Poetics of Enigma and the Enigma of Poetics', *Essays in Poetics*, 26, 2001, pp. 1-13 (p. 7). See also his discussion of how this 'reduction' of form is accompanied by an 'amplification' of form in Platonov's use of more words than necessary (pp. 9-10). Both of these phenomena contribute to the enigmatic character of Platonov's texts.

In discussing the multitude of different ideas voiced in Platonov's texts, and their transformation in Platonov's 'pererabotka', certain parallels appear with Platonov's treatment of other sources: literary and biblical allusions, borrowings from official Soviet language and the slogans of the time. Duzhina has demonstrated to great effect how an extraordinarily wide range of contemporary social and political allusions, as well as biblical and literary ones, are woven into the complex, dense fabric of *Kotlovan*.[204] Eric Naiman and Clint Walker have done the same for *Schastlivaia Moskva*.[205] Without wanting to reduce the importance of individual thinkers as general influences on Platonov, one could argue that in the texts themselves they function as Platonov's 'material', like his other sources, which he transforms to create his own vision of the world. This point is crucial to the following exploration of how the philosophical influences on Platonov appear in his dramatisation of man's destiny in the world. It illuminates, as will be shown, the different levels and registers in which these ideas are expressed in the texts and it also brings important insights into what is perhaps the most essential characteristic of Platonov's literary vision, one which shapes his depiction of man and universe: its sheer materiality. There are many interesting and insightful commentaries on the subject of the 'veshchestvo' of Platonov's prose.[206] In the context of this chapter, however, it is particularly striking that this 'veshchestvo' is fashioned out of the material of human life – ideas, events, speech, literature, the Bible. In this can be seen a dedication to a personal kind of 'realism', one made out of the real elements of human existence, transformed and combined in an effort to provide a 'true' picture of the world, each part given its own voice. The presence of philosophical ideas in Platonov's texts attests to his interest in them, and his search to determine his own ontological position, but they are

[204] Duzhina, 'Putevoditel''.
[205] Eric Naiman, 'Communism and the Collective Toilet: Lexical Heroes in *Happy Moscow*', *Essays in Poetics*, 26, 2001, pp. 96-109, and Clint Walker, 'Unmasking the Myths and Metaphors of the Stalinist Utopia: Platonov's *Happy Moscow* through the Lens of 'The Bronze Horseman'', *Essays in Poetics*, 26, 2001, pp. 119-67.
[206] See, for example: Sergei Bocharov, '"Veshchestvo sushchestvovaniia"', in Kornienko and Shubina (eds.), *Andrei Platonov: Mir tvorchestva*, pp. 10-46, and L.V. Karasev, *Dvizhenie po sklonu: O sochineniiakh A. Platonova*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 38-71.

also part of the materiality of his texts, which is made up of a dense web of refractions of reality as he perceives it.

Part Two: Platonov's vision of the human condition

In his early article 'O nauke' (1920) Platonov sets out his intentions to write:

> О великом пути знания, пройденном человечеством, и о пути, который предстоит ему пройти, о мышлении, истине и заблуждениях, о страданиях человечества в поисках правды своей жизни, о борьбе и гибели за найденную правду, о затаенной страстной мечте, о конечной победе над своими врагами – природой и смертью […].[207]

When one examines as a whole the vision of the world, and of man's role and destiny in it, which Platonov develops in his prose, one is struck by how faithfully he kept to this early vision. This is perhaps a reflection of what he termed the 'odnoobraznyi' and 'postoiannyi' nature of his ideals, a constancy in purpose and vision which remained with him in spite of, or perhaps because of his changing fortunes as a Soviet writer.[208] One of the most striking aspects of this sustained literary vision is to be found in his intensely material evocation of nature and man's relationship to it. Man is depicted as living out a tormented existence at the mercy of the forces of nature, which forms a constant threat to his physical survival. In this second part of the chapter, it will be argued that Fedorov's conception of man's relationship to nature and to his fellow man forms the frame of Platonov's expression of the human condition in his prose.

One of Platonov's most pithy statements of his view of man's position in nature is expressed in his early article 'Simfoniia soznaniia' (1922), in which he discusses Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. His declaration that 'Chelovechestvo v prirode-prostranstve – eto golodyni v zimnem pole' could be

[207] Andrei Platonov, 'O nauke', in Platonov, *Sochinenii*, I-2, pp. 33-34 (p. 34).
[208] From a letter written to his wife in 1926. Andrei Platonov, *Zhivia glavnoi zhizn'iu*, Moscow, 1989, p. 390.

applied to virtually all of his major prose works.[209] Platonov's conception of nature as an essentially hostile force for man is clearly strongly influenced by Fedorov's vision of the 'slepaia sila' of nature as developed in his *Filosofiia obshchego dela*, a vision shared by Bogdanov. For Fedorov, the paradox of human existence is that man has physical being in a natural world that acts to eliminate him. Nature is both a 'blind' and a 'death-bearing' force which dominates man as it does animals. This is the source of man's tragic condition in the world, which Fedorov describes as a state of *nerodstvennost'*. Fedorov distinguishes between two aspects of *nerodstvennost'*. The first concerns the lack of kinship existing between nature and man.[210] This is captured by one of the eccentric questions which act as a heading to the opening part of *Filosofiia obshchego dela*: 'Pochemu priroda nam ne mat', a machekha, ili kormilitsa, otkazyvaiushchaiasia kormit'?'[211] The second aspect of *nerodstvennost'* refers to the lack of kinship between men. For Fedorov, man's physical vulnerability causes him to forget that his true enemy is nature, and not his fellow man, for they share a common origin in the first 'father', the 'Praotets'. This type of *nerodstvennost'* leads to a chronic disharmony, or *nebratstvo*, in human relations, causing man to fight man and thus increase human death. Instead of being united against nature and death, each man lives in isolation, in conflict with his fellow man and having 'forgotten' his ancestors. At the centre of Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela* is the 'common task' for mankind to conquer death by uniting to 'reestablish kinship' and overcome the 'slepaia sila' of nature. This was to be accomplished through scientific 'regulation' of nature, which included plans for artificial rain creation, and through the project to physically accomplish the resurrection of all the dead 'fathers' through gathering of matter and reassembling it, for, according to Fedorov, 'All matter is the dust of our ancestors'.[212]

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[209] Andrei Platonov, 'Simfoniia soznaniia: Etiudy o dukhovnoi kul'ture sovremennoi Zapadnoi Evropy', in Platonov, *Sochineniia*, I-2, pp. 221-26 (p. 224).
[210] Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, p. 60.
[211] Ibid., p. 55.
[212] See discussion of this in Young, *Fedorov*, p. 101.

The following discussion examines how Fedorov's conception of man's tragic *nerodstvennost'* is an essential part of Platonov's evocation of the human condition. A reading of Platonov's story 'Rodina elektrichestva' explores how hostile nature constantly acts to erode man physically into the 'prakh' of the earth. The next section looks at how Platonov's prose, and *Kotlovan* in particular, reflects ideas of the possibility of overcoming nature's 'slepaia sila'. The last section is a detailed examination of Platonov's theme of *bezottsovshchina* in *Chevengur* and *Dzhan*, an expression of man's existential isolation which echoes Fedorov's understanding of the *nerodstvennost'* between men, and between the living and the dead.

I Blind nature and the erosion of man: 'Rodina elektrichestva'

'Rodina elektrichestva' (1926) is perhaps Platonov's most vivid and dramatic evocation of nature as a 'death-bearing' force which dominates man entirely. Its intensity is hardly surprising given that Platonov based it on his own experiences as a young engineer of the appalling effects of the 1921 drought in Russia. Indeed, it was the strong impression made by this natural catastrophe which caused Platonov in 1922 to abandon for a time his place as a promising young writer on the Voronezh literary scene, in order to work exclusively in a technical capacity on land reclamation schemes in the Voronezh region. Seifrid has argued of Platonov that

> The influence of his technical profession appears in his fiction's enduring concern with desires to reshape – or, later, the failure of efforts to reshape – the physical world.[213]

In effect, at this point in his life Platonov rejected what he termed the mere 'sozertsatel'noe delo'[214] of literature in favour of the kind of work to regulate nature and overcome its whims envisaged by Fedorov.

[213] Seifrid, *Platonov*, p. 6.
[214] Quoted in Thomas Langerak, 'Andrei Platonov v Voronezhe', *Russian Literature*, 23 (1988), pp. 437-68 (p. 450).

At the opening of the story, Chuniaev, a bureaucrat of the provincial administration, sends for the young engineer narrator to help the peasants in the drought. Platonov's description of the situation through the eyes of Chuniaev seems almost apocalyptic in its horror. Chuniaev is tormented by the 'fight with destruction' which the drought entails:

> с неба не упало ни одной капли живой влаги, но зато во всей природе пахло тленом и прахом, будто уже была отверзта голодная могила для народа. Даже цветы в тот год пахли не более, чем металлические стружки, и глубокие трещины образовались в полях, в теле земли, похожие на провалы меж ребрами худого скелета.[215]

This description is a powerful image of nature as a death-dealing force which is utterly incapable of supporting human life. It is also an interesting example of Platonov's dialogue with the concept of 'prakh' which is so central to Fedorov's common task. The focus of Platonov's interpretation of Fedorov is on the process by which nature extinguishes human life. In his narratives, death appears as a gradual process of physical erosion, through which man slowly loses his very semblance of humanity. Man becomes the mere empty husk of a human who seems likely to disappear entirely by disintegrating into the matter around him.

The peasants of 'Rodina elektrichestva' exemplify this process of physical erosion in its different aspects. The priest who leads the procession to pray for rain is described as 'obrosshii sedoi sherst'iu, izmuchennyi i pochernevshii'.[216] Here man's loss of his humanity is evoked as a process of becoming animal-like with his 'grey fur'. This forms a parallel with the description of the peasant Elisei in *Kotlovan*, whose back is described as 'uzhe obrastaiushch[aia] zashchitnoi sherst'iu'.[217] V'iugin identifies Russian folklore as the context of Platonov's images of 'ozverenie': the growth of fur is traditionally associated with the presence of 'nechistaia sila'.[218] In addition to

[215] Andrei Platonov, 'Rodina elektrichestva', in Andrei Platonov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. V.A. Chalmaev, 5 vols, Moscow, 1998, i, pp. 236-48 (p. 236).
[216] Platonov, 'Rodina elektrichestva', p. 238.
[217] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 61.
[218] See V'iugin's footnote number 50 in Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 153.

this, however, at least in the above two cases, it is linked to the process of physical erosion by the elements: Elisei's fur is 'protective'. Similarly, the fact that the priest is 'blackened' recalls something like a piece of wood which has been weathered and worn down.

Platonov's description of the old woman in 'Rodina elektrichestva' is an even more extensive portrayal of the process of decay. She is reduced in stature to the size of a child, and described, like a plant, as 'usokhshaia', a dried-out physical husk in which there still resides her 'zorkii um'. When the narrator asks why she still prays, when nature is deaf to her prayers and only heeds work and reason, she replies:

> 'Да я столько годов прожила, что у меня разум да кости – только всего и есть! А плоть давно вся в работу да в заботу спущена – во мне и умереть-то мало чему осталось, все уж померло помаленьку.'[219]

As a proof of this, she takes off her scarf and shows him her head, an 'oblysevshii cherep' which recalls the earlier description of the parched earth as 'sukhaia' and 'lysaia'.[220] A similar parallel in imagery used for the human and the material world can be observed between the bones of the skull and the huts of the benighted village of Verchovka. Thus of the old woman's skull Platonov writes:

> кости […] обветшали, готовые уже развалиться и предать безвозвратному праху земли скупо скопленный терпеливый ум, познавший мир в труде и бедствях.[221]

The huts in the village are also gradually disintegrating and sinking back into the earth: 'zhilishcha obvetshali i uzhe zagnivali nizhnimi ventsami srubov v zemle'. They are also described as looking like a cemetery.[222]

It is interesting to speculate on whether the centrality to Fedorov's philosophy of the concept of 'prakh', and of all matter being the 'dust of the ancestors', was a conscious reaction to the bleakness of the Biblical image of

[219] Platonov, 'Rodina elektrichestva', p. 239.
[220] Ibid., p. 238.
[221] Ibid., p. 239.
[222] Ibid., p. 240. See also Seifrid's discussion of this point. Seifrid, *Platonov*, pp. 64-65.

man as issuing from and returning to dust. Fedorov's 'common task' – man's gathering of the dust of the ancestors in order to carry out a universal resurrection himself – could be interpreted as a direct rebuttal of the implacable reminder in Genesis, 'For dust you are and to dust you shall return', which is enshrined in the rite of Ash Wednesday in the Western church.[223] Certainly Platonov's portrayal of the erosion of human life by nature in all its intense materiality seems to literalise the idea of death as a process of disintegration back into the matter of the world. It is a literal return to the dust of the earth.

II The attempt to conquer nature and death: *Kotlovan*

Fedorov's call for man to overcome his 'true' enemy in nature also plays an important role in Platonov's vision of man in his stories. As has been seen, Platonov's early writings express a confident belief in the power of science to vanquish 'priroda i smert'' and thus save him 'ot kazematov fizicheskikh zakonov'.[224] 'Rodina elektrichestva' is one example of a story which expresses these ideas, for the young engineer manages against all odds to use a motorcycle engine to pump water up from the river to irrigate the village's fields. Variations on the theme of regulating nature to improve living conditions are found in other stories written at this time, all of which are based on Platonov's own experiences as a land improvement specialist: 'O potukhshei lampe Il'icha' (1926), 'Peschanaia uchitel'nitsa' (1927) and 'Lugovye mastera' (1927).[225]

It is in *Kotlovan*, however, that the theme of 'conquering' nature and death is most fully explored in the project to build the 'obshcheproletarskii dom' which is at the centre of the narrative. Platonov's treatment of the theme here has undergone a significant shift from the stories of 1926-27. The active

[223] Genesis 3. 19, *The Jerusalem Bible: Popular edition*, London, 1974. The wording for the Western Catholic rite of Ash Wednesday is: 'Remember, man, you are dust, and to dust you will return', *The Weekday Missal*, London, 1982, p. 137.
[224] Platonov, 'O nauke', p. 34, and Platonov, 'Proletarskaia poeziia', p. 162.
[225] For discussions of these stories see Langerak, *Platonov*, pp. 98-102, and Seifrid, *Platonov*, pp. 60-61.

attempt to control nature through various technical means seen in the earlier stories is absent from *Kotlovan*. Instead, the entire story is focused on the project to construct what is in effect merely a shelter from the hostile forces of nature. As in 'Rodina elektrichestva', Platonov depicts nature in *Kotlovan* as 'blind' to human needs, but he emphasises even more the idea of the earth as a place where it is impossible for man to find shelter. Thus, for example, the bleakness of the observation:

> Уныло и жарко начинался долгий день; солнце, как слепота, находилось равнодушно над низовою бедностью земли; но другого места для жизни не было дано.[226]

Similarly, Prushevskii looks around the 'pustoi raion blizhaishei prirody' and feels sorry that his lost girlfriend and 'mnogie nuzhnye liudi' are forced to 'zhit' i teriat'sia na etoi smertnoi zemle, na kotoroi eshche ne ustroeno uiuta'.[227] Man's condition is also echoed by that of the birds which Voshchev observes. They sing mournfully and fly through the air from dawn to dusk searching for food with the 'pot nuzhdy' under their feathers. Voshchev picks up one which has dropped dead 'ot utomleniia svoego truda', and it is this that spurs him on to build the house that will protect man from the elements:

> И нынче Вощев не жалел себя на уничтожение сросшегося грунта: здесь будет дом, в нем будут храниться люди от невзгоды и бросать крошки из окон живущим снаружи птицам.[228]

One could argue, then, that the grandiose-sounding 'obshcheproletarskii dom' is simply a refuge from nature which man has given up hope of changing for the better. This forms an interesting parallel with the 'ubezhishche' which Chiklin builds not for the workers of the future but as a tomb for the body of Nastia's mother, a superfluous bourgeois. In addition, the enormous grave Chiklin digs for Nastia at the end of *Kotlovan* is described by Platonov in terms of a total protection of the dead child from the forces of nature:

> Он рыл ее [the grave, C. M-R] пятнадцать часов подряд, чтоб она была глубока и в нее не сумел бы проникнуть ни червь, ни корень

[226] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 45.
[227] Ibid., p. 46.
[228] Ibid., p. 31.

растения, ни тепло, ни холод и чтоб ребенка никогда не побеспокоил шум жизни с поверхности земли.[229]

III The *bezottsovshchina* of man: *Chevengur* and *Dzhan*

As the preceding sections indicate, Fedorov's concept of the *nerodstvennost'* existing between man and nature is crucial to an understanding of Platonov's literary depiction of the human condition. The second aspect of Fedorov's *nerodstvennost'* – the lack of kinship between men – is equally important to Platonov's vision of man in his stories. This is expressed through the concept of *bezottsovshchina*, or fatherlessness, which is mentioned as such in both *Chevengur* and *Dzhan*, but which is an important theme in many of his works.[230] At least from around 1927, when Platonov was writing *Chevengur*, to 1937, when he wrote the stories 'Reka Potudan'' and 'Glinianyi dom v uezdnom sadu', the characters in Platonov's prose are repeatedly portrayed as either literally or metaphorically 'fatherless'. This section focuses on *Chevengur* and *Dzhan*, but it is possible to compile an extensive list of characters from other stories who are fatherless. Nastia in *Kotlovan*, Moskva Chestnova in *Schastlivaia Moskva* and Iakov Savvich and the little boy in 'Glinianyi dom v uezdnom sadu' are all orphans in the literal sense. However, most of the workers in *Kotlovan*, for example, display traits of a more universal 'fatherlessness' similar to that of the *prochie* in *Chevengur* or the Dzhan in Platonov's story of the same name.

The links between Platonov's *bezottsovshchina* and Fedorov's *nerodstvennost'* are an excellent example of Platonov's practice, discussed in the first part of this chapter, of re-working philosophical ideas and interweaving them with other 'material' such as contemporary events, and literary and biblical illusions. The result is to produce texts which are extraordinarily dense in meaning. On the one hand, Platonov's idea of fatherlessness makes a clear

[229] Ibid., p. 115.
[230] See also Seifrid's discussion of the link between Platonov's *bezottsovshchina* in *Chevengur* and Fedorov's ideas. Seifrid, *Platonov*, pp. 114-15.

reference to the vital role played by the 'fathers' in Fedorov's system.[231] In Fedorov's understanding, *nerodstvennost'*, sometimes translated into English as 'lack of kinship', exists not just between contemporaries but between generations. Man both individually and collectively has forgotten his *rod*, his ancestors. Hence his definition of the common task of all men, which he terms 'supramoralism': 'Supramoralizm – eto dolg k ottsam-predkam, voskreshenie, kak samaia vysshaia i bezuslovno vseobshchaia nravstvennost''.[232] In Fedorov's understanding man is effectively an orphan through the fact that he has forgotten the fathers. Indeed, the section of the *Filosofiia obshchego dela* in which he describes the actual day of the resurrection of all the fathers is entitled 'Konets sirotstva: bezgranichnoe rodstvo'.[233]

Bezottsovshchina can also be read in the light of the social situation existing in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s, which Platonov explores in both literal and metaphorical terms. The loss of life and destruction of social and family structures during the Revolution, the Civil War and the early years of the Soviet state meant that this was a period of literal fatherlessness and orphanhood. Fedorov's statement that the condition of *nerodstvennost'* means that man lives in isolation and becomes a 'brodiaga, ne pomniashchii rodstva, kak v tolpe' seems an uncannily accurate premonition of this very situation, and certainly describes many of Platonov's protagonists.[234] For Platonov, too, the state of fatherlessness is one which describes both man's physical and his metaphysical condition in the world.

Chevengur: the *prochie* as *bezottsovshchina*

Platonov's most striking portrayal of the Soviet Union's 'orphans' is surely the *prochie* in *Chevengur*, homeless wanderers who are rounded up by

[231] In the *Filsofiia obshchego dela* Fedorov sometimes uses the word 'predki' to refer to the ancestors (see for example 'Vse veshchestvo est' prakh predkov'), but he also uses simply 'ottsy', as in the phrase 'voskreshenie ottsov'. Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, p. 90.
[232] Ibid., p. 473.
[233] Ibid., p. 528.
[234] Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, p. 65.

Prokofii to people the new communist utopia of Chevengur. His vivid evocation of these people's condition is deeply unsettling, and forms a powerful comment on the human cost of social and political change. When Chepurnyi first sees the *prochie* on the mound outside Chevengur, he is presented with a picture of frailty and destitution amidst inhospitable nature:

> Над пустынной бесприютностью степи всходило вчерашнее утомленное солнце, и свет его был пуст, словно над чужой забвенной страной, где нет никого, кроме брошенных людей на кургане, жмущихся друг к другу не от любви и родственности, а из-за недостатка одежды.[235]

Platonov's use of the word 'bespriiutnost'' here is significant, as it is one which he frequently employs to describe man's essential vulnerability to the 'slepaia sila' of nature. Here, as elsewhere in *Chevengur*, the *prochie* suffer physically from nature's essential *nerodstvennost'* to man, but also metaphysically from the *nerodstvennost'* of their mutual relations, which are lacking in the human love of true 'rodstvennost''. They are physically eroded by their constant exposure to the harsh environment and their lack of shelter from it. They are also, however, so mentally and spiritually worn down through their physical suffering that they are barely human. When Chepurnyi asks Prokofii who the *prochie* are, his laconic answer is: '"Prochie i est' prochie – nikto"', and later '"Oni – bezottsovshchina […]. Oni nigde ni zhili, oni bredut."'[236] If one sets this image of the *prochie* against another description of them as 'ravnodushnye nesushchestvuiushchie liudi', it starts to become apparent just how dense Platonov's prose is, interweaving different contexts and threads, and always leaving open the possibility of multiple interpretations.[237] Prokofii's definition of the *prochie* encompasses both an allusion to the political and social condemnation of certain 'elements' of society as 'undesirable', particularly those who are wanderers without a 'permanent place of residence', as well as the ontological concept of 'fatherlessness'. The second phrase, 'ravnodushnye nesushchestvuiushchie liudi', which is an excellent example of Platonov's

[235] Andrei Platonov, 'Chevengur', in Platonov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ii, pp. 5-307 (p. 209).
[236] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 211.
[237] Ibid., p. 210.

ability to combine adjectives in an unusual and striking way, conveys at once the physical and mental reduction of the *prochie* as 'indifferent'. Indeed, they are often described as having to 'remember to live' – and 'not existing', whereby the 'not existing' also seems to allude to a more social and political context.

The very term 'prochie' is remarkably dense in meaning in *Chevengur*. It is initially used in the text in its straightforward meaning of 'others' ('proletariat i prochie'). This could be read in the context of a bureaucratic categorization, given Prokofii's officiousness and his denial that the *prochie* are the 'sloi ostatochnoi svolochi', as Chepurnyi worries that they might be.[238] They are in effect those who do not fit into any recognized category, they are the category 'other' or 'miscellaneous', and indeed in one English translation that is how they are referred to.[239] Seifrid has described Platonov's subsequent use of this word throughout the text to describe these people as 'ironic'.[240] While this is certainly true, it is also far more than this. By using a word which in itself denies individuality, and even more importantly names to these people, Platonov conveys the full 'nothingness' of their existence. In this connection one should mention a particular, long passage describing the *prochie* which is quite remarkable for its directness of authorial voice.[241] This extensive and detailed narration of why the *prochie* are 'nikto' starts from the fact that they were born into a world where 'v prirode i vo vremeni ne bylo prichin ni dlia ikh rozhdeniia, ni dlia ikh schast'ia', from parents who themselves had only the 'ostatki tela, istertogo trudom i protravlennogo edkim gorem' and who abandoned their children as soon as possible.[242] Platonov's description of the life of these children, who grew up without having ever seen their father, clearly attributes their weak and impoverished state to their lack of parents, or any 'rod', and thus in effect to their *bezottsovshchina*:

[238] Ibid., p. 211.
[239] Andrei Platonov, *Chevengur*, trans. Anthony Olcott, Ann Arbor, MI, 1978.
[240] Seifrid, *Platonov*, p. 112.
[241] Platonov, 'Chevengur', pp. 213-15.
[242] Ibid., p. 213.

> И жизнь прочих была безотцовщиной, – она продолжалась на пустой земле без того первого товарища, который вывел бы их за руку к людям, чтобы после своей смерти оставить людей детям в наследство – для замена себя. У прочих не хватало среди белого света только одного – отца […].[243]

The state of *bezottsovshchina* appears here as one of existential isolation and suspension in a world which, as so often in Platonov's descriptions, is 'empty', with no link through kin to either the past or the future.

Chevengur: the *sirotstvo* of the dead

In contrast to the *prochie*, Platonov does not use the actual term *bezottsovshchina* to describe the named characters in *Chevengur*. However, many of them are orphans and Platonov portrays them as filled with a longing for their dead fathers and mothers. For Sasha Dvanov, Zakhar Pavlovich, Kopenkin and Serbinov, their fatherlessness is explored in terms of the need to remember the dead, recalling Fedorov's idea that this is the 'duty' of the sons. At the beginning of *Chevengur*, Platonov describes Zakhar Pavlovich's feelings at the funeral of Sasha's father:

> Его сильно тронуло горе и сиротство – от какой-то неизвестной совести, открывшейся в груди, он хотел бы без отдыха идти по земле, встречать горе во всех селах и плакать над чужими гробами.[244]

As the story progresses, it becomes apparent that in his frequent use of the term *sirotstvo*, Platonov is referring to the state of his characters (in this case Sasha), but more importantly also to the condition of the dead. In an echo of Fedorov's ideas, the dead are 'orphaned' because the living have forgotten them. Thus, for example, when Sasha goes to visit his father's grave before setting off to beg for bread in the town, Platonov writes:

> Всюду стояли крестьянские кресты, многие без имени и без памяти о покойном. Сашу заинтересовали те кресты, которые были самые ветхие и тоже собирались упасть и умереть в земле. Могилы без

[243] Ibid., p. 214.
[244] Ibid., p. 10.

> крестов были еще лучше – в их глубине лежали люди, ставшие навеки сиротами: у них тоже умерли матери, а отцы у некоторых утонули в реках и озерах.[245]

Instead of being a place of remembrance, this cemetery appears as a symbol of complete oblivion, where even the crosses which are there are themselves about to fall and 'die in the ground'. Instead of gaining 'eternal memory', they have become 'eternal orphans': a precise opposite to Fedorov's vision of the resurrection as 'Konets sirotstva: bezgranichnoe rodstvo'. This scene of Sasha's visit to his father's grave, which occurs near the opening of *Chevengur,* is mirrored almost exactly by the description near the end of the text of Serbinov's visit to his mother's grave:

> Среди выскоких трав и древесных кущ стояли притаившиеся кресты вечной памяти, похожие на людей, тщетно раскинувших руки для объятий погибших.
> […]
> Сербинов же стоял в страхе перед тысячами могил. В них лежали покойные люди, которые жили потому, что верили в вечную память и сожаление о себе после смерти, но о них забыли – кладбище было безлюдно, кресты замещали тех живых, которые должны приходить сюда помнить и жалеть.[246]

The basic similarities in imagery and ideas in these two cemetery scenes are offset by striking differences in tone and emphasis. The gentle and subtly expressed sadness of the first scene is replaced by a terrifying vision of tragedy. As they fling their arms out to embrace the dead, the crosses of 'eternal memory' appear here as inadequate and frightening proxies for the people who should be visiting the graves of their relatives. The thousands of forgotten graves which horrify Serbinov stand as a reminder of man's failure to fulfil his task of remembering the dead.

Like Serbinov, Zakhar Pavlovich and Kopenkin are also preoccupied with the fate of their dead mothers. Zakhar Pavlovich is tormented by the thought of his mother's grave, which is also nameless:

[245] Ibid., p. 20.
[246] Ibid., pp. 276-77.

> Он помнил точно место похорон и чужой железный крест рядом с безымянной безответной могилой матери.
> [...]
>
> Захару Павловичу сильно захотелось раскопать могилу и посмотреть на мать, на ее кости, волосы и на все последние пропадающие остатки своей детской родины.[247]

This image of human longing to see the physical remains of a parent is repeated in *Kotlovan*, in which Nastia's wish to have her mother's bones placed on her stomach is fulfilled. In both cases this appears as an attempt to overcome *bezottsovshchina* by establishing *rodstvennost'* with the dead, conceived of in physical terms which echo the materiality of Fedorov's common task. In Kopenkin's dreams of his mother, he connects her with his beloved Rosa Luxemburg: they are both dead, and thus, by implication, both in need of being remembered. Indeed, like Zakhar Pavlovich, the final aim of Kopenkin's quest is to be able to weep at Rosa's grave. Kopenkin dreams that Rosa is outside on the street, but when he opens the window she vanishes. Instead, he sees a funeral procession, where '[…] drugie liudi ponesli nekrashenyi deshevyi grob, v kakikh khoroniat na obshchestvennye sredstva bezvestnykh liudei, ne pomniashchikh rodstva.'[248] This is an image of *sirotstvo* in life and in death, and it is significant that the person in Kopenkin's vision who is being buried by 'other people', is described both as 'unknown', and, in Fedorov's phrase, 'nepomniashchii rodstva'.

As has been seen, the perception of a duty to remember the 'orphaned' dead characterises virtually all of Platonov's characters in *Chevengur*. Furthermore, this duty is central to the framing narrative of novel, the search to 'find' communism in Chevengur. Indeed, the fulfilment of this duty emerges as the most significant motivation of the novel's seeker heroes. Having failed to locate their vision of 'communism' in Chevengur, they are left with their duty to the dead. This is suggested in macabre terms through Kopenkin's naïve and confused attempt to understand the despatching of Chevengur's bourgeoisie to the 'Second Coming':

[247] Ibid., p. 32.
[248] Ibid., p. 124.

> Копенкин стоял в размышлении над общей могилой буржуазии – без деревьев, без холма и без памяти. Ему смутно казалось, что это сделано для того, чтобы дальняя могила Розы Люксембург имела дерево, холм и вечную память.[249]

The complex links between the 'dream' of communism and man's duty to remember the ancestors are expressed with particular force in the character of Sasha Dvanov. Sasha's decision to go to Chevengur is explained on one level of the text by his simple desire to find communism. To this, however, Platonov adds a description of a dream in which Sasha's father tells him not to be sad, because '"I mne tut, mal'chik, skuchno lezhat'. Delai chto-nibud' v Chevengure: zachem zhe my budem mertvymi lezhat'…"'.[250] Thus, in a parallel to Kopenkin's association of the building of communism in Chevengur with 'eternal memory' for Rosa Luxemburg, Sasha's father's request implies that it is communism that will rescue all the dead from oblivion. The tragic outcome of these hopes is foreshadowed in Kopenkin's reproaches to Sasha on behalf of Rosa Luxemburg during a dream:

> 'Что ж ты никогда не сказал мне, что она мучается в могиле и рана ее болит? Чего живу я здесь и бросил ее одну в могильное мучение!... [...] Вы обманули меня коммунизмом, я помру от вас'.

Sasha answers:

> 'Зачем ты упрекаешь? [...] А разве мой отец не мучается в озере на дне и не ждет меня? Я тоже помню'.[251]

The failure of communism in *Chevengur* can thus be read as a failure to end *sirotstvo* by remembering the dead fathers. This failure takes on a particularly tragic dimension in the ending of the story. Kopenkin and the people of Chevengur die a violent death defending what they had thought was 'communism', and thus themselves join the ranks of the unremembered dead, having failed to 'do anything' in Chevengur for the dead. In one respect, however, *Chevengur* does seem to realise the hope of a resolution to man's *bezottsovshchina*. Platonov's description of Sasha's suicide at the end of

[249] Ibid., p. 169.
[250] Ibid., p. 181.
[251] Ibid., p. 296.

Chevengur is evoked in terms of a longed-for reunion with his father that is both spiritual and physical. Sasha is described as 'continuing his life', finally joining himself with his father 'v chuvstve styda zhizni pered slabym, zabytym telom, ostatki kotorogo istomilis' v mogile'.[252]

Bezottsovshchina in *Dzhan*

In her account of the origins and evolution of Platonov's *Dzhan* as a text, Kornienko argues that it developed directly from the concerns and ideas of *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan* and also *Schastlivaia Moskva*, all of which were still unpublished in 1935. For Kornienko, the original outline for *Dzhan* is evidence that Nazar Chagataev was conceived of by Platonov as a Turkmen version of the orphaned and abandoned *bezottsovshchina* in his other stories: 'Nazar – eto utselevshii i povzroslevshii "malen'kii prochii" iz *Chevengura* ili *Kotlovana*'.[253] If one compares *Dzhan* with *Chevengur*, the parallels in Platonov's expression of *bezottsovshchina* are certainly very striking. Chagataev himself can indeed be understood as a *prochii* figure: he was abandoned by his mother and never knew his father. Moreover, his people, the Dzhan, form a direct parallel to the *prochie* as a group in *Chevengur*. Like the *prochie*, they wander from place to place in search of food and shelter, and are physically eroded by the harsh environment in which they have to live. Beyond these similarities, Platonov amplifies and reworks his concept of *bezottsovshchina* in *Dzhan* in a number of important ways. The following analysis focuses on two distinct and new aspects of the theme which deepen understanding of the text itself and are of relevance to the discussion of the theme of memory in Platonov's work, discussed below in Part Three of this chapter. The first of these is what will be termed the 'Stalin text' of the story. The second new aspect of *bezottsovshchina* concerns Platonov's evocation of the reduced physical condition of the Dzhan as a state of *bespamiatstvo*.

[252] Ibid., p. 306.
[253] Natal'ia Kornienko, 'Nasledie A. Platonova: Ispytanie dlia filologicheskoi nauki', in Kornienko (ed.), *"Strana filosofov". Vypusk 4*, pp. 117-37 (p. 128).

Dzhan: the 'Stalin text'

In *Chevengur*, as has been discussed, Platonov explored the idea of *bezottsovshchina* both as the tragedy of never having had a father, and as the duty of the 'sons' to remember the 'fathers'. In *Dzhan,* it is the longing to find a substitute father in order to survive which emerges as an important accent to the theme. Like Moskva Chestnova in *Schastlivaia Moskva*, Chagataev grows up as a ward of the Soviet state, and, in Platonov's original text, the Soviet state is identified with Stalin. Stalin appears as a substitute father figure who will shelter his people from cruel nature and *bezottsovshchina*. This intriguing sub-text to the narrative of *Dzhan*, which is a further example of Platonov's use of a multitude of different contexts and sources as the material of his prose, is absent from all published texts of the story except for the one used here. The removal of all references to Stalin from the text of *Dzhan* before its first publication had a serious impact on the integrity of the work itself, as will be seen. It also, however, led to a significant misunderstanding of Platonov as a writer. Unlike *Kotlovan*, *Chevengur* and indeed *Schastlivaia Moskva*, *Dzhan* was actually published before perestroika in 1964. It was thereafter repeatedly included in subsequent collections of Platonov's stories, although always without the references to Stalin.[254] This led to a particularly ironic state of events during and after perestroika. In the general process of rediscovery and reassessment of many Soviet writers, Platonov was held up as the only Soviet writer who had never written about Stalin, which was not the case at all. As Kornienko has noted, 'Otets Stalin' is a feature of Platonov's prose of the first half of the Thirties, and replaced the quite different images of Lenin in the late Twenties. Stalin appears 'ne kak razrushitel' gosudarstva, a kak stroitel' "nuzhnoi rodiny na meste dolgoi bespriiutnosti" – "v strane byvshikh sirot"'.[255]

[254] Kornienko, 'Nasledie A. Platonova', p. 125. For a full account of the complex history of the text of *Dzhan*, see Kornienko, 'Istoriia teksta'.
[255] Kornienko, 'Nasledie A. Platonova', p. 130. Both of these quotes are from Platonov's 1937 story 'Glinianyi dom v uezdnom sadu'.

To return to the text of *Dzhan* itself, the removal of the Stalin references had a significant effect on Platonov's exploration of *bezottsovshchina* in the story, blunting its sense and poignancy as well as its integrity. As the following analysis will indicate, this is particularly true because the word 'Stalin' was replaced by a variety of different words, thus destroying the continuity of the theme. The first references to Stalin in *Dzhan* come in the third chapter of the text, and form the story's clearest and most extensive statement on the condition of *bezottsovshchina*. On Chagataev's long journey from Moscow to Tashkent, his train passes through small stations where he observes 'portret **Stalina** [vozhdei]' seemingly drawn by local artists. They frequently bear little resemblance to Stalin himself:

> **Сталин** [один] походил на старика, на доброго отца всех безродных людей на земле; однако художник, не думая, старался делать лицо **Сталина** похожим и на себя, чтобы видно было, что он теперь не один живет на свете и у него есть отцовство и родство.[256]

This image of Stalin as the father of all the fatherless is perhaps most remarkable for the subtlety of its perspective. On the one hand, Platonov evokes here the idea of Stalin as a father of the downtrodden, a staple of Soviet mythology of the time. On the other hand, this standard view is not so much subverted (a word which is much too unsubtle for Platonov) but transformed in its prioritization of the point of view of the fatherless. In this one sentence, Platonov expresses the tragedy of these people's condition. The amateur artists inadvertently made Stalin in their own likeness in order to prove to themselves that they have a 'real' father who is actually related to them.

The passage continues with Chagataev's observation of the positive effects of socialist construction in these god-forsaken places, evoked by Platonov in terms of an end to *bezottsovshchina*, to *bespriiutnost'* and also to *bespamiatstvo*:

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[256] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 450. The quoted text in bold represents Platonov's original version; the text in square brackets indicates subsequent substitutions (where they were grammatically necessary), as found, for example, in the text of 'Dzhan' reproduced in Andrei Platonov, *Schastlivaia Moskva: Povesti; Rasskazy; Lirika*, Moscow, 1999, pp. 329-435.

> И сейчас же за такой станцией можно видеть, как разные люди рыли землю, сажали что-то или строили, чтобы приготовить место жизни и приют для бесприютных. Порожних, нелюдимых станций, где можно жить лишь в изгнании, Чагатаев не видел; везде человек работал, отходя сердцем от векового отчаяния, от безотцовщины и всеобщего злобного беспамятства.[257]

Looking at these people, Chagataev recalls his own situation:

> Чагатаев вспомнил материнские слова 'иди далеко к чужим, пусть отец твой будет незнакомым человеком'. Он ходил далеко и теперь возвращается, он нашел отца в **Сталине** [чужом человеке], который вырастил его, расширил в нем сердце и теперь посылает снова домой, чтобы найти и спасти мать, если она жива, похоронить ее, если она лежит брошенной и мертвой на лице земли.[258]

As a father figure, Stalin appears as a universal sheltering force who will nurture and protect both body and spirit, saving his 'children' from the hostile forces of nature and the bitterness of *sirotstvo*. Chagataev describes him as a 'dobraia sila, beregushchaia i prosvetliaiushchaia ego zhizn''.[259] For this reason, Chagataev realises that he cannot leave his people to die:

> потому что его самого, брошенного матерью в пустыне, взял к себе пастух и советская власть, и **Сталин** [неизвестный человек], прокормил и сберег его для жизни и развития.[260]

It should be noted that Platonov's references to Stalin in *Dzhan* have as little to do with Stalin the man and historical figure as the naïve portraits which Chagataev observes on his journey. Indeed, Stalin does not figure in the text as a real person at all. Instead he appears as a symbol, denoting a number of different aspects of the idea of 'father': he is a protector, but also saviour. The religious image of father as saviour is particularly suggested by the connection that Chagataev sees between himself and Stalin. He is brought up by Stalin and sent home to 'save' his mother, and at different points in the story it is emphasised that Chagataev understands his role as one of 'saving' his people as their father, like Stalin. Hence, for example, the exchange between Chagataev

[257] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 450. For a detailed discussion of *bespamiatstvo*, see the following section.
[258] Ibid., p. 450.
[259] Ibid., p. 522.
[260] Ibid., p. 480.

and Suf'ian, an old man from his people, with its biblical allusions to salvation from hell:

> 'Ты встретил где-нибудь своего отца?' спросил он.
> 'Нет. А ты знаешь **Сталина** [Ленина]?'
> 'Не знаю', ответил Суфьян. 'Я слышал один раз это слово от прохожего, он говорил, что оно хорошо. Но я думаю - нет. Если хорошо, пусть оно явится в Сары-Камыш, здесь был ад всего мира, и я здесь живу хуже всякого человека.'
> 'Я вот пришел к тебе', сказал Чагатаев. [261]

Platonov's series of references to Stalin in the original text of *Dzhan* thus present and elaborate on an image of Stalin as a 'father of the fatherless', with whom Chagataev identifies himself. This image, however, is subtly undermined by the framing narrative of *Dzhan*: Chagataev's mission to save his people. Stalin as a symbol remains intact, but Chagataev's vision of his people's future, inspired by the example of Stalin, is ultimately rejected by them. Although he seems to fill his role of father successfully by providing them with food and shelter and rescuing them from their 'ad vsego mira', they resist his efforts to build a collective future and abandon him. Of particular significance is the fact that they leave not as a group, but individually and in different directions 'vo vse strany sveta', only to return one by one at the end of the story of their own free will.[262] The outcome of the story thus seems to express in subtle terms a rejection of the idea of an imposed, collective salvation from above, as well as a plea for the individual fate. Though Chagataev does restore the Dzhan to life through his nurture of them, his conception of himself as a 'father of the fatherless' in the mould of Stalin appears in the story as an illusion, one which recalls the attempt of the amateur artists to find 'ottsovstvo i rodstvo' in Stalin by making him in their own image.

[261] Ibid., p. 456.
[262] Ibid., p. 513.

Dzhan: the *bespamiatstvo* of the Dzhan

When Chagataev is charged with bringing his people out of 'hell' and into 'heaven' by the local Party Secretary in Tashkent, the official description of the Dzhan is: 'turkmeny, karakalpaki, nemnogo uzbekov, kazaki, persy, kurdy, beludzhi i pozabyvshie, kto oni'.[263] This introduction to the Dzhan is significant, for in this story Platonov consistently explores the reduced condition of his fatherless characters as one of mental oblivion, captured in *Dzhan* by the term *bespamiatstvo*. The non-standard and highly personal use of words has long been considered an essential element of Platonov's writing. However, even the standard meanings of *bespamiatstvo* throw an interesting light on Platonov's employment of the word in the text. It means 'unconsciousness', as in 'vpast' v bespamiatstvo', and in an older use of the word denotes a loss of memory, 'otsutstvie pamiati, zabyvchivost''.[264] Platonov's 'vseobshchee zlobnoe bespamiatstvo' in *Dzhan* evokes a state that is somewhere between life and death, where lack of nourishment has pushed man to the edge of physical consciousness. Platonov's descriptions of this state also, however, contain repeated references to a connected loss of the mental faculty of memory. This idea is suggested by Platonov's laconic description of the Dzhan as a ragbag of different nationalities and those who have 'forgotten who they are', and Platonov develops it throughout the text in his description of the Dzhan. He describes how their constant physical privations cause them to forget that they are alive: 'telo zabylo, chto ono zhivet'.[265] Platonov's most extended expression of *bespamiatstvo*, however, is in the figure of Chagataev's mother, Giul'chatai. Prematurely aged, bent double and 'seichas legka[ia] i vozdushna[ia], kak malen'kaia devochka', she recalls the withered *starukha* of 'Rodina elektrichestva'.[266] However, the dark eyes with their expression of the

[263] Ibid., p. 451.
[264] A.P. Evgen'eva (ed.), *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, 4th edn, 4 vols, Moscow, 1999, i, p. 81.
[265] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 460.
[266] Ibid., p. 463.

'zorkii um' still existing inside the *starukha*'s emaciated body are absent in Giul'chatai, who looks at her son 'bez pamiati'.[267] Platonov writes:

> Чагатаев смотрел в глаза матери, они теперь стали бледные, отвыкшие от него, прежняя блестящая темная сила не светила в них; худое, маленькое лицо ее стало хищным и злобным от постоянной печали или от напряжения удержать себя живой, когда жить не нужно и нечем, когда про самое сердце свое надо помнить, чтоб оно билось, и заставлять его работать. Иначе можно ежеминутно умереть, позабыв или не заметив, что живешь, что необходимо стараться чего-то хотеть и не упускать из виду самое себя.

Here *bespamiatstvo* appears as a state of physical and mental oblivion in which the mind forgets to tell the body to carry on the most essential functions.

Bespamiatstvo is also associated in the text with the constant sleeping, dreaming and dozing of the Dzhan: it is a state between life and death which enables them to survive a little longer. When Chagataev is alone and without food and water in the desert, he attempts to 'vpast' v bespamiatstvo dlia otdykha i ekonomii zhizni'.[268] Descriptions of sleeping or dreaming are frequently juxtaposed with the concept of *bespamiatstvo* in the text of *Dzhan*. Hence, for example, the phrase 'v dremote i bespamiatstve', or in a reference to the sleeping Dzhan: 'Aidym oshchupala na stanovishche vsekh spiashchikh i bespamiatnykh'.[269] Conversely, when the Dzhan have eaten, their return to a more normal physical state is connected with not having to try to remember themselves: 'Liudi shli seichas khorosho i chuvstvovali, chto oni sushchestvuiut, ne napriagaias' pamiat'iu dlia vospominanii o samikh sebe.'[270]

It is interesting to note that although, as an idea, *bespamiatstvo* is most fully explored in *Dzhan*, its origins are discernible in *Kotlovan*, and to a lesser extent in *Chevengur*. Although neither of these works contains the actual term *bespamiatstvo*, in both stories Platonov's characters fear that they will 'forget' to live. This can be seen, for example, in the idea of both death and sleep as being a 'forgetting of the mind'. In *Chevengur*, the dying *prochii* child requests

[267] Ibid, p. 462.
[268] Ibid., p. 484.
[269] Ibid., p. 484 and p. 500.
[270] Ibid., p. 501.

of its mother '"Ty zavtra razbudi menia, chtoby ia ne umer, a to ia zabudu i umru"'.[271] This is paralleled by the description of Nastia's death in *Kotlovan*. She asks Chiklin '"Chiklin, otchego vsegda um chuvstvuiu i nikak ego ne zabudu?"' Chiklin puts her mother's bones on her stomach, covers her up and tells her '"Spi, mozhet, um zabudesh'."'[272] Other parallels are to be found in Platonov's depiction of the peasants sleeping 'v terpelivom zabvenii' in *Kotlovan*, and in repeated reference to the need to 'remember' to exist.[273] Elisei's difficulty in forcing any words out when he wants to say something is attributed to the circumstance that 'on postoianno zabyval pomnit' pro samogo sebia'.[274]

Part Two of this chapter has examined how Platonov's vision of the human condition is informed by Fedorov's conception of *nerodstvennost'* in both its senses. In Platonov's interpretation of this condition, man is both physically eroded by nature's *slepaia sila* and existentially 'fatherless'. In the absence of any 'dobraia, beregushchaia sila', human life appears as a gradual and irrevocable process of physical and mental disintegration into the dust of the earth, one which man seems powerless to overcome. Platonov's characters live in constant fear of this 'return to dust', but it is significant that their greatest fear is that they will then be literally scattered by the winds, and thus not even remain intact in death. In *Kotlovan*, the oppressive inevitability of this process is expressed in connection with Voshchev's failure to find truth:

> все равно истины нет на свете или, быть может, она и была в каком-нибудуь растении или в героической твари, но шел дорожный нищий и съел то растение или растоптал гнетущуюся низом тварь, а сам умер затем в осеннем овраге, и тело его выдул ветер в ничто.[275]

[271] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 228.
[272] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, pp. 112-13.
[273] Ibid., p. 110.
[274] Ibid., p. 60.
[275] Ibid., p. 86. See also Iakov Titych's wish that dead things should remain whole in 'Chevengur', p. 243. This passage is quoted in full in Part Three, I: The gathering motif: *Kotlovan* and *Chevengur*.

Equally, one could mention Platonov's description of the desert in 'Takyr' (1934), where the Austrian Katigrob finds himself far from home 'v etoi khudoi pustyne, davno rassypavshei svoi kosti v prakh i prakh istrativshei na veter.'[276] Human life, in Platonov's prose, seems entirely ruled by an inexorable, disintegrative dynamic, one which is compelling evoked through the unique materiality of Platonov's vision. It is this powerful momentum of decay, perhaps, which contributes more than anything else to the darkness of many of Platonov's stories. Yet, as will be argued in the final part of this chapter, one can identify in Platonov's stories another and opposite dynamic: one which is integrative and life-affirming.

Part Three: Platonov's preservation and remembrance of a *tselyi trudnyi mir*

> Человечество думает, что в пустыне ничего нет, одно дикое, неинтересное место, где дремлет во тьме грустный пастух и у ног его лежит грязная впадина Сары-Камыша, в котором совершалось некогда человеческое бедствие, - но и оно прошло, и мученики исчезли. А на самом деле и здесь, на Аму-Дарье, и в Сары-Камыше тоже был целый трудный мир, занятый своей судьбой.[277]

In one of his articles devoted to the regulation of nature, Fedorov describes nature as man's 'vrag vremennyi' but his 'drug vechnyi'.[278] Fedorov is referring here to his conception of man's God-given role to regulate nature to human advantage through his superior reasoning. As George Young has argued:

> Nature, in Fedorov, is not essentially evil, but it is blind. Left unregulated, the blind force of nature drives the universe towards disintegration, drives men and women to abandon their parents in order to turn themselves from children into parents, and divides even the individual against himself. […] Man's place, in Fedorov, is not within but over nature.[279]

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[276] Andrei Platonov, 'Takyr', in Andrei Platonov, *Che-Che-O: Povesti; Rasskazy*, Voronezh, 1999, pp. 348-68 (p. 363).
[277] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 466.
[278] Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, p. 521.
[279] Young, *Fedorov*, p. 113.

The essential dichotomy of Fedorov's view of nature is one which also characterises Platonov's position. In Platonov's stories, nature emerges as enemy and friend, 'iarostnyi' and 'prekrasnyi', [280] as 'eta smertnaia zemlia'[281] and the 'tselyi trudnyi mir'.[282] The coexistence in Platonov's writing of these apparently polar opposites can be attributed in part to the polyphonic character of his handling of ideas, as discussed in Part One of this chapter. When examined in the context of Platonov's articles of the period, however, this complex and contradictory vision of nature appears to stem from a personal and deeply-felt ambivalence towards man's role in nature. The crucial text in this connection is Platonov's extraordinary article 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', which was probably written at the end of 1934, the time when he was working on *Dzhan*. In his excellent commentary on the article, V. Perkhin argues that it displays a tension between conflicting views of nature – the 'osvoenie mira' versus the 'odukhotvorenie mira' – which had been with Platonov since the early years of his career as a writer:

> Несмотря на то, что в первые пореволюционные годы Платонов испытал сильное воздействиве рационализма и с этих позиций призывал 'сокрушать, переделать эту планету, чтобы стала как станок', идея 'одухотворения мира' оставалась неотъемлемой частью его сознания с отроческих лет.[283]

As was suggested in Part Two of this chapter, Platonov's more mature prose displays a diminished confidence in the project to regulate nature. This dynamic is illuminated by 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', which forms Platonov's polemic with the whole idea of the 'osvoenie mira'. In a direct and provocative reference to Stalin's statement '"Tekhnika v period rekonstruktsii reshaet vse"', Platonov argues that 'Tekhnika – eto i est' siuzhet sovremennoi istoricheskoi

[280] See Platonov's 1941 story 'V prekrasnom i iarostnom mire' in Andrei Platonov, *V prekrasnom i iarostnom mire*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 403-16.
[281] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 46.
[282] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 466.
[283] Andrei Platonov, 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', with an introduction and commentary by V. Perkhin, *Russkaia literatura*, 1993, 2, pp. 200-06 (p. 201).

tragedii'.[284] Platonov warns that technology and the project for the 'osvoenie mira' threaten actually to destroy nature. Paradoxically, this tragedy is a result of the building of socialism, for it is only in a state where the workers are in power that the full potential of technology can be realised, thus making complete control over nature possible. In Platonov's opinion, the problem lies in man himself:

> сам человек меняется медленнее, чем он меняет мир. Именно здесь центр трагедии. Для этого и нужны творческие инженеры человеческих душ. Они должны предупредить опасность опережения человечексой души техникой.[285]

Contemporary man, according to Platonov, finds himself on the verge of complete control of the forces of nature, but singularly unfit to discharge this task:

> он оборудован не той душой, не тем сердцем и сознанием, чтобы, очутившись в будущем во главе природы, он исполнял свой долг и подвиг до конца и не погубил бы, ради какой-нибудь психической игры, всего сооружения мира и самого себя.[286]

This sober vision of humanity's limitations forms a sharp contrast to the optimistic view of man's capacity for change which Platonov had held a decade earlier. In 'Proletarskaia poeziia', for example, he wrote:

> Сущность человека должна стать другой, центр внутри его должен переместиться. […] И хотим ли мы или не хотим – революция внутри человека произойдет, человек изменится.[287]

It is this loss of faith in man's ambition to regulate nature that underlies a theme which became increasingly important in Platonov's stories from *Kotlovan* on: the tender concern for the 'tselyi trudnyi mir'. Below, it will be argued that this concern for nature emerges as an opposite dynamic to the disintegrative effect of nature on man. It is an integrating impulse which works

[284] Platonov, 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', p. 205. Perkhin cites Stalin's speech 'O zadachakh khoziaistvennikov' (4 February 1931) as the source of this statement.
[285] Ibid., p. 206. Platonov is alluding to Stalin's famous comment on the need for 'inzhenery chelovecheskikh dush' made at a meeting with Soviet writers at Maksim Gor'kii's house on 26 October 1932. See K.V. Dushenko, *Slovar' sovremennykh tsitat*, Moscow, 2002, p. 394.
[286] Platonov, 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', p. 206.
[287] Platonov, 'Proletarskaia poeziia', pp. 162-63.

against the ceaseless 'turning to dust' of man, protecting every particle of the universe as something individual and unique to be preserved for the future. This impulse informs two motifs which run through Platonov's prose from the middle of the 1920s, the 'gathering' motif, and the motif of 'mutual remembrance'. These two motifs in themselves act as opposing forces to, respectively, the erosion of man by cruel nature, and the condition of *bezottsovshchina*, and they can also be understood as a reworking of Fedorov's 'sobiranie prakha'. Just as remembrance is the unifying impulse in Fedorov's common task to resurrect the whole of the universe, so it is memory which is the motor of Platonov's gathering and mutual remembrance motifs. The first two sections below trace the development of these motifs in *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan* and 'Reka Potudan''. The third and final section focuses on *Dzhan*. It is in this *povest'* that the idea of memory as an integrative force is most fully explored by Platonov, both through ideas of gathering and mutual remembrance, and in its narrative of a return to memory and the past.

I The gathering motif: *Kotlovan* and *Chevengur*

The description of Voshchev's bewilderment and helplessness on losing his job at the opening of *Kotlovan* is a particularly compelling example of Platonov's vision of the human condition. It expresses in Platonov's inimitable verbal style the constant tension between the materiality and spirituality of man, one which seems to live in the very language of his prose. Platonov writes:

> Вощев очутился в пространстве, где был перед нум лишь горизонт и ощущение ветра в склонившееся лицо.
>
> Но вскоре он почувствовал сомнение в своей жизни и слабость тела без истины, - он не мог долго ступать по дороге и сел на край канавы, не зная точного устройства всего мира и того, куда надо стремиться.[288]

It is against this background of man's existential suffering that Platonov first introduces the image of Voshchev gathering things into his sack:

[288] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 23.

> Вощев подобрал отсохший лист и спрятал его в тайное отделение мешка, где он сберегал всякие предметы несчастья и безвестности. ‘Ты не имел смысла житья,’ со скупостью сочувствия полагал Вощев, ‘лежи здесь, я узнаю, за что ты жил и погиб. Раз ты никому не нужен и валяешься среди всего мира, то я тебя буду хранить и помнить.’[289]

Both Voshchev’s search for truth, here Platonov’s ‘exact arrangement of the universe’, and his gathering of abandoned objects run like threads through the narrative of *Kotlovan*. Indeed, one way of interpreting the structure of *Kotlovan* is as a Dantean journey in search of a higher truth. Duzhina is one of a number of critics who have identified Dantean allusions in the text of *Kotlovan*. The opening sentence of the narrative ‘V den’ tridtsatiletiia lichnoi zhizni’ recalls Dante’s ‘Midway through the journey of our life’, and Voshchev has both lost the ‘straight way’ and undergone much suffering on his path to the ‘other world’ he seeks.[290] Of particular interest to the discussion of this chapter, however, is that Voshchev’s gathering not only runs alongside his tormented search for truth but in fact appears as the material enactment of it. In the absence of what Platonov terms a ‘feeling’ of truth, Voshchev decides to look for its material presence in the ground, ‘dobyt’ istinu iz serediny zemnogo prakha’.[291] Later, Platonov writes:

> Вощев, как и раньше, не чувствовал истины жизни, но смирился от истощения тяжелым грунтом - и только собирал в выходые дни всякую несчастную мелочь природы как документы бесплановогo создания мира, как факты меланхолии любого живущего дыхания.[292]

The gathering motif as Fedorov’s ‘sobiranie prakha’

The connection between Voshchev’s gathering and Fedorov’s common task has been widely accepted in critical literature at least since the first

[289] Ibid.
[290] Duzhina, ‘Putevoditel’’, p. 88, and Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Stanley Lombardo, Indianapolis, IN, 2009, p. 3.
[291] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 28.
[292] Ibid., p. 49.

publication of *Kotlovan*, in the émigré journal *Grani* in 1969.[293] Fedorov's 'sobiranie prakha', where 'vse veshchestvo est' prakh predkov', is transformed by Platonov into Voshchev's gathering into his sack of 'vsiakie predmety neschast'ia i bezvestnosti'. Moreover, Fedorov's ideas seem to frame the motivation of Voshchev's gathering: the need to 'khranit' i pomnit'' all dead matter, to collect in its entirety the 'dokumenty' and 'fakty' of all that once lived. In this connection, it is important to mention that Voshchev's gathering is foreshadowed by a number of references in *Chevengur*, all of which are characterised by the need to preserve dead matter or things as a whole. Hence, for example, the passage describing Iakov Titych's fascination with collecting things:

> Яков Титыч любил поднимать с дорог и с задних дворов какие-нибудь частички и смотреть на них: чем они раньше были? чье чувство обожало и хранило их? Может быть, это были кусочки людей, или тех же паучков, или безымянных земляных комариков, - и ничто не осталось в целости, все некогда жившие твари, любимые своими детьми, истреблены на непохожие части, и не над чем заплакать тем, кто остался после них жить и дальше мучиться. 'Пусть бы все умирало,' - думал Яков Титыч, - 'но хотя бы мертвое тело оставалось целым, было бы чего держать и помнить, а то дуют ветры, течет вода, и все пропадает и расстается в прах. Это мука, а не жизнь. И кто умер, тот умер ни за что, и теперь не найдешь никого, кто жил когда, все они – одна потеря.'[294]

Here, the gathering motif appears as the opposing force to the disintegrative dynamic of nature which relentlessly turns everything into dust and then disperses it further through the wind. This passage also recalls the importance of the whole in Fedorov's common task, where each and every particle of the fathers has to be gathered from every corner of the universe so that the 'sons' can reassemble the fathers in their entirety for universal resurrection. This idea is underlined in Platonov's description of Dvanov as a gatherer:

> Дванов находил различные мертвые вещи вроде опорок, деревянных ящиков из-под дегтя, воробьев-покойников и еще кое-что. Дванов поднимал эти предметы, выражал сожаление их гибели и забвенности и снова возвращал на прежние места, чтобы все

[293] See Kiselev, 'O povesti *Kotlovan*'.
[294] Platonov, 'Chevengur', pp. 242-43.

было цело в Чевенгуре до лучшего дня искупления в коммунизме.[295]

Although the expression of the gathering motif in *Kotlovan* does not foreground the need to preserve things as a 'whole' in the same way, the integrative impulse is just as important. Platonov repeatedly stresses the all-embracing nature of Voshchev's concern to gather up each and every thing. As will be shown, this is a dynamic which develops in *Kotlovan* as Voshchev's collection expands to include all the peasants and workers, and even the bear Misha.

Another important element of Platonov's reinterpretation of Fedorov's 'sobiranie prakha' is the gentle and meticulous concern of his gatherers for all that is dead and discarded. It is this that A. Kiselev identifies in *Kotlovan* as the feeling of 'zhalost' i sostradanie' for all dead things whether people, objects or dead natural matter. He argues that

> тоска по безвестно погубленным, умершим людям, по неиспользованной до конца силе и энергии всех живых существ – звучит как основной фон повествования.[296]

This stands in stark contrast to the motivation of Prokofii's avaricious 'gathering' as described by Platonov in *Chevengur*:

> Прокофий обошел все присутствующее население и списал все мертвые вещи города в свою преждевременную собственность.[297]

In *Kotlovan* the gathering motif is also accompanied by the concept of 'otmshchenie' or vengeance. In the early part of the story, Platonov describes how Voshchev falls asleep with his head on the sack 'kuda sobiral dlia pamiati i otmshcheniia vsiakuiu bezvestnost''.[298] The significance of the term 'otmshchenie' and the importance of its link to 'pamiat'' becomes clearer in a later passage, following Voshchev's official presentation of his sack of objects to the activist to be registered as the property of the collective farm:

> Он собрал по деревне все нищие, отвергнутые предметы всю мелочь безвестности и всякое беспамятство – для

[295] Ibid., pp. 297-98.
[296] Kiselev, 'O povesti *Kotlovan*', p. 137.
[297] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 300.
[298] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 26.

> социалистического отмщения. Эта истершаяся терпеливая ветхость некогда касалась батрацкой, кровной плоти, в этих вещах запечатлена навеки тягость согбенной жизни, истраченной без сознательного смысла и погибшей без славы где-нибудь под соломенной рожью земли. Вощев, не польностью соображая, со скупостью скопил в мешок вещественные остатки потерянных людей, живших, подобно ему, без истины и которые скончались ранее победного конца. Сейчас он предъявлял тех ликвидированных тружеников к лицу власти и будущего, чтобы посредством организации вечного смысла людей добиться отмщения – за тех, кто тихо лежит в земной глубине.[299]

This description of Voshchev's gathering is the most extended and intense statement of the importance of memory in *Kotlovan*. The objects in Voshchev's sack are evoked as the precious remains of the dead, material things imprinted with the unique details of their lives and suffering. Voshchev's gathering appears here as a mission to avenge the 'unknown' and 'forgotten' dead by preserving all material traces of them for the future, a future which he identifies with socialism. In this connection, the vengeance aspect of the gathering motif in *Kotlovan* forms an allusion to man's duty to perform a universal resurrection in Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*.

In the gathering motif, Platonov interweaves philosophical themes with contemporary social and political ones, just as he did with the theme of *bezottsovshchina*. Duzhina's argument that the gathering motif is in part a refraction of the 'util'syr'e' collection campaign of 1929-1930 is both convincing and illuminating.[300] This campaign in support of the building up of Soviet industry propagated the idea that 'rubbish' no longer exists, since everything can be reused. Citizens were asked to collect all their discarded items and bring them to the relevant authorities in sacks. The parallels with Voshchev's gathering of 'vsiakaia meloch'' are clear. In her close analysis of the text of *Kotlovan,* Duzhina identifies a series of references to this campaign. Examples of this include several references to the words 'util'syr'e' or 'util'' in descriptions of Voshchev's gathering, and also the absurd but historically

[299] Ibid., p. 99.
[300] Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', pp. 75-79.

accurate request to cut off the manes and tails of horses for hard-currency export, a request which is heard on the radio in *Kotlovan*.

Duzhina also suggests allusions here to the wider political context of the period. In particular, Platonov's use of the word 'otkhody' for rubbish can plausibly be linked with the related word 'otkhodniki', which was the contemporary term for those who abandoned the *kolkhoz* for the city. The phrase used in the press at the time to describe the human 'util'syr'e' for industrialisation was 'otkhody i otbrosy krest'ianskikh khoziaistv i gorodskogo naseleniia'.[301] This is echoed at the end of *Kotlovan* when Voshchev brings all the collectivised peasants to the foundation pit. Voshchev tells Zhachev that '"Muzhiki v proletariat khotiat zachisliat'sia"', and, in a phrase previously removed from the text, he explains: '"A ia ikh privel dlia utilia, kak nichto."'[302] Thus *Kotlovan*, which starts with Voshchev becoming part of the 'otkhody gorodskogo naseleniia' when he is sacked, ends with him gathering the 'nobodies' from the kolkhoz to the construction site to be 'used' there.

The gathering motif and the conclusion of *Kotlovan*

The gathering motif as developed through the narrative of *Kotlovan* is crucial to an understanding of the story's complex ending, which revolves around the death of Nastia. It is to Nastia, who embodies the workers' vision of the communist future, that Voshchev presents his sack:

> Он привез в подарок Насте мешок специально отобранного утиля, в виде редких, непродающихся игрушек, каждая из которых есть вечная память о забытом человеке.[303]

When Nastia dies, however, Voshchev's hopes for 'socialist vengeance' for the dead vanish: 'on uzhe ne znal, gde zhe teper' budet kommunizm na svete'.[304] In the final scene of the story, Voshchev, and all the workers and the peasants whom Voshchev has brought as human 'util'' all start digging furiously

[301] Ibid., pp. 78-79.
[302] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 115.
[303] Ibid., p. 114.
[304] Ibid.

downwards into the pit 'budto khoteli spastis' naveki v propasti kotlovana'.[305] In a short passage previously omitted from the published texts of *Kotlovan*, Chiklin says: '"Teper' nado eshche shire i glubzhe ryt' kotlovan. Puskai v nash dom vlezet vsiakii chelovek iz baraka i glinianoi izby."'[306] The imagery of this scene suggests a number of different meanings, all of them in some way reflecting Platonov's sincere and deeply-felt concern for the fate of socialism, the 'izlishniaia trevoga za nechto liubimoe' which he refers to in the postscript to *Kotlovan*.[307]

In Duzhina's view, the final scene of *Kotlovan* represents Platonov's reinterpretation of Stalin's declared aim of the 'unichtozhenie protivopolozhnosti mezhdu gorodom i derevnei i smychka proletariata s krest'ianstvom'.[308] One could add that this scene is an excellent example of Platonov's inimitable materialisation of ideas. In Platonov's interpretation, peasants and proletarians work with great energy side by side on the construction site, but they seem more likely to be united physically in death as matter than to be welded together through the experience of socialist labour. The association between the 'wider and deeper' pit, in which the diggers hope to 'save themselves forever', and the image of the grave is unavoidable. Furthermore, for the modern reader the expanding dimensions of the pit and the information that it has to be large enough to accomodate 'vsiakii chelovek' necessarily suggest the mass grave. In this connection, it is worth mentioning Duzhina's view of the gathering motif as a reflection of the painful reality of the Soviet Union of this period, a place where 'bol'shaia chast' naseleniia strany prevratitsia v "otbrosy i otkhody", v material dlia stroitel'stva "zdaniia sotsializma"'.[309] This is exactly the impression that is left by the ending of *Kotlovan*, when all of Platonov's workers and peasants appear as 'otkhody' or 'predmety neschast'ia i bezvestnosti' and descend en masse into the pit. Furthermore, this final scene appears as an inversion of the universal ambitions

[305] Ibid., p. 115.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid., p. 116.
[308] Duzhina, 'Putevoditel'', p. 79.
[309] Ibid., p. 136.

behind the project for the 'obshcheproletarskii dom': the home which had to be large enough for 'all' proletarians has become a grave into which they must 'all' fit. Though it is clearly impossible to establish whether Platonov consciously conceived of this final scene as an allusion to the political situation, it should be emphasised that because of his profession as a land improvement engineer, he was one of the very few Soviet writers who had first hand knowledge of the enormous human cost of collectivisation as it was actually happening.[310]

The ending of *Kotlovan* can equally be interpreted in the light of the philosophical underpinnings of the gathering motif, both as part of the web of references to Fedorov and as a culmination to Voshchev's search for truth. The final scene recalls Voshchev's decision to 'dobyt' istinu iz serediny zemnogo prakha', but with the crucial difference that this is now a collective rather than an individual effort. In Fedorov's *Filosofiia obshchego dela*, truth, or at least the path to truth, is to be found in the dust of the earth, since it contains the material for universal resurrection. In this respect, the ending of *Kotlovan* can be read as the desperate attempt to find eternal and universal salvation in the earth. Moreover, one could argue that, just as with Voshchev, this collective search for truth in the dust of the earth arises from an absence of the 'feeling' of truth elsewhere. The spectre of the longed-for 'obshcheproletarskii dom' seems to haunt the whole of *Kotlovan* and this final scene in particular, in which it seems to represent the absent vision of the ideal, one which should have reached up towards the heavens, but is replaced in reality by an ever deeper chasm.

A consideration of the overall outcome of Voshchev's gathering in the narrative of *Kotlovan* brings some further insights into the dense meaning of the story's conclusion, and particularly to the question of resurrection, which is the culmination of Fedorov's common task. Voshchev faithfully fulfils his duty to

[310] See Robert Chandler and Olga Meerson on this point, and in particular their mention of Platonov's work notebooks for August 1931 for a report on the progress of collectivisation in the central Volga and northern Caucasus regions. His professional assessment is extraordinarily frank about the disasters. Robert Chandler and Olga Meerson, 'Afterword', in Andrei Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*, trans. Robert Chandler et al., New York, 2009, pp. 153-77 (p. 156).

'preserve' and 'remember' all that is dead and abandoned, but at the end of the story he has failed to find the 'future' to which he wishes to entrust it for the final avenging of the dead, in the person of either the activist or Nastia. Initially, he gives his collection to the activist as a present to the new collective farm, but the peasants who remain after the activist has finished dekulakization themselves become part of his collection of unwanted objects. It seems significant that it is Nastia's death which is the cause of the frenzied digging of the pit in the final scene. One way of reading this is as the last act of Voshchev's gathering, in which he returns his now extended collection of dead things and 'living dead' back to the earth, where Chiklin is also digging a special deep grave for Nastia. In V'iugin's opinion, both the meaning of Nastia's full name 'Anastasiia' as 'the resurrected' and the method of her burial indicate that the question of resurrection in the context of Fedorov's common task is left open by Platonov in the ending of *Kotlovan*, just as it was in *Chevengur*. Moreover, he sees here a particular contemporary resonance:

> В конечном счете котлован, ставший ее каменной могилой, может быть уподоблен зеркальному отражению уже возведенного к концу 20-х годов мавзолею: и в основе платоновского и в основе красинского (изначально) проекта лежит одна мысль, одна надежда.[311]

It is Platonov's own words, however, in his postscript to *Kotlovan* which perhaps best convey the sense of the story's ending:

> Автор мог ошибиться, изобразив в виде смерти девочки гибель социалистического поколения, но эта ошибка произошла лишь от излишней тревоги за нечто любимое, потеря чего равносильна разрушению не только всего прошлого, но и будущего.[312]

Both in *Chevengur* and in *Kotlovan*, communism appears as Platonov's cherished ideal, and both works express his fear that this 'nechto liubimoe' will not survive or indeed that it only seemed to be present in the Soviet reality. As an ideal state, communism has a very particular meaning in Platonov's prose. In both *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan* it emerges as a time and place where

[311] V'iugin, 'Povest' "Kotlovan"', p. 17.
[312] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 116.

bezottsovshchina does not exist: where everything and everyone is valued and remembered, dead or alive, where no one lives in *bezvestnost'* and *bespamiatstvo*. The settings of the two narratives are different: *Chevengur* explores the attempt to realise a communist utopia by a small group of eccentrics and dreamers, whereas *Kotlovan* is set against the background of the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union at the end of the 1920s. In both cases, however, the reader is left with the impression that Platonov measures these 'communisms' against his ideal and finds them lacking. *Chevengur* ends with nothing having been 'done' for the fathers, and this is just as true for the ending of *Kotlovan*. If Voshchev's return of his precious collection of *bezvestnost*' and *bespamiatstvo* to the dust of the earth suggests that his attempt to gather and remember has failed, one could argue that this is because the ideal is not present. The construction of socialism has not changed the natural dynamic of disintegration: the dead are left unremembered and vulnerable to disintegration and obliteration through the erosive forces of nature, and the living *bezottsovshchina* are descending into the pit. For Platonov, it seems, the neglect of the past leads to the forfeiting of the ideal future, one which is founded on the remembrance of each and every thing.

II Mutual remembrance: *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan* and 'Reka Potudan''

The remembering of the dead that informs the gathering motif is paralleled in Platonov's stories by an equally important remembrance of the living. It appears as the constant preoccupation of Platonov's characters with remembering each other in order to survive in an inhospitable world. Mutual remembrance, like the gathering motif, is imbued with a tender care for all material being, both animate and inanimate. The words 'berech'' and 'berezhno' are indeed repeatedly used by Platonov in this context.

In *Chevengur*, Platonov describes how Sasha Dvanov lies ill and fears for his life when Fekla Stepanova is asleep:

> Когда Фекла Степановна уснула, Дванову стало трудно быть одному. Целый день они почти не разговаривали, но Дванов не чувствовал одиночества: все-таки Фекла Степановна как-то думала о нем, и Дванов тоже непрерывно ощущал ее, избавляясь этим от своей забывающейся сосредоточенности. Теперь его нет в сознании Феклы Степановы, и Дванов почувствовал тягость своего будущего сна, когда и сам он всех забудет; его разум вытеснится теплотой тела куда-то наружу, и там он останется уединенным грустным наблюдателем.[313]

Here, active mutual remembrance appears as that which will keep Dvanov intact not only physically but also spiritually, an establishing of *rodstvennost'* which will counter his metaphysical isolation. This idea is echoed in the character of Simon Serbinov, who desperately seeks someone to 'remember' him eternally after his mother's death.[314] He is determined to enter into a physical relationship with Sonia, so that she will be forced to remember him. Thus, at the end of *Chevengur* when Serbinov is dying, he does not much mind, 'ved' Sof'ia Aleksandrovna ostanetsia zhit', pust' ona khranit v sebe sled ego tela i prodolzhaet sushchestvovanie.'[315] Similarly, in *Kotlovan*, Chiklin reassures the dead Kozlov by telling him that he is as good as alive because Chiklin will remember everything about him:

> 'А ты, Козлов, тоже не заботься жить. Я сам себя забуду, но тебя начну иметь постоянно. Всю твою погибшую жизнь, все твои задачи спрячу в себя и не брошу их никуда, так что ты считай себя живым.'[316]

Conversely, the failure of mutual remembrance is linked in Platonov's prose to physical disintegration. Thus in *Kotlovan*, the disintegration of the old fence Chiklin played by as a child appears as a direct and physical result of Chiklin's failure to remember it over the years, though it has faithfully remembered him. Covered in moss, bent double and with its old nails falling out, 'starik zabor stoial nepodvizhno i, pomnia o nem, vse zhe dozhdalsia chasa, kogda Chiklin proshel mimo nego i pogladil zabvennye vsemi tesiny

[313] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 85.
[314] Ibid., p. 277.
[315] Ibid., p. 304.
[316] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 69.

otvykshei ot schast'ia rukoi.'[317] In 'Reka Potudan'', Liuba's friend Zhenia appears to be dying of typhus precisely because she has been forgotten and not loved. Nikita thinks he could have loved her too, like Liuba: 'Ona tozhe, kazhetsia, prekrasnaia: zria on ee ne razgliadel togda vo t'me i plokho zapomnil.'[318]

Mutual remembrance is frequently equated with love in Platonov's prose, and appears as an equally basic human need. Thus, for example, the passage in *Chevengur* when Serbinov and Dvanov discuss Sonia, and Dvanov promises to 'think' of her after having 'forgotten' her for a long time. Serbinov responds: '"Dumaite. Po-vashemu, eto ved' mnogo znachit – dumat' – eto imet' ili liubit'."'[319] The idea of loving as remembering is also expressed in the constant concern of Dvanov and the Chevengurians for each other. They make special presents for each other and look after those who are unwell. Of Dvanov, Platonov writes:

> У Дванова не было в запасе никакой неподвижной любви, он жил одним Чевенгуром и боялся его истратить. Он существовал одними ежедневными людьми – тем же Копенкиным, Гопнером, Пащинцевым, прочими, но постоянно тревожась, что в одно утро они скроются куда-нибудь или умрут постепенно. Дванов наклонился, сорвал былинку и оглядел ее робкое тело: можно и ее беречь, когда никого не останется.[320]

Here the impulse to remember other people or things appears as just as necessary to life as being remembered. This is also true of the extraordinary passage in *Kotlovan* in which Platonov describes how the peasants who are about to be collectivised kiss each other and ask each other for forgiveness:

> Многие, прикоснувшись взаимными губами, стояли в таком чувстве некоторое время, чтобы навсегда запомнить новую родню, потому что до этой поры они жили без памяти друг о друге и без жалости.[321]

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[317] Ibid., p. 50.
[318] Andrei Platonov, 'Reka Potudan'', in Platonov, *Schastlivaia Moskva*, pp. 471-96 (p. 479).
[319] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 296.
[320] Ibid., p. 301.
[321] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 87.

Platonov's most sustained exploration of mutual remembrance as love is without doubt 'Reka Potudan'', in which Nikita and Liuba's relationship is repeatedly evoked in terms of remembering and forgetting. Hence, for example, the opening and the conclusion of their first conversation:

> 'Вы меня не помните?' спросила Люба.
> 'Нет, я вас не забыл,' ответил Никита.
> 'Забывать никогда не надо,' улыбнулась Люба.[322]
> […]
> 'Вы теперь не забудете меня?' попрощалась с ним Люба.
> 'Нет,' сказал Никита. 'Мне больше некого помнить.'[323]

Conversely, Nikita's doubts as to whether Liuba really loves him are expressed in his decision literally 'not to remember' her, and thus 'not to know' her: '"[…] Liubu zabudu, ne stanu ee pomnit' i znat'.[324]'''

In his work diaries for his Platonov-inspired film *Odinokii golos cheloveka* (1978-87), Aleksandr Sokurov writes: 'Ia pomniu ikh, ty zapomni menia, a tebia zapomniat tozhe – vot tsepochka sushchestvovaniia, sokhraniaiushchaia ego veshchestvo.'[325] This comment captures much of the essence of the theme of mutual remembrance in Platonov's stories. It appears as another aspect of Platonov's reworking of Fedorov's common task. If the gathering motif materialises the 'sobiranie prakha', then mutual remembrance gives substance to the role of remembrance in Fedorov's scheme. In Platonov's prose this duty to remember becomes an activity which must constantly be engaged in to counteract the relentless dispersing and isolating forces of cruel nature which reduce man to the state of *bezottsovshchina*. It is an integrating force which keeps man alive and intact by binding him to others and establishing *rodstvennost'*.

[322] Platonov, 'Reka Potudan'', p. 476.
[323] Ibid., p. 478.
[324] Ibid., p. 482.
[325] Aleksandr Sokurov, '*Odinokii golos cheloveka*: Dnevniki 1978 goda', in *Sokurov*, ed. Liubov' Arkus, St Petersburg, 1994, pp. 33-38, (p .34).

III The recovery of memory and life: *Dzhan*

'Pamiat'', writes Sokurov, '- energiia Platonova, ego elektrichestvo.'[326] It has been argued above that memory is indeed the 'energy' behind two important motifs in Platonov's prose – the gathering motif and the motif of mutual remembrance, with their integrative dynamic to preserve the whole of existence, whether dead or living. These two motifs reappear in *Dzhan* too, but in a new and qualitatively different context. The following discussion examines how *Dzhan* can be seen as a story about the recovery of memory.[327] In this respect it occupies a unique position among Platonov's stories. Neither before nor after *Dzhan* does Platonov write anything in which the theme of memory forms the central strand of the narrative. Any attempt to elucidate why memory takes on such prominence in this one story must necessarily be tentative, but an examination of some aspects of the political and personal context in which *Dzhan* was written does suggest some possible explanations.

Platonov and Central Asia

Above anything else, it is clear that Platonov's encounters with Turkmenistan in 1934-1935 affected him deeply. In a letter to his wife from March 1934 Platonov describes his first impressions of the desert:

> Я смотрю жадно на все, незнакомое мне. […] Если бы ты видела эту великую скудность пустыни! Мне нравятся люди на станциях – киргизы. Изредка видны глиняные жилища вдалеке с неподвижным верблюдом. Я никогда не понял бы пустыни, если был не увидел ее – книг таких нет.[328]

Equally, in a diary entry recording his return to Turkmenistan in January 1935, Platonov states simply: 'Opiat' Amu-Dariia, Chardzhui, opiat' v peskakh, v

[326] Sokurov, '*Odinokii golos cheloveka*: dnevniki', p. 33.
[327] For a different, and particularly interesting, interpretation of the role of memory in *Dzhan*, see the following article: Stephen Hutchings, 'Remembering of a Kind: Philosophy and Art, Miscegenation and Incest in Platonov's "Džan"', *Russian Literature*, 51 (2002), pp. 49-72.
[328] Platonov, *Zhivia glavnoi zhizn'iu*, p. 393.

pustyne, v samom sebe.'[329] Platonov clearly felt an immediate love for the whole world of the desert and its people. This was a world which was immeasurably different from the one in which Platonov existed, both in its still palpable sense of a rich and ancient past and in its natural world. One could also speculate that the intensity with which Platonov embraced Turkmenistan was in some way a reaction to what was a particularly difficult period in his career. Platonov's desperation is evident in his request to Gor'kii to arrange a meeting in May 1933: 'Predmet, o kotorom ia khochu s Vami posovetovat'sia, kasaetsia voprosa, mogu li ia byt' sovetskim pisatelem ili eto ob''ektivno nevozmozhno.'[330] Despite Gor'kii's support, Platonov's many stories of this period always suffered a similar fate: they were accepted for publication but ultimately shelved at some stage during the editing process. It was after Platonov had received yet another rejection of one of his stories – 'Musornyi veter' (1933) – that he was finally accepted as a contributor to the 'collective' book on the Soviet East, probably with the assistance of Gor'kii.

The centrality Platonov accords to memory and the past in *Dzhan* can also be understood as his personal response to the official view of Soviet Central Asia in the 1930s as a *tabula rasa* for Sovietization, where the past was of no value at all. This view formed the general tone of the books produced after the first group journey of Soviet writers to Turkmenistan in 1930. Kornienko argues that *Dzhan* is a direct polemic with the opinions expressed by the 'zakonodatel' vostochnoi problematiki sovetskoi literatury' P. A. Pavlenko in his 'Puteshestvie v Turkmenistan' (1932).[331] Platonov's evocation of the 'tselyi trudnyi mir' of the desert, with its animal and plant life and its traces of previous civilisations, stands as a direct refutation of Pavlenko's view that there is nothing of any value in Turkmen culture or nature:

> Туркмения прошлого ликвидируется, последние потомки Тимура и Чингиз-Хана съезжают из туркменской истории. […]

[329] Kornienko, 'Istoriia teksta', p. 224.
[330] Ibid., p. 217.
[331] Ibid., pp. 224-26.

> Всю Бухару надо срыть и отправить на утильсырье для рассыпки, как удобрение. [...] В этих песках, нет ничего, что можно взять для завтрашней жизни.[332]

A specific example of this is the direct opposition between Pavlenko's description of the desert tortoises as 'util'syr'e' and Platonov's image of them with 'zadumchivost'' in their eyes. Pavlenko's references to 'util'syr'e' here recall Platonov's reinterpretation of that concept in *Kotlovan*. In the narrative of *Dzhan*, this 'util'syr'e' consists of people and things, but also animals and an entire culture, and all of these are given back their unique value and importance by Platonov.

One could also see in Platonov's vision of the Turkmen world in *Dzhan* a reflection of the sentiments he expressed in 'O pervoi sotsialisticheskoi tragedii', written in the same year as *Dzhan* and discussed at the beginning of Part Three of this chapter. Platonov's portrayal of the unspoilt beauty and integrity of the 'living' desert world in *Dzhan* is an expression of his personal perception of this world and its value in the face of his deep worries that it could be destroyed at the hands of man, who is not fit to be its master.

Chagataev's journey and the gathering motif

In a parallel with *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, the narrative of *Dzhan* too revolves around its hero's journey in search of some idea of truth. As has been seen, in the two earlier works this 'truth' is a vision of communism as an ideal state, and in both it proved to be ultimately elusive. The journeys of Dvanov and Voshchev are evoked by Platonov as the wanderings of humble truth seekers, the *stranniki* heroes who become increasingly prominent in Platonov's prose throughout the 1920s.[333] In *Dzhan* the complexion of both hero and journey undergo a significant transformation. On the surface, Chagataev is a purposeful hero with a quest: to find and save his mother and his people by

[332] Ibid., p. 225.
[333] See Langerak's discussion of the development of the *strannik* hero from 1920 to the character of Foma Pukhov in 'Sokrovennyi chelovek' (1927). Langerak, *Platonov*, pp. 138-39.

bringing an already established communism to them from Moscow. Indeed, it is in this context that the gathering motif appears in *Dzhan*, reinterpreted as Chagataev's understanding of his mission as like Stalin's:

> 'Сталину еще труднее, чем мне,' думал в утешение себе Чагатаев. 'Он собрал к себе всех вместе: русских, татар, узбеков, туркменов, белорусов – целые народы, он соберет скоро целое человечество и потратит на него всю свою душу, чтоб людям было чем жить в будущем и знать, что надо думать и делать. Я тоже соберу свое маленькое племя, пусть оно оправится и начнет жить сначала, прежде ему жить было нельзя.'[334]

This interior monologue from the Stalin text of *Dzhan* continues the idea of Stalin, and by association Chagataev, as father figures who will save and protect their people. The 'gathering' of peoples it describes is, however, a clear echo in tone and expression of the gathering in *Kotlovan* and *Chevengur*, and this is supported throughout the narrative of *Dzhan* by Chagataev's meticulous concern to find and bring back to life every one of the Dzhan, literally gathering them from the dust of the desert.

Chagataev's journey through memory

On a more profound level, Chagataev's journey in *Dzhan* is realised by Platonov as a journey through memory to the 'whole' of his life. This is reflected in the narrative structure of *Dzhan*, which dramatises the return of Chagataev to his homeland after completing his education in the very different world of Moscow. The story also contains two flashback passages. In the first, Chagataev recalls how his dying mother abandoned him in the desert and what happened to him afterwards.[335] The second is a collective memory of his people's past: the story of the Dzhan's suffering at the hands of the Khivan khanate.[336] More importantly, however, it is reflected in the essence of this journey, which Kornienko identifies as the 'sokrovennyi motiv vozvrashcheniia

[334] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 522. This entire passage is omitted from all the versions of 'Dzhan' except the 1999 version used in this study.
[335] Ibid., pp. 443-46.
[336] Ibid., pp. 457-58.

cheloveka, naroda, serdtsa – k samim sebe'.[337] It is a Dantean journey with its hardships and disappointments, but it is also a journey of sudden revelations, and this again sets *Dzhan* apart from *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan* and indeed Platonov's story 'Sokrovennyi chelovek' (1926). It is imbued with the spirit of Platonov's own experience of returning to Turkmenistan as being 'Opiat' […] v samom sebe.'[338]

Chagataev's journey begins, one could argue, at the very opening of the story and long before he sets off for Turkmenistan. Platonov writes:

> Во двор Московского экономического института вышел молодой, нерусский человек Назар Чагатаев. Он с удивлением осмотрелся кругом и опомнился от минувшего долгого времени.[339]

These first two sentences demonstrate Platonov's extraordinary ability to set a scene with an economy of language coupled with an expanse of meaning, while always avoiding the clichéd. In addition, the second sentence forms an unmistakeable echo of Platonov's description of Voshchev near the beginning of *Kotlovan*: 'Voshchev ochutilsia v prostranstve'. [340] In both cases, Platonov's choice of language suggests a realisation of the self as a being in space and time which is both physical and metaphysical, and this sets the tone for the journey that follows. In the case of Chagataev, he appears here to 'come to his senses', foreshadowing the process of awakening that follows as he journeys back through his memories to his previous life. Platonov's inimical and unusual use of language means that we can only speculate about the precise meaning of certain words and phrases. However, the employment of the verb 'opomnit'sia', itself a synonym of 'ochnut'sia' and rooted in the Russian 'pomnit'', is interesting in this context. The dictionary definition of 'opomnit'sia' encompasses the following:

> Прийти в сознание после обморока, забытья; очнуться.
> […]

[337] Kornienko, 'Istoriia teksta', p. 224.
[338] Ibid., p. 224.
[339] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 438.
[340] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 23.

> Обрести способность хладнокровно действовать, рассуждать; прийти в себя.[341]

At the very beginning of *Dzhan*, then, Chagataev's journey starts with a sense of 'recovery' from forgetting that includes the idea of 'coming to' or returning to one's proper self.

In describing Chagataev's physical journey to his homeland, Platonov evokes a world of the past and memory, which is as ancient and unchanging as when Chagataev left it as a child. Here, as elsewhere in Platonov's work, nature appears as a space which is both material and metaphysical. Chagataev observes:

> Такая же земля, пустынная и старическая, дует тот же детский ветер, шевеля скулящие былинки, и пространство просторно и скучно, как унылая чуждая душа.[342]

It is when Chagataev's train stops in the open steppe in the middle of the night, and Chagataev goes out into the apparently complete silence and emptiness of this blank 'prostranstvo', that the journey as return 'v samyi sebia' begins in earnest:

> Вдруг в степной темноте вскрикнула одна птичка, ее что-то напугало. Чагатаев вспомнил этот голос, через многие годы, как будто его детство жалобно прокричало из безмолвной тьмы. Он прислушался; еще какая-то птица что-то быстро проговорила и умолкла, он тоже помнил ее голос [...]. Невдалеке он заметил кустарник и, дойдя до него, взял его за ветвь и сказал ему: 'Здравствуй, куян-суюк!'. Куян-суюк слегка пошевелился от прикосновения человека и опять остался как был, равнодушный и спяший.[343]

Moving further out into the darkness, Chagataev hears more rustling and calling of creatures and plants, for, as Platonov notes, the steppe is only silent 'dlia otvykshykh ushei'. As the ground drops away, Chagataev walks into tall, blue grass:

> Чагатаев, с интересом воспоминания, вошел в траву; растения дрожали вокруг него, колеблемые снизу, разные невидимые

[341] Evgen'eva (ed.), *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, ii, p. 626.
[342] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 449.
[343] Ibid., p. 450.

> существа бежали от него прочь – кто на животе, кто на ножках, кто низким полетом: что у кого имелось. Они, наверно, сидели до того неслышно, но спали из них лишь некоторые, далеко не все. У всякого было столько заботы, что дня, видимо, им не хватало, - или им жалко было тратить краткую жизнь на сон и они только чуть дремали, опустив пленку на полглаза, чтобы видеть хоть полжизни, слышать тьму и не помнить дневной нужды.[344]

In these extraordinarily powerful passages, Platonov evokes Chagataev's return to Turkmenistan as a reawakening to his past which is the rediscovery of the whole complex world of nature in the desert. The importance of this experience for Chagataev is suggested by the continuation of this scene, when Chagataev is described as simultaneously 'forgetting' his mission and 'seeing clearly' for the first time as he lets the train go on without him and continues his journey to Tashkent on foot.

It should be emphasised that in *Dzhan*, Platonov's vision of the natural world seems to have undergone a significant transformation, as is evident in the above description. Nature does still appear as a hostile environment to man, but in contrast to *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan* it is teeming with animal and plant life, and not just their dead or dying remains. It is the antithesis of Pavlenko's vision of the desert as a place where in Platonov's words, 'nichego net'.[345] This seems to reflect Platonov's personal view of the importance of nature for man, as can be seen in an entry in his notebook for 1935:

> Человечество – без облагораживания его животными и растениями – погибнет, оскудеет, впадет в злобу отчаяния, как одинкокий в одиночестве.[346]

Platonov's portrayal of 'living' nature in *Dzhan* seems to express literally the idea of 'odukhotvorenie mira'. The animals and plants are described in human terms as 'vse zdeshnie zhiteli', they have voices, and on hearing Chagataev's approach 'Oni ispugalis' nastol'ko, chto, ozhidaia gibeli, speshili poskoree

[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid., p. 466.
[346] Platonov, *Zapisnye knizhki*, p. 155.

razmnozhit'sia i nasladit'sia.'[347] Nature appears here in all its 'sokrovennost'' and 'krotost'', two characteristics which recur in Platonov's writing about the natural world. It is a 'tselostnyi' secret universe, filled with its own inhabitants who are leading their own, complex existence, one which has just as much worth as the human one above it. Platonov writes:

> Не может быть, чтобы все животные и растения были убогими и грустными […]. Иначе надо допустить, что лишь в одном человеческом сердце находится истинное воодушевление, а эта мысль ничтожна и пуста, потому что и в глазах черепахи есть задумчивость, и в терновнике есть благоухание, означающие великое внутреннее достоинство их существования, не нуждающееся в дополнении душой человека.[348]

It is interesting to note that other stories written by Platonov around this time share this vision of the natural world. This is true of his 1936 story 'Sredi zhivotnykh i rastenii', as the title might suggest, which opens with a description of a 'living' forest which is described as a 'mnogoliudnyi gorod'. [349] In 'Takyr' (1934), which is also set in Central Asia, the little girl lies with her face to the ground, listening 'kak dvizhetsia ponemnogu pesok sam po sebe: u nego tozhe byla nebol'shaia, raznoobraznaia zhizn''.[350]

This living vision of nature plays a central role in Platonov's development of the theme of mutual remembrance in *Dzhan*. Mutual remembrance between man and the animal and plant world is just as important here as mutual remembrance between people. This is indicated in the scene of Chagataev's return, quoted above: he recognises and greets the 'kuian-suiuk' bush, and the bush responds. Further on, Platonov describes how Chagataev promises to take care of a small desert tortoise with 'tender' eyes: 'On zabotilsia o sushchestvuiushchem, kak o sviashchennom'.[351] This kind of mutual remembrance appears in *Dzhan* as just as important to Chagataev's

[347] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 451. Compare with the description of the Dzhan: 'Chagataev slyshal inogda po nocham son suprugov i ikh liubov', dobyvaiushchuiu detei iz bednosti svoego tela,' p. 470.
[348] Ibid., p. 515.
[349] Andrei Platonov, 'Sredi zhivotnykh i rastenii', *Rossiia*, 1998, 1, pp. 74-82 (p. 74).
[350] Platonov, 'Takyr', p. 350.
[351] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 455.

physical survival as it is to the animal or plant. In the flashback to the time when Chagataev was abandoned as a child in the desert, the young Nazar decides to follow an old and 'barely alive' tumbleweed bush, which also had no family, and assures it: '"[…] ty dumai pro menia chto-nibud', a ia budu pro tebia."'[352] Equally, Chagataev's sorrow on the road from Khiva to his homeland in Sary-Kamysh is because although he remembers all the 'forgotten' animals, plants and hills, they are indifferent to him, as if they have been 'blinded' by his neglect.[353] Only some stunted bushes, like little old men,

> одни из всех местных существ не забыли Чагатаева, потому что были настолько непривлекательны, что это походило на кротость, и в равнодушие или в беспамятство их поверить было нельзя. Такие безобразные бедняки должны жить лишь воспоминанием или чужой жизнью, больше им нечем.[354]

As in Platonov's other stories, mutual remembrance in *Dzhan* is strongly identified with love. On the very first page of the text, Chagataev bids farewell to the objects in the Institute courtyard, wanting them to 'remember' and 'love' him.[355] When Chagataev's mother sends him away, she tells him she is too weak to love him, and will forget him, and his answer is '"Ia tozhe tebia zabudu, ia tozhe tebia ne liubliu."'[356] Love and remembrance here too appear as directly connected to physical survival. Platonov writes: 'Nazar v nedoumenii poproboval svoi nogi i telo: est' li on na svete, raz ego nikto teper' ne pomnit i ne liubit'.[357] This connection is also central to Platonov's extraordinary description of a conversation between two of the Dzhan, overheard by Chagataev. The man and his wife are preoccupied by the fact that in their extreme poverty and hunger they have nothing to give each other, not even children. They love each other in spite of this, and the husband comforts his wife by telling her '"[…] ia dumaiu o tebe, a ty obo mne, i vremia idet…"'[358]

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[352] Ibid., p. 444-45.
[353] Ibid., p. 453.
[354] Ibid., p. 455.
[355] Ibid., p. 438.
[356] Ibid., p. 443.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Ibid., p. 468.

The landscape of memory in *Dzhan*

Chagataev's journey through the desert is a journey through his personal memories of the world of his childhood. It is also, however, a journey through a landscape of memory in a broader, cultural sense, one which reflects Platonov's personal perception of the Turkmen landscape:

> Искусственные холмы Тимура, древнеазиатские и греческие городища все еще покрывают обитаемые места Туркмении. Поэтому нынешняя Туркмения представляет собою кладбище дотуркменских народов. Эти кладбища городов напоминают не только о поражении, но и о героизме, о торжестве культур, теперь поникших в глиняных развалинах.[359]

This idea of the landscape as a physical repository of the past is refracted in two passages in *Dzhan*. In the first, Chagataev comes across the ruins of an ancient clay fortress, where 'son i zabvenie, bespamiatstvo dushnogo vozdukha iskhodili iz-pod sten'.[360] The fortress is filled with human bones, including those of a Red Army soldier who had clearly been the most recent to die there. Later, Platonov describes how Chagataev comes across a barrow 'pod kotorym lezhal v svoei mogile kakoi-nibud' zabytyi, arkheologicheskii gorodok'.[361] Chagataev fears that the Dzhan could become the next to disappear into the dust of the ground 'peremeshav svoi kosti, poteriav svoe imia i telo', forgotten even by memory itself: 'Neuzheli i ego narod dzhan liazhet vskore gde-nibud' vblizi i veter pokroet ego zemlei, a pamiat' zabudet, potomu chto narod ne uspel nichego vozdvinut' iz kamnia ili zheleza'.[362]

The idea of the landscape as being literally composed of the bones of forgotten peoples and civilisations can be seen as a further variation on Fedorov's concept of all the earth being the dust of the ancestors. One could also see it in the context of Platonov's interest in Spengler's ideas on culture, space and time. In particular, the landscape of *Dzhan* recalls Platonov's interpretation of Spengler in 'Simfoniia soznaniia', where he sees nature as

[359] Platonov, *Zhivia glavnoi zhizniu*, pp. 397-98.
[360] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 471.
[361] Ibid., p. 474.
[362] Ibid., p. 475.

'proshloe, oformlennoe, zastyvshee v vide prostranstva vremia.'[363] It is worth quoting Platonov's elaboration of this conception:

> Природа есть тень истории, ее отбросы, экскременты – то, что было когда-то живым и движущимся, т.е. временем, полетом, будущим, а то, что стало теперь прошлым, пространством, материей, формой, одиноким забытым камнем на покинутой дороге. […] И природа - есть закон, путь, оставленный историей, дорога, по которой когда-то прошла пламенная, танцующая душа человечества.[364]

This passage is illuminating of Platonov's vision of the world in a number of important ways. In the first place, it emphasises the essential materiality of his worldview, where all things eventually become solidified as the material of the earth. It also captures the concern for these things cast off by this process, expressed in his prose through his characters' care for everything that is abandoned and forgotten. The image of the 'forgotten' stone on an abandoned road could belong in a number of his stories, but it is the vision of the 'plamennaia, tantsuiushchaia dusha' of humanity which seems to be expressed in the fate which Chagataev fears for the Dzhan. For Spengler, history was 'a picture of endless formations and transformations, of the marvellous waxing and waning of organic forms.'[365] Rejecting what he saw as the fiction of a single linear history, he set out a conception of history as the independent life cycles of many different cultures:

> each springing with primitive strength from the soil of a mother-region to which it remains firmly bound throughout its whole life-cycle; each stamping its material, its mankind, in *its own* image; each having *its own* idea, *its own* passions, *its own* life, will and feeling, *its own* death.[366]

Spengler's ideas about the unique and permanent imprint left by every culture find expression alongside various Fedorov-related motifs in Platonov's 1926 story 'Efirnyi trakt', which was originally supposed to include sections of

[363] Platonov, 'Simfoniia soznaniia', p. 225.
[364] Ibid., p. 224.
[365] Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles Atkinson, 2 vols, London, 1926-1928, i, p. 22.
[366] Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, i, p. 21.

'Simfoniia soznaniia'.[367] In this story, the protagonist directs the construction of an immensely deep vertical tunnel into the tundra, which is initially explained as a project to provide the far north with geothermal heat. Subsequently, however, the real goal of the project emerges as the investigation of the 'mysterious' and 'wonderful' remains of ancient and unknown cultures perfectly preserved under the permafrost.[368] Spengler's ideas are also illuminating of the spirit of Platonov's dramatisation in *Dzhan* of the uncertain fate of Chagataev's 'nebol'shoi narod', who are already 'pochti nesushchestvuiushchie liudi'.[369] The landscape of memory in *Dzhan* is a sombre warning to Chagataev that his failure to save his people could mean that they will vanish into oblivion like other peoples before them. It also, however, expresses an insistence on the material existence of the memory of apparently forgotten and dead cultures and civilisations, which lies literally at man's feet if he would only look. Viewed from this perspective, in his portrayal of the landscape through which Chagataev travels, Platonov was conducting a subtle but powerful polemic not only against the official view of Soviet Central Asia as a *tabula rasa*, but also against the official vision of history as exclusively a linear and teleological progression.

Chagataev's dream and the conclusion of *Dzhan*

The narrative of Chagataev's journey through memory is sustained on different levels throughout *Dzhan*, but there is one specific passage which without doubt forms the centre of this narrative, and without which it cannot properly be understood. It should be noted that the integrity of this important passage was seriously compromised by extensive cuts by Platonov's editors, and it exists in its entirety only in the 1999 edition of *Dzhan* used in this study.

[367] For a detailed discussion of the history of 'Efirnyi trakt', see Kornienko, 'Istoriia teksta', pp. 38-44.
[368] Andrei Platonov, 'Efirnyi trakt', in Andrei Platonov, *Efirnyi trakt: Povesti 1920-x – nachala 1930-x godov,* compiled by N.V. Kornienko, Moscow, 2009, pp. 8-94 (p. 28). This new version of 'Efirnyi trakt' is the first to correspond to Platonov's original manuscript.
[369] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 475.

This passage is an extended and powerful description of Chagataev's crisis on his journey through the desert, when he finds himself alone and on the brink of death. This physical crisis is evoked in terms of a spiritual crisis, as Chagataev is tormented in a dream by endless visions of people and things from his past:

> во сне на его слабое сознание напали разные воспоминания, бесцельные забытые впечатления, воображение скучных лиц, виденных когда-то, однажды, — вся прожитая жизнь вдруг повернулась назад и напала на Чагатаева.[370]

Chagataev cannot defend himself against this relentless progression of apparently disconnected memories, which force themselves on him, compelling him to remember each and every one of them. This leads him to an important realisation:

> Раньше он думал что большинство ничтожных и даже важных событий его жизни забыто навсегда, закрыто навечно последующими крупными фактами, - сейчас он понял, что в нем все цело, неуничтожимо и сохранно как драгоценность, как добро хищного нищего, который бережет ненужное и брошенное другими.[371]

Chagataev's dream can be read as a revelation that his life has been preserved as a precious whole, without anything having been lost or forgotten. Like the landscape of *Dzhan*, each and every thing has been carefully preserved under the surface. The dream is a compressed vision of the recovery of memory, and forms the apex of Chagataev's entire journey through memory in the narrative of *Dzhan*. It is also of great importance to the way that one understands the outcome of his journey at the end of the story. Chagataev's discovery that he is 'whole' after all is paralleled by the Dzhan's final return to a full sense of being human after existing on the edge of death in *bespamiatstvo*. As has been discussed, after Chagataev has nurtured the Dzhan back to physical strength, they reject the vision of the future he offers them as their 'father'. Their departure is explained to Chagataev by Suf'ian, the wise old man who stays with Chagataev, in the following terms: 'On [the Dzhan, C. M-R] sam sebe

[370] Ibid., p. 484.
[371] Ibid.

vydumaet zhizn', kakaia emu nuzhna.'[372] Suf'ian also tells Chagataev that they will return of their own accord, as indeed they do, having 'convinced themselves' of life.[373] Thus the ending of *Dzhan* does indeed represent a 'vozvrashchenie cheloveka, naroda, serdtsa – k samim sebe', where the 'self' is understood in its unique and 'sokrovennyi' entirety, one which is preserved through memory.

The outcome of Chagataev and his people's journey in *Dzhan* can also be interpreted as a resolution to the gathering and mutual remembrance motifs in general. Indeed, the central idea of Chagataev's revelation, namely that every single part of his life survives in its entirety inside him 'neunichtozhimo i sokhranno kak dragotsennost'', is the highpoint of the integrative spirit which motivates both the gathering motif and the theme of mutual remembrance as they were developed by Platonov in *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*. In *Dzhan*, Chagataev succeeds in the task he set himself to 'gather' his people from the dust of the desert: '"Ia tozhe soberu svoe malen'koe plemia, pust' ono opravitsia i nachnet zhit' snachala, prezhde emu zhit' bylo nel'zia."' [374] When the Dzhan return, one of them describes their previous existence as 'my po-mertvomu zhili', and indeed *Dzhan* concludes with a 'resurrection to life'.[375] The story's ending can thus be interpreted as an image of the fulfilment of Fedorov's common task. This idea is paralleled in Chagataev's experience too: the epiphany he experiences in his dream is the result of the gathering together of each and every memory of his past.

In this connection, the ending of *Dzhan* is of course strikingly different from the endings of *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, where the attempt to gather and remember ended in death. The Dzhan not only return to life but flourish. They return to their homeland at the end of the story with a previously unimaginable material wealth. On their travels they have earned enough money to buy a large flock of sheep, camels and donkeys, and they have clean, furnished houses.

[372] Ibid., p. 525.
[373] Ibid., p. 529.
[374] Ibid., p. 522.
[375] Ibid., p. 529.

They invite Chagataev to join them for a festive meal of plov, of which there is enough 'dlia ugoshcheniia tselogo naroda.'[376] By the time Chagataev leaves to return to Moscow, more houses are being built, children are being born, and the Dzhan are selling livestock in Khiva in order to buy dry goods and enough new clothes to last them until the next year. The newly prosperous and secure state of Chagataev's people suggests that the ending of *Dzhan* can also be read as a resolution of *bespamiatstvo* and of *bezottsovshchina*. It recalls Fedorov's vision of resurrection as 'konets sirotstva: bezgranichnoe rodstvo', where 'vse budet rodnoe, ne chuzhoe'.[377] The shelterless have found protection against cruel nature and nourishment to sustain them and enable them to live in a proper state of *rodstvennost'* as a people, helping each other to survive. That the revivified state of the Dzhan represents the fulfilment of the dream of Platonov's 'prochie' is underlined by the fact that, on their way home, the Dzhan themselves gather up the 'remains' of long-since vanished families and tribes from the old riverbeds and hollows of the desert. These 'zabytye liudi', who also call themselves 'dzhan', follow them in the hope of also being resurrected in life, 'chtoby spastis' dlia dal'neishei zhizni.'[378] Chagataev's fate forms a parallel to that of his people. He has finally found his home and his *rod* and is thus able to leave and start his own new life, with two other orphans: his wife's daughter Kseniia and the Dzhan girl Aidym. The importance of this new *rod* is underlined by the closing sentence of *Dzhan*: 'Chagataev ubedilsia teper', chto pomoshch' emu pridet lish' ot drugogo cheloveka.'[379]

Platonov defined the word 'dzhan' as meaning 'dusha, kotoraia ishchet schast'e'.[380] This seems to be what Chagataev (who finally falls asleep 'v pokoe schast'ia' and not as previously 'v bespamiatstvo') and his people have found at the end of their journey.[381] *Dzhan* is a tale of the restoration of a man and his

[376] Ibid., p. 528.
[377] Fedorov, *Sochineniia*, pp. 528-29.
[378] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 529.
[379] Ibid., p. 533.
[380] Ibid., p. 437.
[381] Ibid., p. 438 and p. 530.

people's lives to physical and spiritual completeness, which comes about through the power of memory to preserve each and every part of the 'tselyi trudnyi mir'. Platonov's evocation of the elation of this discovery that 'vse tselo, neunichtozhimo i sokhranno' is what makes *Dzhan* one of his most optimistic and uplifiting stories.

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been argued that Platonov's prose expresses a view of the universe as an ideal whole, which, however, is constantly threatened by the fragmenting forces of the human world. Platonov can be seen as an inheritor of the *miroponimanie* which is a defining characteristic of the Russian philosophical tradition as it developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is important, because, as a result of his unusual poetics, Platonov has frequently been perceived as lying outside any literary tradition, a writer sui generis. It seems likely that the main conduit of these ideas for Platonov was the philosophy of Nikolai Fedorov, whose theories were hugely influential at the time when Platonov started his career as a writer. As has been seen, a number of Fedorov's specific ideas can be seen to frame Platonov's evocation of the human condition in his prose. Further to this, it is Fedorov's overall, material vision of the wholeness of the universe which emerges as the defining influence on Platonov. This materiality of vision goes beyond Platonov's exploration of the disintegrative and integrative dynamics of the world, or his preoccupation with the theme of memory. It is in fact the essence of his famously unique verbal style, the very 'veshchestvo' of his texts, the dense, 'compiled' web of allusions to literature, political slogans and campaigns, the Bible, philosophy, his inclusion of the 'all'.

There is, however, a crucial aspect of Fedorov's understanding of the world which is notably absent from Platonov's worldview. If the centre and source of Fedorov's entire system is God, the 'Praotets', this space is empty in

Platonov's prose. One recalls Platonov's worries in his article 'O liubvi' that communism had failed to fill the empty space left by the religion it destroyed.[382] Like Voshchev, Platonov's heroes frequently gaze into 'priroda-prostranstvo', 'ne znaia tochnogo ustroistvo mira i togo, kuda nado stremit'sia', only to find that it is 'empty'.[383] In failing to find any sense of truth in the world around them, any point on which they can fix their gaze, they return to the reality of the material world in all its fullness as a possible locus for meaning. In many respects, this is what Platonov as a writer does too in his attempt to evoke the 'prekrasnyi i iarostnyi mir' in his prose.[384] From his youth, Platonov was driven by an inextinguishable longing for a 'truth', which he envisaged as a better world, in which man would have achieved his 'konechnaia pobeda nad svoimi vragami – prirodoi i smert'iu', and in which his benighted fellow citizens would find shelter from the droughts and natural disasters he himself witnessed. Yet, over the course of his lifetime, the fulfilment of Platonov's cherished 'zataennaia strastnaia mechta' seemed to become increasingly unlikely, and this is something which is palpable in his prose.[385] Like the heroes of his *Chevengur*, *Kotlovan* and *Dzhan* Platonov feared the loss of his 'nechto liubimoe' in the realisation of communism in his country.[386] Also like his heroes, in the absence of this vision, and driven by his unwavering truthfulness, he too returned to the materiality of truth in the careful recording and remembering in his prose of the wholeness of existence, 'vse nishchie, otvergnutye predmety, vsiu meloch' bezvestnosti i vsiakoe bespamiatstvo'.[387] This literary gathering of the all of existence, the material 'dokumenty' and 'fakty', defines not only the materiality of Platonov's prose, but also its spirit. The spirit of Platonov's prose is open, inclusive, deeply compassionate and humbly dedicated to the task of 'preserving and remembering' even the smallest and most insignificant of things in a time and place where the

[382] Andrei Platonov, 'O liubvi', in Platonov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, i, pp. 202-205.
[383] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 23.
[384] See Platonov's 1941 story 'V prekrasnom i iarostnom mire', referred to at the beginning of Part Three.
[385] Platonov, 'O nauke', p. 34. For full quote see opening of Part Two above.
[386] Postscript to *Kotlovan*. Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 116.
[387] Ibid., p. 99.

dominant values militated against all of this, and Platonov himself was being increasingly excluded and 'forgotten' as a writer. In addition, this gathering is also connected to the genuine and often overlooked 'realism' of Platonov's evocation of life in the Soviet Union from the Revolution to the Second World War. A case in point is the truly extraordinary and detailed documentation of the events of collectivisation in *Kotlovan*: from the education of the peasants in the hut, to the peasants killing off their livestock, to the throwing out of the peasants from their homes, the locking up of 'elements' in the central OrgDvor, and the sacking of the Activist for 'deviation'. As Robert Chandler has argued, the surrealism of the world of Platonov's prose is misleading: 'Platonov's focus is not on some private dream world but on political and historical reality – a reality so extraordinary as to be barely credible.'[388] Platonov's prose, with its careful and unflinchingly truthful evocation of the 'tselyi trudnyi mir', demonstrates in an absolutely material form the success of this exceptional attempt to preserve and remember the whole 'truth' of his times. For these reasons, Platonov must surely stand as the great bard of the socialist tragedy, without whom one cannot properly understand Russian twentieth-century history.

[388] Platonov, *The Foundation Pit*, p. 157.

Chapter Three

Memory and the *tselostnost'* of Russia: Valentin Rasputin

Introduction

"Правда в памяти."[389]

In contrast to the case of Platonov, memory is a theme which can easily and immediately be identified as central to Valentin Rasputin's work and the fiction of all the 'village prose' writers (*derevenshchiki*). Indeed, it is precisely the vision of a better past in which old traditions and values have been preserved that is the defining feature of village prose.[390] As a result of this, the majority of critical studies of Rasputin's writings include an interpretation of the role and meaning of memory in his stories. Galina Belaia talks of Rasputin's 'tema pamiati chelovecheskoi, na kotoroi stoit mir'.[391] This perception of memory as the foundation of Rasputin's worldview, one with a strong moral dimension, is shared by a number of critics. Thus, for example, Teresa Polowy talks of an 'ethical concept of "moral memory"', and A.F. Lapchenko notes that 'V poiskakh opor, ogradaiushchikh nravstvennost' ot poter', vsemi svoimi proizvedeniiami V. Rasputin utverzhdaet aktivnuiu dukhovnuiu silu pamiati.'[392] For Günther Hasenkamp, Rasputin's main theme is the loss of a worldview based on 'spiritual memory', which in linking present action to the past acts as a guarantor of ethical behaviour.[393]

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[389] Valentin Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', in Valentin Rasputin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, 2 vols, Moscow, 1990, ii, pp. 201-380 (p. 343).
[390] Parthé, *Russian Village Prose*, pp. 9-11.
[391] Galina Belaia, 'Na glubine: Razmyshleniia nad prozoi V. Rasputina', *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 1982, 1, pp. 11-15 (p. 15).
[392] Teresa Polowy, *The Novellas of Valentin Rasputin: Genre, Language and Style*, New York, 1989, p. 11, and A.F. Lapchenko, *Chelovek i zemlia v russkoi sotsial'no-filosofskoi proze 70-kh godov*, Leningrad, 1985, p. 15.
[393] Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 228.

The theme of memory also figures as a part of a number of 'folk' approaches to Rasputin's stories. Constance Link, for example, sees memory as an access to a parallel, universal world in Rasputin's fiction.[394] Although the current study does not share this particular interpretation, the emphasis on the role of folk imagery in Rasputin's texts is of interest. Folk imagery and belief feature prominently in Rasputin's writing, including in his handling of the theme of memory.[395] An obvious example is Rasputin's evocation of the dilemma faced by Dar'ia in *Proshchanie s Materoi* (1976): her dismay at being forced to abandon the graves of her ancestors is expressed in terms of traditional Russian beliefs about the power and importance of the dead.[396] It is the premise of the following discussion, however, that folk motifs appear in Rasputin's writings as a part of the traditional Russian way of life that is the fabric of his work, rather than as a serious attempt to reconstruct a mythical worldview where sacred and profane worlds exist side by side. In common with many of the other *derevenshchiki*, Rasputin took the details of traditional village life with all its customs and beliefs as the raw material of his stories. As will be seen, the rural setting to his stories takes on an increasingly emblematic character over the course of Rasputin's career, evoking his perception of the tragic and fatal demise of a better way of life.

Galina Belaia has described the framework of Rasputin's worldview in his fiction as the 'obraz edinogo mira', which is an 'ideal'naia proektsiia' and a 'voploshchenie idei edinoi Vselennoi'.[397] In this chapter, the theme of memory in Rasputin's fiction is explored in its relationship to this vision of an ideally whole world. This view of the world in terms of an essential *tselostnost'* can in part be interpreted as Rasputin's inheritance of a generally traditional, rural, Russian worldview with its mixture of Christian and pre-Christian ideas on the

[394] Constance Link, 'Symbolism of the Sacred: The Novels of Valentin Rasputin', unpublished doctoral dissertation from Indiana University, 1983, p. 215.
[395] For a discussion of the folk imagery in *Proshchanie s Materoi* see Link, 'Symbolism of the Sacred', pp. 153-62.
[396] See also Irena Maryniak's discussion of the pre-Christian Siberian beliefs about the dead in: Irena Maryniak, *Spirit of the Totem: Religion and Myth in Soviet Fiction 1964-1988*, London, 1995, pp. 62-63.
[397] Belaia, 'Na glubine', p. 13.

unity of the living and the dead, of the human and the natural worlds – elements which are particularly evident in Rasputin's writing during the 1960s and 1970s. In the following discussion, however, it will be argued that Rasputin's 'obraz edinogo mira' is also informed by the classical Slavophile concept of existence as 'tsel'nost bytiia'. These ideas, it will be contended, were mainly absorbed by Rasputin through the prism of the Russian nationalist debate which became increasingly active in the Soviet Union from the 1960s onwards. This debate, which initially existed on the unofficial level in samizdat publications, had become a part of official discourse by the mid-1980s following Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost'*.[398] The village prose writers, including Rasputin, have been active participants in this debate in all its stages up to the present day.

Modern Russian nationalism, like its pre-Revolutionary antecedent, takes its intellectual framework predominantly from the early Slavophile thinkers, and in particular Kireevskii and Khomiakov. Their works, which were officially banned for most of the Soviet period, were appearing in samizdat editions by the 1960s, and were officially republished in the late 1970s.[399] James Scanlan has argued that Slavophile ideas were a central element of dissident nationalist debate from the 1960s onwards, and by the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union had become 'a blueprint for national salvation'.[400] John Dunlop notes that Dostoevskii, whose ideas inspired generations of Russian nationalists from the writers of *Vekhi*, through to Solzhenitsyn and the other authors of *Iz-pod glyb*, remains probably the single most influential thinker for modern Russian nationalism.[401] In effect, many ideas originally expressed by the early Slavophiles have been absorbed by modern Russian

[398] For detailed accounts of the Russian nationalist debate since the 1960s, see Peter J. S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After*, London, 2000, and Kevin O'Connor, *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks: Russian Nationalism and the Gorbachev Revolution*, Oxford, 2006.
[399] James P. Scanlan, 'Interpretations and Uses of Slavophilism in Recent Russian Thought', in. Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism*, pp. 31-61 (p. 31); Duncan, *Russian Messianism*, p. 70.
[400] Scanlan, 'Interpretations and Uses of Slavophilism', p. 45.
[401] John B. Dunlop, *The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism*, Princeton, NJ, 1983, p. 209.

nationalism through Dostoevskii's interpretation and development of them. It is worth noting the particularly influential status of Dostoevskii's *Dnevnik pisatelia* and *Besy* in nationalist debate in general, and for Rasputin and other *derevenshchiki* in particular.[402] Dostoevskii originally saw the theme of *Besy* as describing how in Russia:

> the devils went out of the Russian man and entered into a herd of swine, that is, into the Nechaevs and Serno-Solovieviches, et al. These are drowned or will be drowned, and the healed man, from whom the devils departed, sits at the feet of Jesus.[403]

However, as Joseph Frank has argued, although Dostoevskii clearly would have liked to believe in this redemptive outcome for Russia, 'What he saw all around, and what he would depict in his novel, was the process of infection and self-destruction rather than the end result of purification.'[404] In *Besy*, Dostoevskii takes to an extreme Kireevskii and Khomiakov's concern about the destructive effect of Western rationalism on the *tselostyni* and *sobornyi* Russian world. It is the novel's extraordinarily prescient vision of a nation possessed by alien ideals hurling itself towards self-destruction which has such resonance for modern Russian nationalism, as it did for Dostoevskii's contemporaries. It justifies nationalist rejection of Western modes of thought or government as irrelevant and dangerous for Russia. Through *Besy*, the heritage of damage done to Russia by imported ideas is traced in nationalist debate in a straight line from nineteenth-century rationalism and materialism, through communism and up to the present.

The émigré Russian thinker Ivan Il'in, another inheritor of classical Slavophile thought, is a more recent influence on mainstream nationalist thinking, and one whom Rasputin refers to in a number of his articles. Il'in's popularity dates from the publication of his 1950 article 'Chto sulit miru

[402] Parthé, 'Russian Village Prose in Paraliterary Space', pp. 231-32.
[403] Quote from a letter of Dostoevskii to Apollon Maikov cited in Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years 1865-1871*, London, 1995, p. 412.
[404] Ibid.

raschlenenie Rossii?' in Russia in 1990.[405] In it, Il'in sets out his pessimistic vision of the disorderly disintegration of a post-communist Soviet Union into a 'gigantic Balkans' ripe for exploitation by the West, a vision which appeared prophetic for nationalists of many hues in the early 1990s.[406] Il'in argued that

> Россия есть не случайное нагромождение территорий и племен, и не искусственно слаженный 'механизм' 'областей', **но живой, исторически выросший и культурно оправдавшийся ОРГАНИЗМ, не подлежащий произвольному расчленению**.[407]

In Il'in's collected writings on his country, *Nashi zadachi*, Russia appears as an ideal and divinely determined whole with a unique historical destiny to follow its own path, the 'Russian idea': 'Nam net spaseniia v zapadnichestve. U nas svoi puti i svoi zadachi. I v etom – smysl russkoi idei.'[408]

In general, the relation between modern nationalist thinking and its sources is one that can best be described as a process of eclectic borrowing and appropriation that frequently severs particular ideas from the original context in which they were conceived.[409] One example of this is to be found in the application of the Slavophile concept of Russia's essential *samobytnost'*, or otherness from the West. The modern nationalist polemic is based on *samobytnost'*, but for the most part ignores the importance of Russian Orthodoxy to this idea in the early Slavophilism of Kireevksii, Khomiakov and Aksakov to Dostoevskii and Il'in. The reception of Il'in's thinking is another example of this same phenomenon. As Philip Grier has shown, Il'in's 'Russian national dictatorship' has frequently been taken out of the overall context of his political vision, strongly based on the rule of law, to justify authoritarian government in Russia.[410] Rasputin is in this respect a typical participant in the contemporary nationalist debate, as his writings borrow freely from various

[405] Philip T. Grier, 'The Complex Legacy of Ivan Il'in', in Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism*, pp. 165-86 (p. 169).
[406] See Grier's article cited above for a full discussion of the reactions and interpretations of Il'in's thought in Russia in the 1990s.
[407] Il'in's emphasis. Il'in, *Nashi zadachi*, i, p. 245.
[408] Ibid., p. 318.
[409] James P. Scanlan, 'Overview', in Scanlan (ed.), *Russian Thought after Communism*, pp. 3-10 (p. 9).
[410] Grier, 'The Complex Legacy of Ivan Il'in', p. 174.

parts of the Slavophile inheritance, without providing a coherent discussion of the individual thinkers' works.

The question of the relationship between the village prose movement and the rise of an increasingly aggressive Russian nationalism is controversial, and has been the subject of a highly polarised debate.[411] The fact that the *derevenshchiki* and nationalist circles seem to have felt drawn to each other is hardly surprising. The increasing interest in a vision of nation inspired by pre-Revolutionary Slavophile ideas and the lyrical image of a more authentic Russian past in village prose can be seen as springing from the same social and political situation in the Soviet Union. This, argues Kevin O'Connor, was 'an increasing Russian awareness of and sensitivity to the connections between the problems of contemporary society and the destruction of the country's pre-revolutionary past.'[412] As Kathleen Parthé has noted, 'Time, forward!' became 'Time, backward!' in the search for a new ideal.[413] These broader developments form the common background to the orientation towards the past in dissident nationalist debate and in village prose.[414]

However one chooses to view the link between village prose and Russian nationalism, it is without doubt that village prose, and Rasputin's career with it, unfolded against the background of and in dialogue with the rediscovered Slavophile ideas of Russian nationhood. In the case of Rasputin, this is reflected in his growing political involvement which followed the trajectory of the increasingly open debate on national issues from the late 1970s. Thus, in the period following the publication of *Proshchanie s Materoi* in 1976, articles and *ocherki* on a wide range of social, political and ecological issues became an ever more dominant part of Rasputin's writing. Indeed, for a period of nine years after the publication of *Pozhar* in 1985, Rasputin devoted himself entirely to journalism. This was also the period of his direct

[411] See Kathleen Parthé's discussion of the different positions taken: Parthé, 'Russian Village Prose in Paraliterary Space', pp. 225-41.
[412] O'Connor, *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks*, p. 49.
[413] Parthé, *Russian Village Prose*, pp. 48-49.
[414] Hasenkamp argues that the loss of the ruling ideology's credibility and the resulting 'spiritual vacuum' directly influenced village prose writers' emphasis on a collective moral code. Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 230.

participation in the political process. He was elected a people's deputy through the Writers' Union in 1989,[415] appointed a member of Gorbachev's Presidential Council in 1990[416] and was involved in a number of cultural and political groups of nationalist orientation.[417] Rasputin's political activism has had a decisive and apparently irreversible effect on the critical reception of his fiction, which is for the most part interpreted through a political prism. This is certainly the case for the stories and one *povest'* he has written since his withdrawal from politics in 1994, but it also affects fiction written prior to his political period. Kathleen Parthé argues that as village prose entered what she calls 'paraliterary space', older village prose texts were 're-labelled' without being 're-read'. Village prose as a whole is reinterpreted as a 'Soviet literature of compromise, if not collaboration, […] a proto-chauvinist, even proto-fascist Russian literature'.[418]

This chapter is an elucidation of the way in which the Slavophile notion of the *tselostnost'* of existence seems to have influenced Rasputin's worldview as expressed in both his stories and his articles. While it is neither a reading nor a re-reading of Rasputin's fiction as 'nationalist', the concept of 'nation' is important to the following discussion. It will be argued that from the late 1970s, the idea of nation becomes increasingly bound up with the 'obraz edinogo mira' and the theme of memory in Rasputin's writing. The first section of this chapter looks at the expression of a *tselostnyi* worldview sustained by memory in Rasputin's stories from the period 1966-1976, with particular reference to *Proshchanie s Materoi* (1976). The second section is focused on Rasputin's *publitsistika* from the period 1977-1986 and his *povest' Pozhar* (1985). It explores how in these writings the gentler vision of a vanishing world found in *Proshchanie s Materoi* is replaced by a more morally charged portrayal of a world which has 'fallen' from an ideal whole, expressed in terms of a disintegrating society fraught with problems. Finally, the third section is based

[415] O'Connor, *Intellectuals and Apparatchiks*, p. 145.
[416] Duncan, *Russian Messianism*, p. 124.
[417] Ibid., pp. 121-22 and p. 132.
[418] Parthé, 'Russian Village Prose in Paraliterary Space', p. 229 and p. 238.

primarily on Rasputin's non-fiction during the period 1986-2002. It examines how both memory and the ideal of *tselostnost'* become central to the conception of Russian culture, history and literature which Rasputin developed in his articles of this period.

I The vanishing of a whole world: Rasputin's *povesti* (1966-1976)

Proshchanie s Materoi (1976) is without doubt Rasputin's most clearly articulated vision of the loss of a traditional way of life at the hands of an impatient new society. In its focus on the planned flooding of the island of Matera to make way for a hydroelectric power station, the plot literalises the idea of a vanishing world: Matera disappears under the waters of the Angara like the mythical city of Kitezh into Lake Svetloiar. This concern with the loss of the past and its values first appears in his short story 'Ekh, starukha' (1966) and is a feature of all four of the *povesti* he wrote during this period: *Den'gi dlia Marii* (1967), *Poslednii srok* (1970), *Zhivi i pomni* (1974) and *Proshchanie s Materoi* (1976). The following is an analysis of how, in Rasputin's stories of this period, the theme of memory expresses this concern in two particular ways. In the first place, memory is central to the concept of the unity of human existence over time, which is evoked as the ideal. Memory, conceived of as a moral imperative, appears as the means to preserve this continuity. Secondly, memory as a morally-charged concept plays a significant structural role in Rasputin's writing, shaping both the characters and the places of his stories.

The unity of existence: Rasputin's 'neskonchaemaia tsep''

In his story 'Ekh, starukha', Rasputin describes the thoughts of an old shaman woman who is unafraid of her approaching death, for her daughter and granddaughter are proof that she has fulfilled her duty: 'Ee rod prodolzhaetsia i budet prodolzhat'sia – ona v etoi tsepi byla nadezhnym zvenom, k kotoromu

prikreplialis' drugie zven'ia'.[419] At the same time, she is tormented by the fact that she has not passed on the ancient art of shamanism which she inherited from her ancestors:

> Человек, заканчивающий свой род, несчастен. Но человек, который похитил у своего народа его старинное достояние и унес его с собой в землю, никому не сказав, - как назвать этого человека?[420]

This passage encompasses all the main ideas which inform and frame the worldview which Rasputin expresses in his prose of this period. The metaphor of a chain, in which each person's life forms a link, is used to evoke the idea of the eternal unity of existence, in which past, present and future are firmly linked together. The story also introduces the idea of the individual's duty to bind past to future through a continuation of both their own *rod* in terms of an uninterrupted blood line, and the heritage of their cultural traditions and values. Conversely, the failure to be a 'reliable link' in this chain appears as a shameful betrayal of the past.

The motif of the 'neskonchaemaia tsep'' of existence, and the connected concern with the continuation of one's *rod* figure in both *Poslednii srok* and *Zhivi i pomni*.[421] It is in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, however, that these ideas are more fully elaborated by Rasputin and moved to the centre of the narrative. Indeed, the story's plot hinges on Dar'ia's fear of the abandoning of the family graves to the flood waters, thus destroying the continuity with the past. Through the character of Dar'ia, Rasputin evokes in detail the perception of a life lived as one small link in an eternal chain. Looking at her son and grandson, she sees 'odna nitochka s uzelkami'[422], and when she imagines the day of her death, she sees an endless stream of her ancestors ready to judge her for her actions:

> Ей казалось, что она хорошо видит их, стоящих огромным, клином расходящимся строем, которому нет конца, [...]. И на острие этого

[419] Valentin Rasputin, 'Ekh, starukha', in Valentin Rasputin, *Krai vozle samogo neba: Ocherki i rasskazy*, Irkutsk, 1966, pp. 53-58 (p. 54).
[420] Rasputin, 'Ekh, starukha', p. 54.
[421] See, for example: Valentin Rasputin, 'Poslednii srok', in Rasputin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, i, pp. 256-414 (p. 387); and Valentin Rasputin, 'Zhivi i pomni', in Rasputin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, ii, pp. 7-200 (p. 80).
[422] Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', p. 282.

> многовекового клина, чуть отступив, чтобы лучше ее было видно, лицом к нему одна она.[423]

In Dar'ia's perception of the world, these ancestors are as real as the living, and certainly as linked to the future. In tending to their graves, she calls them all by name, remembering her father's instruction that she must go on living 'chtob pokrepche zatsepit' nas s belym svetom, zanozit' v nem, chto my byli'.[424] The traditional duty to remember the dead appears here as a duty to ensure their immortality. For this the dead depend on the living, and, in the voices Dar'ia hears at the graveyard, demand their due: 'A golosa, vse gromche, vse neterpelivei i iarostnei… Oni sprashivaiut o nadezhde, oni govoriat, chto ona, Dar'ia, ostavila ikh bez nadezhdy i budushchego.'[425] Integral to this worldview is the idea that in breaking the continuity with the past, the future is also unmoored. When Dar'ia's son explains to her that there is no longer time to transport the graves to the new settlement, she warns him: '"Ezheli my kinuli, nas s toboi ne zadumivaiutsia kinut'"'.[426] Like the shaman woman in 'Ekh, starukha', Dar'ia's feeling of guilt that she will not be able to fulfil her duty is expressed in terms of her shame that she is breaking the eternal chain of her *rod* and betraying both the past and the future:

> 'Не помереть мне в спокое, что я от вас отказалась, что это на моем, не на чьем веку отрубит наш род и унесет. Ой, унесет, унесет... А я, клятая, отделюсь, другое поселенье зачну. Кто мне такое простит?'[427]

These ideas are also expressed in Dar'ia's realisation: 'Pravda v pamiati. U kogo net pamiati, u togo net zhizni.'[428] The act of remembering appears here as an unequivocally moral imperative which preserves the 'true' integrity of life conceived of as a unity of past, present and future.

[423] Ibid., p. 341.
[424] Ibid., p. 223.
[425] Ibid., p. 342.
[426] Ibid., p. 339.
[427] Ibid., p. 340.
[428] Ibid., p. 343.

Memory, characterisation and evocation of place

Virtually all Rasputin's characters in his four early *povesti* could be mapped onto a spectrum showing different attitudes to the relevance of the past. Memory appears in these stories as a moral yardstick against which characters are measured and ultimately judged.[429] This device can be identified in *Poslednii srok*¸ *Zhivi i pomni* and also in Rasputin's first *povest', Den'gi dlia Marii*, in which memory is not otherwise a prominent theme. In this story, the protagonist Kuz'ma is trying to collect sufficient money to cover the amount missing from the balance of the local shop which his wife manages, in order to prevent her from being taken to court and possibly imprisoned.[430] Those who attempt to help Kuz'ma are characterised as people who have respect for the traditional values of the village way of life. Figures like the old man Gordei, Aunt Natal'ia and the chairman of the village collective farm share the view that the villagers must hold together as a collective and help each other in times of need. Indeed Mariia herself, although initially fearful of shouldering the responsibility of the village shop had finally agreed to do so out of a sense of duty to the village, which would otherwise have lost it. Conversely, those who refuse Kuz'ma assistance are either villagers who do not share the traditional collective values of the village, or, in the case of Kuz'ma's brother Aleksei, former villagers who in moving to the city have cut themselves off from their past both geographically and in terms of a loss of traditional moral values. The ending of the story, in which Kuz'ma travels to the city in order to ask Aleksei for assistance as a last resort, holds out little hope that any help will be forthcoming from this quarter. This conception of village and city as representing diametrically opposed worldviews, defined through a respect or conversely a dismissal of the value of the past, is particularly developed in

[429] For a discussion of attitudes to the past as a moral marker in Rasputin's fiction, see A.F. Lapchenko, '"Pamiat'" v povestiakh V. Rasputina', *Vestnik Leningradskogo universiteta*, 1983, 3, pp. 50-54.
[430] Valentin Rasputin, 'Den'gi dlia Marii' in Rasputin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, i, pp. 161-255.

Proshchanie s Materoi. In this work, this opposition shapes both the story's characters and its description of place.

Proshchanie s Materoi: 'village' characterisation

As indicated above, in *Proshchanie s Materoi* Dar'ia is clearly identified with the 'truth' of an eternal continuity with the past. Although the heroines of *Poslednii srok* and *Zhivi i pomni* are also clearly associated with the village worldview, in Dar'ia Rasputin created a more symbolic figure. Along with the other older people of Matera, she embodies the old worldview, and has frequently been identified as a *pravednitsa*.[431] Bogodul, whom Günther Hasenkamp sees as a *iurodivyi* figure, is described by Rasputin as coming to the village 'Ot tekh, prezhnikh liudei, polnym stroem ushedshikh na pokoi.'[432] These characters literalise the idea of continuity between past and present in the archaic nature of their language, and in their upholding of the superstitions and traditions which frame the older, collective way of life. This is particularly apparent in Rasputin's description of Dar'ia's final farewell to her family *izba*, which is cleaned, whitewashed and decorated as if she were following the traditional ritual to prepare a corpse for a funeral. Another example is the portrayal of the daily gathering to drink tea round Dar'ia's samovar. Rasputin's evocation of the slow, unhurried pace of conversation conducted in the old village dialect in the peaceful *izba* creates an impression of a conception of time and existence that has nothing in common with the modern worldview symbolised by the deadline for the flooding of Matera. The samovar at the centre of this tea-drinking ritual appears here as a symbol of a common cultural heritage, a focus for a collective way of life that will disappear with the new life in the settlement. As Dar'ia warns Nastas'ia, there is no place in urban apartments for a samovar.[433] The passage describing the last harvest on Matera

[431] Kathleen Parthé, 'The Righteous Brothers (and Sisters) of Contemporary Russian Literature', *World Literature Today*, 67, 1 (Winter 1993), pp. 91-99 (p. 96).
[432] Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 153; and Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', p. 218.
[433] Ibid., p. 210.

is a further example of Rasputin's portrayal of the timeless and cyclical rhythms of village life which reinforce the links between past and present. This idea is underlined by the villagers' singing as they return from the fields in the evenings: 'Pesnia to odna, to drugaia, to staraia, to novaia, no chashche vse-taki staraia, proshchal'naia-pominal'naia, kotoruiu, okazyvaetsia, pomnil i znal narod'.[434] The importance of the transmission of cultural memory from generation to generation in *Proshchanie s Materoi* is emphasised by the emotive religious language which Rasputin employs to describe the process:

> Ты – не только то, что носишь в себе, но и то, не всегда замечаемое, что вокруг тебя, и потерять его иной раз пострашнее, чем потерять руку или ногу, […]. Быть может, лишь это одно и вечно, лишь оно, передаваемое, как дух святой, от человека к человеку, от отцов к детям и от детей к внукам, смущая и оберегая их, направляя и очищая, и вынесет когда-нибудь к чему-то, ради чего жили поколенья людей.[435]

Rasputin's evocation of Matera as a place is, like his characters, primarily symbolic in content. He writes that:

> И как нет, казалось, конца и края бегущей воде, нет и веку деревне: уходили на погост одни, нарожались другие, заваливались старые постройки, рубились новые.[436]

The village appears here as part of the eternal cyclical flow of nature in which each age forms a natural continuation of the previous one. If the village seems to represent continuity, then Rasputin's description of the island itself suggests an ideal wholeness before the 'flood':

> Но от края до края, от берега до берега хватало в ней и раздолья, и богатства, и красоты, и дикости, и всякой твари по паре – всего, отделившись от материка, держала она в достатке.[437]

Galina Belaia draws on the allusion to Noah's ark in this passage in her interpretation of the island as a small world representing the cosmos, and

[434] Ibid., p. 277.
[435] Ibid., p. 291.
[436] Ibid., p. 203.
[437] Ibid., p. 230.

indeed in its completeness and self-sufficiency it appears as an image of a whole world.[438]

Proshchanie s Materoi: 'city' characterisation

Rasputin's articulation of the values of the past through Dar'ia and Matera itself establishes them as an unequivocally positive moral force in *Proshchanie s Materoi*. The weight they carry in the narrative is heightened by Rasputin setting them against their absolute opposite. In comparison with his later story *Pozhar*¸ Rasputin gives only a brief description of urban space – the city or the new settlement – in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, but it is a clearly negative one. In contrast to Matera's timeless rhythms, city life rushes forward at a furious pace as people push to get ahead, and no one has time for anyone else.[439] The new way of life in the city is, moreover, so severed from the world of Matera that the older villagers have no place there: Egor dies within a short time of moving to the city. The new settlement built as a replacement for Matera is depicted in terms which are scarcely less negative. Even its construction is not attuned to the needs of villagers' traditional way of life: there is no provision for the housing of livestock and food stores in the winter, and its grid-like layout is oppressively uniform. The streets of the settlement are empty of people and without trees, dominated by noisy motorcycles and the smell of petrol, and in contrast to the collective, integral nature of life in the village, 'Zhizn' shla tam, za zaborami'. [440]

The characters in *Proshchanie s Materoi* who are associated with the urban worldview can be divided into two main groups: those who appear morally weak, and those who are actively immoral. Like Anna's children in *Poslednii srok*, or Andrei in *Zhivi i pomni*, both Dar'ia's son and grandson lack the integrity associated with the older generation. Moreover, in Rasputin's portrayal of the younger generations of Dar'ia's family, the degree of moral

[438] Galina Belaia, *Khudozhestvennyi mir sovremennoi prozy*, Moscow, 1983, p. 129.
[439] Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', pp. 303-304.
[440] Ibid., p. 365.

weakness is related to different stages of detachment from the past. Thus Andrei, Dar'ia's grandson, is so removed from his village roots that he rejects them and all they represent as an amusing irrelevance. He places his faith instead in the idea of 'progress' embodied in the new life of the settlement and the construction of the hydroelectric power station for which Matera must be sacrificed. Rasputin juxtaposes these two different worldviews in a debate between Dar'ia and her grandson, the effect of which is to make Andrei seem naïve rather than immoral, his arguments fragmentary borrowings which lack any unifying context, and which contrast with his grandmother's wisdom.[441] Lapchenko argues that in the character of Pavel, Dar'ia's son, Rasputin imprints that actual process of loss of memory.[442] He appears caught between loyalty to the old world of the village and the attraction of the new settlement, which he cannot learn to love as a home: 'Chto verno, to verno – eto ne Matera'.[443] He has neither his mother's moral fibre nor his son's naïve idealism, and emerges as an indecisive and ultimately weak character. His promise to transport the family's graves to the new settlement indicates a respect for the values of the past, but he is so preoccupied with the demands of the new life that he procrastinates and in the end fails to do so.

The second group of characters connected with a rejection of the past comprises the 'authorities': Vorontsov, Zhuk and the men they bring with them to clear Matera for the flooding. They represent a new type of character in Rasputin's fiction of this period, one which becomes increasingly important in his stories written after *Proshchanie s Materoi*. Rasputin's depiction of them is much less nuanced: they are shown to be immoral and even positively evil. This is illustrated in the way they are perceived by the older villagers, who describe them as 'cherti' and 'nechistaia sila', both traditional images of evil.[444] Similarly, they are perceived as 'chuzhie', figures traditionally mistrusted in the peasant world view. The pompous official language of these outsiders is indeed

[441] Ibid., pp. 280-88.
[442] Lapchenko, *Chelovek i zemlia*, p. 34.
[443] Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', p. 366.
[444] Ibid., p. 212. For a discussion of *nechistaia sila* and images of the devil in Russian folk belief, see Linda J. Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, London, 1989, pp. 38-50.

so alien to the older villagers that they cannot understand them.[445] Vorontsov, chairman of the Soviet of the village and the new settlement soviet, actually comes from the village, but is labelled by Egor as a 'tourist' because of his disregard for the old village values.[446] The character of Zhuk, Vornontsov's superior and a complete outsider, is cast in even more negative terms. He is described as resembling a 'gypsy', with all the pejorative connotations of the image of the gypsy in traditional rural societies. His cunning and dishonesty is further suggested by the fact that he hides his devil-like short black curly hair under a straw hat.[447]

In *Proshchanie s Materoi*, the 'outsiders' are the perpetrators of two acts which represent a direct attempt to cut the community's links with its past. The first of these is the desecration of the village graveyard, which clearly symbolises the new society's disregard for the idea of a continuity of existence based on memory. The second act of destruction is the attempt to cut down the enormous larch tree, revered by the villagers for its extreme age and for the fact that its deep roots are believed to anchor the island to the river bed. Both Link and Hasenkamp see in the larch the image of a 'cosmic tree' that in itself is a symbol of 'wholeness and integration', binding the heavenly and the earthly into a larger unity through its branches and roots.[448] Viewed from this standpoint, the bid to remove the tree could be interpreted as an attempt to unmoor Matera both literally from the river bed and metaphorically from the past.

In comparing *Proshchanie s Materoi* with Rasputin's preceding stories, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn commented:

> Это прежде всего – смена масштаба: не частный человеческий эпизод, а крупное народное бедствие – не именно одного

[445] Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', pp. 212-13.
[446] Ibid., p. 217.
[447] Ibid., p. 218.
[448] Link, 'Symbolism of the Sacred', p. 162, and Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, pp. 147-50.

> затопляемого, обжитого веками острова, но грандиозный символ уничтожения народной жизни.[449]

Solzhenitsyn's assessment of *Proshchanie s Materoi* as a 'grandioznyi simvol unichtozheniia narodnoi zhizni' is clearly influenced by his personal interpretation of Russian history. However, his observation of the 'smena masshtaba' represented by the story in comparison with its predecessors is particularly relevant to the present discussion of memory in these texts. One could argue that in both *Poslednii srok* and *Zhivi i pomni,* Rasputin explores the idea of memory as a means to achieving a properly 'whole' existence on an individual level, although the outcomes of the two stories are quite different. In the final chapter of *Poslednii srok,* Liusia rediscovers the past which she had forgotten as something 'ochen' tsennoe i neobkhodimoe dlia nee, bez chego nel'zia'. This reconnecting of her past to her present life appears here as a personal revelation, through which she realises that the future too is clearer: 'mozhno idti dal'she'.[450] In *Zhivi i pomni*, by contrast, Andrei destroys the integrity of his life by his failure to accept the consequences of his own actions as a deserter. In doing so, he effectively forfeits his life, physically and spiritually, and this is connected in the text with being forgotten. The outcome of the story suggests that his lack of repentance bars him from the possibility of restoring his life as a whole through memory on any level, either through his descendents or through collective memory in his community.

In *Proshchanie s Materoi*, however, the focus has moved from the individual to the collective. The duty to remember appears here as the means to preserve the continuity of an entire way of life. Read in this way, the submerging of Matera at the end of the story, together with its graves and Dar'ia and the some of the older villagers, represents a definitive break in the 'neskonchaemaia tsep'' of existence. Moreover, the scene describing the attempted rescue of the old people by boat suggests that in cutting the link to the past, the community's future is seriously compromised, echoing the idea

[449] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, 'Slovo pri vruchenii premii Solzhenitsyna Valentinu Rasputinu 4 maia 2000', *Novy mir*, 2000, 5, pp. 186-89 (p. 187).
[450] Rasputin, 'Poslednii srok', p. 338.

that 'Pravda v pamiati. U kogo net pamiati, u togo net zhizni.'[451] It is significant that the passengers on the boat that sets out for Matera include not only Vorontsov as an active destroyer of the past, but also Pavel as a half-hearted 'collaborator' and Petrukha, a rootless character who burns down his own *izba* for financial gain.[452] In terms of Rasputin's method of characterization, all three represent different degrees of rejection of the old value system of Matera and the boat thus appears as an image of the new society from the settlement. The conclusion to this scene, in which the boat is blindly adrift in thick fog, having failed to reach Matera on time, offers a pessimistic vision of a society which has turned its back on the past. *Proshchanie s Materoi* represents a 'smena masshtaba' in Rasputin's fiction not only in its portrayal of the collective loss of the past, but in the way that this loss is accorded a symbolic and moral meaning in the text, and particularly in its conclusion. These aspects of Rasputin's writing become increasingly dominant in all his stories written after 1976.

II The fallen world: Rasputin's *publitsistika* (1977-1986) and *Pozhar*

In the polarised critical debate around the work of Rasputin and other *derevenshchiki*, 'liberal' interpretations frequently identify the period of the late 1970s and early 1980s as a watershed. The appearance in the mid-1980s of Rasputin's *Pozhar* (1985), Vasilii Belov's *Vse vperedi* (1986) and Viktor Astaf'ev's *Pechal'nyi detektiv* (1986) is viewed as marking a new direction in village prose, both in style and tone.[453] Indeed, Galina Belaia has argued that these new works cannot be understood as village prose, which in retrospect reached its highest point and conclusion with Rasputin's *Proshchanie s*

[451] Rasputin, 'Proshchanie s Materoi', p. 343.
[452] For a discussion of the character of Petrukha, see Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben,* pp. 166-67.
[453] For a discussion of *Vse vperedi* and *Pechal'nyi detektiv*, see Parthé, 'The Righteous Brothers (and Sisters) of Contemporary Russian Literature', pp. 91-94.

Materoi.[454] Belaia, like many other critics, had always recognised the strong moral element of village prose, part of Russian realism's tradition of 'social-philosophical' prose.[455] She notes of Rasputin's writing in particular that 'kosmogoniia Rasputina est' sozdanie modeli *sushchego*, no i modeli *dolzhnogo* chelovecheskogo bytiia'.[456] Rasputin's own statements during this period indicate that he clearly viewed literature and his own writing as having a central moral function: 'vse poslednie gody tak nazyvaemaia "derevenskaia proza" bol'she vsego zanialas' nravstvennym zdorov'em cheloveka – i cheloveka nastoiashchego, i cheloveka budushchego'.[457] For Belaia and others, *Pozhar* represents a radical departure from Rasputin's previous stories which stems precisely from the transformation of this consciously moral aspect of his writing. The vision of an ideal past moved from being an 'artistic-philosophical metaphor' to a 'programme' for a 'renaissance – whether in morality, in society or in public life'.[458] The perception is of a shift from the moral to the moralising: in Liudmila Petrushevskaia's words, the writer as 'moral authority' becomes the writer as 'public prosecutor'.[459] This development is associated with a 'journalistic' expression of social criticism which is seen to compromise the aesthetic quality of the writing of Rasputin and his fellow *derevenshchiki*. Galya Diment's assessment of this shift is a good example of arguments of this kind, and gives us some sense of the vehemence of the critical debate which pitted 'liberals' against 'chauvinists' in the discussion about the *derevenshchiki*. Diment sees *Proshchanie s Materoi* as 'largely devoid of didacticism but at the same time deeply moral', but argues that in *Pozhar*

> although the themes remain virtually the same, the richness, the suggestiveness, the spirit of tolerance – and even the talented storytelling – have largely disappeared. Unlike Rasputin's earlier works,

[454] Galina Belaia, 'The Crisis of Soviet Artistic Mentality in the 1960s and 1970s', in Sheelagh Duffin Graham (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet Literature*, London, 1992, pp. 1-17 (p. 7).
[455] See also Lapchenko, *Chelovek i zemlia*, pp. 3-13, and Anton Hiersche, *Sowjetische Dorfprosa: Geschichte und Problematik*, Berlin, 1985, p. 228.
[456] Belaia, *Khudozhestvennyi mir sovremennoi prozy*, p. 135.
[457] Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by V. Pomazneva, 'Ne mog ne prostit'sia s Materoi', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 16 March 1977, p. 3.
[458] Belaia, 'The Crisis of Soviet Artistic Mentality', p. 8.
[459] Quoted in Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 231.

> 'The Fire' is simplistic and didactic as well as vaguely xenophobic and paranoid.[460]

Rasputin, by contrast, seems to have perceived his writing in the 1980s as a continuation of his earlier work, and a natural development of his long-held view of literature's moral function in response to the changing historical situation. In answer to criticism of the journalistic style of *Pozhar,* he commented:

> 'Какая у меня публицистичность? Я думаю, что это правильно, это не должно быть в настоящей литературе, но в тот момент, когда писалась эта повесть, и в тот момент, который сейчас [1987] еще не закончился, это был необходимый разговор именно в таком роде'.[461]

Moreover, he explained his increasing focus on journalism by arguing that 'Now is the time of journalism. […] Any self-respecting writer has no choice but to turn to journalism.'[462]

The following discussion looks at how Rasputin's expression of a *tselostnyi* view of the world and the theme of memory are developed in *Pozhar* and also in his *publitsistika* of the period from 1977 to 1986. As will be seen, many of the ideas and imagery associated with memory and the 'obraz edinogo mira' from Rasputin's earlier *povesti* reappear both in *Pozhar* and in Rasputin's articles on social and political issues. From this point of view at least, his writing during this period seems to exemplify a strong sense of continuity with his previous work, rather than any break with it. Both the articles and *Pozhar* reflect an outward shift in Rasputin's understanding of memory and the unity of existence from the level of the individual and small community to the national, demonstrating both Rasputin's developing political vision and the conscious *publitsistichnost'* of his fiction during this period.

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[460] Galya Diment, 'Valentin Rasputin and Siberian Nationalism', *World Literature Today*, 67, 1 (Winter 1993), pp. 69-73 (p. 71).
[461] Quoted from an interview with Rasputin: Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 226, footnote 43.
[462] Translated from the German original. Ibid., p. 227.

Publitsistika (1977-1986)

The *ocherk* 'Irkutsk s nami' (1979) is an example of how Rasputin's non-fictional writing of this period takes up the ideas and imagery associated with the theme of memory from his earlier *povesti* and places it in a wider context. This piece on the history of Irkutsk is on the one hand an argument for the importance of preserving and respecting the past of the *malaia rodina*, the backdrop to *Proshchanie s Materoi* and Rasputin's other earlier stories.[463] In Rasputin's interpretation, the *malaia rodina* acts as an anchor of morality: '"Malaia rodina" – dusha cheloveka, i tot, kto okonchatel'no zabyl i pokinul ee, poterial i dushu.'[464] The article also, however, takes the concern with a continuity of *rod* as a guarantee of personal morality as expressed particularly clearly in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, and extends it to the level of nation in a discussion of the meaning of *rodina* as motherland:

> И не стоять человеку твердо, не жить ему уверенно без этого чувства, без близости к деяниям и судьбам предков, без внутренного постижения своей ответственности за дарованное ему место в огромном общем ряду быть тем, кто он есть. Былинный источник силы от матери – родной земли представляется ныне не для избранных, не для богатырей только, но для всех нас источником исключительно важным и целебным, с той самой волшебной живой водой, при возвращении человека в образ, дух и смысл свой, в свое неизменное назначение.[465]

The 'ogromnyi obshchii riad' of ancestors echoes the imagery of the 'ogromnyi stroi' of Dar'ia's forefathers in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, but here the *rod* is a collective, national one. In addition, the need to keep alive the memory of the past appears here as an almost holy national duty to which everyone is called, rather than as the personal responsibility of each individual for their own kin.

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[463] See Kathleen Parthé's discussion of the concept of *malaia rodina* in village prose: Kathleen Parthé, 'Village Prose: Chauvinism, Nationalism, or Nostalgia?', in Duffin Graham (ed.), *New Directions in Soviet Literature*, pp. 106-21 (p. 113).
[464] Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by P. Dobrobaba and N. Tenditnik, 'Zhivaia sviaz' vremen i sudeb', *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 6 May 1979, p. 2.
[465] Valentin Rasputin, 'Irkutsk s nami: Ocherk', in Valentin Rasputin, *Vek zhivi – vek liubi: Rasskazy*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 190-208 (p. 190).

Similarly, in an interview in 1986, the image of life's 'neskonchaemaia tsep'' is transformed into a metaphor for the existence of the whole nation.

> 'Мы ведь звенья одной цепи, одной сквозной жизни, подхватываемся, продолжаемся в судьбе Отечества [...]. И мы уйдем и не хотим, чтобы канули бесследно. И нас должны вспоминать. А если мы будем считать, что случайно пришли и так же случайно уйдем и ничего после нас не останется, тогда твори на земле что угодно. Без памяти народа своего, рода своего, семьи жить и работать нельзя. А иначе мы настолько разъединимся, почувствуем себя одинокими, что это может погубить нас'.[466]

In this passage, the memory of both the personal and the collective past appears as equally important for the preservation of the unity of existence, the 'skvoznaia zhizn'', and thus also moral integrity. The imagery used by Rasputin here to evoke the results of the breaking of the chain is one of division, isolation and anarchic destruction. In effect, it is the reverse image of the ideal, a disintegration of the whole into a chaos of fragments which echoes Kireevskii's analysis of the effect of rationalism on the 'tselostnost' bytiia vnutrennego i vneshnego, obshchestvennogo i chastnogo, […] iskusstvennogo i nravstvennogo'.[467] Rasputin evokes this catastrophe as a state of being without roots: 'Chelovek dolzhen znat' svoe rodstvo. Bez etogo net ukorennosti'.[468] This portrayal of a society which is unmoored from its past as rootless, peopled by feckless wanderers is, as will be seen, central to *Pozhar*. The negative image of the wanderer, which forms a complete contrast to the positive image of the seeker-wanderer in both Platonov and Tarkovskii's work, recalls Chaadaev's analysis of Russia as a country of nomads. Cut off from their own past and thus a possible future, Russians lead a life which is 'otorvanna ot svoego vidovogo tselogo'.[469]

In Rasputin's writings of this period, the collective duty to remember a common past is increasingly linked with a concept of national history which echoes the traditional Slavophile understanding of the Russian nation. He

[466] Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by T. Mikeshina-Okulova, 'Ot rodu i plemeni', *Ogonek*, October 1986, 43, pp.27-29 (p.27).
[467] Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, i, p. 218.
[468] Rasputin, 'Ot rodu i plemeni', p. 27.
[469] Chaadaev, *Sochineniia*, p. 23.

refers, for example, to Karamzin's *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo* with its view of Peter the Great's reforms as having severed Russia from her 'true' path, a version of history that was widely embraced by the early Slavophiles and their successors.[470] One could also mention his interpretation of the Battle of Kulikovo Field in his article 'Za Nepriavdoi lebedi krichali' (1980) as the turning point in Russian history, the first step towards unity that would make Russia a great state and a great nation. In addition, his contention that Russia sacrificed itself at Kulikovo not only for its own sake, but also to save Europe, is to be seen in the context of the messianic strain of Russian nationalist thought which has traditionally seen Russia as uniquely called upon to save Europe from the Eastern threat through suffering.[471] Rasputin's description of his visit to the Kulikovo site revolves around his conviction of the contemporary relevance of this battle for modern Russia.[472] The symbolic value assigned to certain locations, either real like Kulikovo or mythical like Kitezh, on the 'map' of Russian history is typical of the broader nationalist discourse and, as Kathleen Parthé has noted, it echoes Iurii Lotman's analysis of the symbolic conception of space in Russian medieval literature:

> notions of moral value and locality fuse together: places have a moral significance and morals have a localized significance. Geography becomes a kind of ethics.[473]

In an echo of the way in which Dar'ia in *Proshchanie s Materoi* seems to hear the voices of her dead ancestors demanding that they be remembered, Rasputin describes the feeling of almost hearing the voices of the battle's dead, expressing a mixture of fear, supplication and hope under the same sky which witnessed the events in 1380:

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[470] Rasputin, 'Ot rodu i plemeni', p. 29, and Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by V. Pomazneva, '…Prezhde vsego vospitanie chuvst', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 26 March 1980, pp. 4-5 (p. 5). Compare with Solzhenitsyn's discussion of the reign of Peter I as diverting Russia from her proper historical destiny: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Rossiia v obvale*, Moscow, 1998, p. 156.
[471] Valentin Rasputin, 'Za Nepriavdoi lebedi krichali: K 600-letiiu bitvy na pole Kulikovom', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 4 January 1980, p. 6. For Dostoevskii's vision of Russia's role in the process of 'universal panhuman unification' see the discussion in Chapter One of this study.
[472] For a discussion of the symbolic role of Kulikovo Field in Russian nationalist discourse, see: Kathleen Parthé, *Russia's 'Unreal Estate': Cognitive Mapping and National Identity*, Washington DC, 1997, p. 7.
[473] Cited in ibid., p. 5.

> Небо над этой степью знает великую тайну: оно было могучим высшим свидетелем битвы и победы, затем многовекового терпеливого ожидания, и оно стало, наконец, свидетелем пробуждающейся памяти...[474]

The duty to remember appears here in an unequivocally patriotic light as the call to return to Russia's historic greatness: 'Ne nam li griadit sud'ba vyiti na pole Kulikovo, chtoby snova otstoiat' russkuiu zemliu i russkuiu krov'?'[475]

Pozhar

The increasing emphasis on the past as the guarantor of individual, collective and national life which is found in Rasputin's articles from the late 1970s is also reflected in *Pozhar*. If, in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, Rasputin's focus had been on the point of a break with the past, the story of *Pozhar* is a dramatisation of the results of the severing of the 'neskonchaiemaia tsep''. Conceived of by Rasputin as a sequel to his earlier *povest'*, *Pozhar* is set twenty years after the flooding of 'Egorovka', as Matera is known in this story, in the new settlement of Sosnovka. In his portrayal of Sosnovka, Rasputin both develops the brief sketch of the new settlement in *Proshchanie s Materoi* and creates a reverse image of Matera. Expressed in a more colloquial style and with a far clearer authorial voice, *Pozhar* is a direct investigation of the social and moral effects of the rejection of the past and its values, and Sosnovka is a metaphor for this.

The most prominent element of the new way of life described by Rasputin in *Pozhar* is its rootless, temporary nature. Rasputin describes existence in Sosnovka as 'bivuachnyi', recalling Chaadaev's criticism of the nomadic character of Russian towns mentioned in Chapter One. Rasputin writes:

> Неуютный и неопрятный, и не городского и не деревенского, а бивуачного типа был этот поселок, словно кочевали с места на место, остановились переждать непогоду и отдохнуть, да так и

[474] Rasputin, 'Za Nepriavdoi lebedi krichali', p. 6.
[475] Ibid., p. 6.

> застряли. Но застряли в ожидании – когда же последует команда двигаться дальше, и потому – не пуская глубоко корни, не охорашиваясь и не обустраиваясь с прицелом на детей и внуков, а лишь бы лето перелетовать, а потом и зиму перезимовать.[476]

The makeshift character of the new settlement in *Proshchanie s Materoi* has here become the essence of a new way of life that has replaced the traditions of the village: it is neither village nor city, and the old values have vanished without being replaced by any new ideals. This nomadic way of life is directly connected in the text to the community's new means of existence after all the agricultural land was flooded: the 'Lespromkhoz'. The felling of the trees is depicted as an essentially destructive activity. In destroying their own natural environment, people are also brutalized and alienated from the natural, productive cycle of sowing and harvesting that underlay the traditional way of life in the village. Every time an area has been completely deforested, the entire community has to leave behind its homes and graves and move on. Thus it appears that in originally rejecting the past, the community has earned itself an inhuman state of permanent flux, in which it can neither put down new roots nor ever maintain links to its dead.

Like the new settlement in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, the actual physical structure of Sosnovka is portrayed by Rasputin as hostile to basic human needs and interests. The most prominent example of this is the warehouses with their precious contents, which were constructed with great haste and little forethought in such a way that any fire spreads easily to engulf the entire structure.[477] Sosnovka as a social unit is also cast in opposite terms to Matera or Egorovka. Without the anchor of a sense of continuity over time, Sosnovka illustrates Rasputin's idea discussed above of 'tvori na zemle chto ugodno', a situation in which it is impossible for people to live and work.[478] Sosnovka is characterised in *Pozhar* by a range of social problems – theft, dishonesty, violence and drunkenness – and a corresponding lack of the kind of collective

[476] Valentin Rasputin, 'Pozhar', in Rasputin, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, ii, pp. 381-438 (pp. 387-88).
[477] Ibid., p. 384.
[478] Rasputin, 'Ot rodu i plemeni', p. 27.

spirit Rasputin described in *Proshchanie s Materoi*. The extent of the community's disintegration and its consequences is dramatised in the reaction of Sosnovka's inhabitants to the fire. Even this common danger to life and property fails to rally the community: isolated individuals try ineffectively to stop the fire and save the stores whilst others engage in opportunistic plundering.

Pozhar: 'village' characterisation

In *Pozhar*, Rasputin's characters are defined by their attitude to the past. The opposition between 'village' and 'city' here is particularly expressed as the contrast between 'ukorennost'' and its absence. Ivan Petrovich, his wife Alena, Misha Khampo and Afoniia all stand for continuity with the village past, and are shown in an unequivocally positive moral light. Ivan's surname, Egorov, identifies him directly with the values of the village, and he is described as having remembered Egorovka every day for the twenty years since the flooding.[479] Kathleen Parthé compares Ivan to Dar'ia as a *pravednik* figure: certainly he is defined in the text as someone who feels bound to speak out about evils and injustices and pays for this by being mocked and threatened by others.[480] Despite his firm convictions, he is bewildered by a world in which everything seems to have been turned upside down: 'zhizn', […], iz tselogo chisla prevrashchalas' v drob' s chislitelem i znamenatelem, gde neprosto razobrat'sia, chto nad chertoi i chto pod chertoi'.[481] Thus the process of wider social disintegration is portrayed by Rasputin as leading to internal confusion, a fragmentation of what had once been a comprehensible whole into pieces. In the person of Ivan, 'besporiadok vokrug' leads to 'besporiadok vnutri', and this results in his helplessness when confronted with the extreme situation of the

[479] Rasputin, 'Pozhar', pp. 393-94.
[480] Parthé, 'The Righteous Brothers (and Sisters) of Contemporary Russian Literature', p. 92. She also interprets Misha Khampo as a *pravednik*.
[481] Rasputin, 'Pozhar', p. 395.

fire.[482] Man appears here as a pale imitation of his stalwart forbears: 'A ved' davno li muzhik kak muzhik byl – odna shkura ot muzhika ostalas'.[483] In this connection, it is worth mentioning 'Ne mogu-u', a short story written by Rasputin in 1982. The main theme of this story is the moral and physical decline of the 'muzhik', a figure who is identified with a vision of Russia's heroic history, from Kulikovo to the defeat of Hitler. Gerol'd, the protagonist of 'Ne mogu-u', has been physically and mentally destroyed by alcoholism, and appears in the story as the sorry remains of the 'muzhik' of the past:

> А вспомнить – такие же мужики, прямые предки его, с такими же русыми волосами и незатейливыми светлыми лицами, какое чудесным и редким раденьем, показывая породу, досталось ему, – шли на поле Куликово, сбирались по кличу Минина и Пожарского у Нижнего Новгорода, сходились в ватагу Стеньки Разина, продирались с Ермаком за Урал, прибирая к хозяйству земли, на которых и двум прежним Россиям было просторно, победили Гитлера... И вот теперь он.[484]

The character of Misha Khampo, described as the 'dukh egorovskii' and a 'prirozhdennyi storozh, storozh-samostav' who looks after the community's property, is also linked in *Pozhar* to the values of the village.[485] A *pravednik* like Ivan, he has a strict sense of morality which he is prepared to uphold, and this ultimately costs him his life. Afoniia, though not an outspoken defender of the truth, is also given a strong moral role in *Pozhar*, and is instrumental in preserving the links to Egorovka at least on some level. At the end of the narrative, it is he who seems to have persuaded Ivan not to abandon Sosnovka, but to stay and find some way of carrying on. It is also Afoniia who plans to commemorate Egorovka symbolically by putting a marker over the village's former location in the water to remind people: 'Chto stoiala tut Egorovka, rabotnitsei byla ne poslednei, na matushku-Rossiiu rabotala'.[486] If in *Proshchanie s Materoi* the idea of Matera as a symbol for a vision of the whole world of the past was only suggested by the text, here Rasputin makes the

[482] Ibid., p. 409.
[483] Ibid., p. 385.
[484] Valentin Rasputin, 'Ne mogu-u', in Valentin Rasputin, *Zhivi i pomni*, pp. 319-26 (p. 321).
[485] Rasputin, 'Pozhar', pp. 426-27.
[486] Ibid., p. 432.

connection between Egorovka and *rodina mat'* explicit. Similarly, Alena appears in *Pozhar* as a representation of a more universal idea. Ivan sees in her an image of wholeness, 'odno tseloe', like the Holy Trinity in her completeness.[487]

Pozhar: 'city' characterisation

As in *Proshchanie s Materoi*, the immoral characters in *Pozhar* are roughly divided between complete outsiders and former villagers, or *svoi*. The latter group, in *Pozhar*, are portrayed in a particularly negative light: they represent the moral vacuum which exists in the story as a result of the abandoning of the traditional way of life. Ivan is threatened by the thuggish outsiders for his outspokenness, but also by former villagers. They also take part in the looting during the fire, and the possibility that one of them might have started the fire rather than the outsiders is not excluded. This betrayal from within appears in the text as something even worse than any outside threat: 'Prot' chuzhogo vraga stoiali i vystoim, svoi vrag, kak i svoi vor, postrashnee.'[488] The social collapse which Rasputin depicts in *Pozhar* is indeed specifically expressed as a process of self-destruction, one which is embodied in the character of Gerol'd in 'Ne mogu-u': 'Nikto, nikakoi vrazhina ne sumel by sdelat' s nim to, chto sdelal s soboi on sam.'[489] Once the link with the past has been cut, it appears, the integrity of life is vulnerable to a constant hollowing out from within, a process for which the fire at the centre of the narrative is the main metaphor. The warehouse fire is portrayed as self-destructive both in the suggestion that it might be arson, and in the fact that since traditional wisdom was ignored in the construction of Sosnovka, the fire is allowed to spread swiftly and pass beyond human control. Moreover, the ability of Egorovka's strong community to withstand an external enemy during the war is contrasted with Sosnovka's constant vulnerability to the *arkharovtsy*,

[487] Ibid., pp. 421-22.
[488] Ibid., p. 417.
[489] Rasputin, 'Ne mogu-u', p. 321.

a band of outsiders defined by their rootless character, who successfully exploit the internal disunity of the settlement and terrorise them. The cost of this internal disunity is conveyed through the information that in the four years before the fire, the same number of villagers has died from alcoholism, fights and negligent work practices as at the front during the war.[490] Rasputin's own explanation of the meaning and origin of the word *arkharovtsy* is worth quoting in this connection:

> В народе это слово получило звучание человека неприкаянного, который не имеет ни памяти, не имеет почти ни физического лица, живет как перекати-поле. То есть человек, который на все способен.[491]

In the *arkharovtsy*, Rasputin creates a reverse image of his 'righteous' characters: they embody the connected processes of loss of roots, memory and morality. His comparison of them to the tumbleweed plant forms an intriguing point of intersection with Platonov's use of this plant as a positive image of his wanderer heroes.

The conclusion of *Pozhar* seems to present a bleak vision of the implosion of a society, in which life bound to the productive cycle of nature has been replaced by a destructive downward spiral. In the struggle between Misha Khampo and the *arkharovtsy* leader Sonia, the death of both appears to be a final symbol for the self-destructive new way of life, which in destroying those who stand in its way, also eliminates itself. In playing out in *Pozhar* the fate of the community cut adrift from its roots in the ending of *Proshchanie s Materoi*, Rasputin seems to offer a vindication of the idea that 'U kogo net pamiati, u togo net zhizni.' Indeed, the concept of 'life' as an eternal unity which Rasputin explored through the character of Dar'ia seems almost as far out of sight in *Pozhar* as the sunken village of Egorovka. The older village worldview does live on in the story's positive characters, but seems to be under constant threat of extinction. The ending of *Pozhar* does, however, offer some hope of an

[490] Rasputin, 'Pozhar', p. 401.
[491] Quoted in Hasenkamp, *Gedächtnis und Leben*, p. 221 (footnote 35).

alternative vision to the destruction left by the fire, one which is linked in the text with the idea of a better, collective Russian way of life in the past. The village of Ivan's son in the Far East suggests the possibility of recreating a functioning community, there 'derzhalsia […] poriadok ne na okrike i shtrafe, a na izdavna zavedennom mezhdousobnom obshchinom zakone'.[492] The *obshchina*, traditionally viewed by Slavophiles as the original and ideal Russian form of community and a perfect expression of the idea of *sobornost'*, appears here as model and inspiration, as well as the exact opposite of Sosnovka. The possibility of a new beginning also appears as the need to gather together the fragments of life to create a new unity, a process which echoes the eternal patterns of nature:

> Весна отыскала и эту землю – и просыпалась земля. Устраивать ей теперь переклик, что уцелело и что отмерло, что прибавилось от людей и что убавилось, собирать уцелевшее и неотмершее в одну живу и приготавливать к выносу.[493]

Rasputin describes Ivan's feeling of optimism at these signs of the earth reawakening, 'budto vyneslo ego nakonets na vernuiu dorogu.'[494] Taken as a part of Rasputin's wider exploration of the theme of memory in his articles, one could argue that the conclusion of *Pozhar* suggests that salvation is to be found in this 'true path', one which returns both collective and nation to their 'neizmennoe naznachenie', to a Russian past which stands as an ideal of harmonious wholeness.[495] Matera or Egorovka may have been submerged, but the ideal that they represent in these texts is still accessible through this specifically national understanding of the 'truth' of memory. As in the mythology surrounding the city of Kitezh, which Kathleen Parthé has called an emblem of 'past suffering and of future possibility', the true Russia has not been destroyed but has withdrawn to escape destruction, to reawaken and reveal itself to the righteous at the appointed time.[496]

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[492] Rasputin, 'Pozhar', p. 417.
[493] Ibid., p. 438.
[494] Ibid., p. 438.
[495] Rasputin, 'Irkutsk s nami', p. 190, quoted above in section 'Publitsistika 1977-1986'.
[496] Parthé, *Russia's 'Unreal Estate'*, p. 8.

III The return to a whole Russia through cultural memory: Rasputin's writing (1986-2004)

The publication of the short story 'Senia edet' in 1994 marked Rasputin's return to literature after almost a decade devoted entirely to *publitsistika* and political activity. Critical reception of the short stories written by Rasputin since 1994, and his *povest' Doch' Ivana, mat' Ivana* (2004), is split between the indiscriminate praise to be found in conservative journals and newspapers, and an almost complete indifference on the part of the liberal press.[497] The few reviews which have appeared in liberal journals tend to criticise Rasputin's recent fiction for its repetition of earlier themes, settings and characters, and a reading of these stories suggests that this is indeed the case. [498] The cycle of six stories centred on Senia Pozdniakov, as well as 'Izba' (1999) and 'Na rodine' (1999), are all set in Siberian villages which were resettled in the 1960s when the Angara was dammed for the Bratsk Power Station, and all of them feature the *pravednik* or *pravednitsa* protagonists familiar from Rasputin's earlier stories.

In terms of style and authorial voice, Rasputin's fiction since 1994 continues the direction taken in *Pozhar*. Alla Latynina's assessment of 'V tu zhe zemliu' (1995), as a story in which 'otlichno napisannye stseny, […], peremezhaiutsia rassuzhdeniiami, pozaimstvovannymi iz sobstvennoi neudachnoi publitsistiki' gives an indication of this.[499] Indeed, in their direct expression of social and political views, didactic tone and frequently their actual phraseology, these stories are even closer to Rasputin's polemical articles of the same period than was the case with *Pozhar*. This is in part a function of

[497] For an example of the eulogies to Rasputin in the conservative-nationalist press, see: Kapitolina Koksheneva, 'Muzyka tsel'nogo cheloveka', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 29 August – 4 September 2001, p. 12.
[498] See Alla Latynina, 'Slovo khudozhnika i propisi moralista: Valentin Rasputin vozvrashchaetsia v literaturu?', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 6 September 1995, p. 4, and Aleksandr Ageev, 'Rasputin novyi i staryi', *Znamia*, 1999, 6, pp. 218-20.
[499] Latynina, 'Slovo khudozhnika i propisi moralista', p. 4.

the far greater openness of public debate on social and political issues in Russia by the early 1990s. The strong presence in the recent stories of what Latynina denotes 'Rasputin-moralist, prorok i oblichitel'' is, however, also an indication of Rasputin's continued belief in the social role of literature both to expose contemporary reality and to suggest where a solution might lie.[500] In this connection it is worth noting Rasputin's view that although the figure of the wise *starik* or *starukha* in village prose was the twentieth century's only meaningful '"geroi nashego vremeni"', the changed times demand a new kind of positive hero from literature,[501] one whom he sees in national terms: 'chelovek, umeiushchii pokazat', kak stoiat' za Rossiiu, i sposobnyi sobrat' opolchenie v ee zashchitu.'[502]

Rasputin's recent stories also echo *Pozhar* in their exploration of memory and an ideally whole world. For this reason, the following discussion encompasses only a brief analysis of these stories and focuses primarily on Rasputin's *publitsistika*. Here, as will be argued, he articulates a clear vision of memory as a redemptive force which can unite a fragmented society and nation by returning Russia to her true self. *Tselostnost'* emerges here as perhaps the defining characteristic of Rasputin's conception of 'Podlinnaia Rossiia'. She appears as a mythically preserved, untouched whole, and in addition, following the classical Slavophile view, her *tselostnost'* is what sets her apart from the divided and divisive West.

Prose fiction (1994-2004)

In the stories he has written since 1994, Rasputin has continued his portrayal of the decline and fragmentation of a society which was the subject of *Pozhar*. The main distinction is to be found in the explicit dimension of this process. If in *Pozhar* the collapse of a community may have suggested a wider

[500] Ibid., p. 4.
[501] Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by I. Kushelevyi and V. Kozhemiako, '"Nashi uchitelia teper' iz porody potverzhe…"', *Moskva*, 2002, 3, pp. 3-12 (pp. 8-9).
[502] Valentin Rasputin, 'Moi manifest: Nastupaet pora dlia russkogo pisatelia vnov' stat' ekhom narodnym…', *Nash sovremennik*, 1997, 5, pp. 3-6 (p. 6).

crisis, in the stories written since 1994 social breakdown is explicitly and repeatedly expressed as part of a national collapse, and the destruction of a specifically Russian way of life. In addition, rather than being generally urban or *chuzhoi*, the destructive forces are associated with an immoral Western way of life and thinking which is located in the new democratic, capitalist system as well as in imported television, books and goods. Here, Rasputin's conception of Russia follows classical Slavophile reasoning: Russia is everywhere defined in opposite terms to the West: moral as opposed to immoral, unified as opposed to divided.

This shift in the context of Rasputin's polemic is reflected in the detail of his portrayal of social collapse, which otherwise is very similar to that provided in *Pozhar*. In the new stories, this process is still evoked in terms of a falling apart of an original, unified Russian way of life, and memory of the past is still seen to play a vital role in returning to this. Moreover, many of the concepts connected with this narrative of decline from earlier stories recur here. Thus, for example, the idea of self-destruction takes on both a national and a Western aspect. It is the Russian democratic government which is accused of a cynical and systematic destruction of its own country: '"Vsiu Rossiiu pod planomernoe vymiranie."'[503] This includes the idea of the physical and moral decline of the Russian nation or *rod* itself through the violent influence of Western media and Western mores. In 'Senia edet'(1994), for example, Senia is horrified by media reports on the explosion of teenage pregnancies, and wonders '"Kogo oni narozhaiut? Kakoi narod pridet posle etogo?"'.[504] As in Rasputin's earlier fiction, the moral in these stories is located in characters, values and locations which embody a link to an idealized Russian past.[505] Senia is portrayed as a true Russian *muzhik*, lacking the stature of a *bogatyr'* but as

[503] Valentin Rasputin, 'Po-sosedski', in Rasputin, *Zhivi i pomni*, pp. 334-54, (p. 347). Compare with Solzhenitsyn's similar views on the destruction of Russia from within: Solzhenitsyn, *Rossiia v obvale*, p. 53.
[504] Valentin Rasputin, 'Senia edet', in Rasputin, *Zhivi i pomni*, pp. 326-34 (p. 333).
[505] See, for example, the symbolism of the *izba* in: Valentin Rasputin, 'Izba', *Nash sovremennik*, 1999, 1, pp. 3-20; also the 'real' Russia of the shores of Lake Baikal in Valentin Rasputin, 'Novaia professiia', *Nash sovremennik*, 1998, 7, pp. 3-23.

unstoppable in his search for justice.[506] Moreover, he sees 'truth' as having abandoned Moscow to hide in the forests and mountains, like Kitezh.[507]

Publitsistika (1986-2004)

It is in his non-fictional writing after 1986 that Rasputin develops his concern with memory and the 'obraz edinogo mira' in a more interesting way. In articles written during this period, these ideas are central to Rasputin's discussion of the meaning and function of cultural memory, Russian cultural history and Russian literature in what he perceives as the renewal of national life.

In an article dedicated to Dmitrii Likhachev on his eightieth birthday, Rasputin describes Likhachev's profession as 'natsional'naia pamiat'' and sees him as an embodiment of the Russian concept of 'lad', an ideal oneness and harmony of inner and outer selves.[508] Rasputin evokes the contemporary historical period as one of the 'return of memory', of history, literature, folklore, morality, spirituality and national character: 'My bol'she ne ivany ne pomniashchie rodstva.'[509] The reinstatement of the nation's memory is understood by Rasputin as the achievement of Likhachev's idea of 'dukhovnaia osedlost'': 'Konechno, vremia kochevnichestva i bespamiatstva ne proshlo bessledno […], no napravlenie tem ne menee opredelilos', verkh vziala ob''ediniaiushchaia, a ne raz''ediniaiushchaia sila'.[510] The reestablishment of a link between present and past appears here as Russia's return to her 'true' self and to the *rodnoe* after a nomadic existence cut off from the past, a reversal of the process described by Rasputin in *Proshchanie s Materoi*. Cultural memory emerges as a unifying force as opposed to the destructive forces that had

[506] Rasputin, 'Po-sosedski', p. 335.
[507] Ibid., p. 346.
[508] Valentin Rasputin, 'Vsia zhizn' – strada: K 80-letiiu Dmitriia Sergeevicha Likhacheva', in Valentin Rasputin, *Chto v slove, chto za slovom?*, Irkutsk, 1987, pp. 326-34 (pp. 327-29).
[509] Rasputin, 'Vsia zhizn' – strada', p. 330.
[510] Ibid., p. 331.

previously had the upper hand, an idea expressed more emphatically in his speech '"Zhertvovat' soboiu dlia pravdy". Protiv bespamiatstva' in 1987:

> Память – само по себе понятие скрепляющее и охранительное. Нет более удобрительной силы для раскрытия и расцвета народных возможностей, нет почвы более плодоносной, чем национальная память, ощутительная, непрерывная связь поколений живущих с поколениями прошлого и будущего.[511]

Following from this, Rasputin argues that memory should take on its rightful role as the motor to political and economic life to counteract the catastrophic results of the previous 'Epokha bespamiatstva'.[512]

Rasputin's article 'Kul'tura: levaia, pravaia, gde storona?' (1989) is a more detailed discussion of the need to restore and preserve the continuity and integrity of national cultural history, which he understands in terms of a narrowly Russian canon.[513] Rasputin explains his understanding of national culture with reference to Kireevskii's argument that only 'organic' ideas can take root and flourish in a culture: the grafting of foreign ideas that are alien to the native culture is bound to fail and may also destroy this culture from within.[514] Moreover, this destruction by *svoi*, a theme familiar from Rasputin's fiction, is far more dangerous than the mere forgetting of the past, for:

> Культура, вместо того чтобы противостоять перевороту своих ценностей, с необыкновенной готовностью принялась их обслуживать, вскармливая внутри себя собственного убийцу.[515]

Rasputin's argument is encapsulated by his quotations of Dostoevskii's words 'Krasota mir spaset' from *Idiot* and 'Nekrasivost' ub'et' from *Besy*. If 'real' Russian culture is an unequivocally positive and redeeming force for Rasputin, a hybrid, 'trans-national' version, or even worse a purely alien culture is the

[511] Valentin Rasputin, '"Zhertvovat' soboiu dlia pravdy": Protiv bespamiatstva. Vstuplenie na V s"ezde vserossiiskogo obshchestva okhrany pamiatnikov istorii i kul'tury', *Nash sovremennik*, 1988, 1, pp. 169-72 (p. 169). [Speech originally given in Gor'kii, July 1987.]
[512] Ibid., p. 170.
[513] Valentin Rasputin, 'Kul'tura: levaia, pravaia, gde storona?' in Valentin Rasputin, *Znat' sebia patriotom*, Irkutsk, 1989, pp. 12-39.
[514] Rasputin, 'Kul'tura', p. 20.
[515] Ibid., p. 36.

opposite.[516] As has been mentioned, it is Dostoevskii's portrayal of the insidious process of destruction from within through 'alien' values which has made *Besy* such an important text for Russian nationalists. In his analysis of the state of contemporary culture in Russia, Rasputin casts the political elite as the treacherous *svoi*. The fact that they welcomed Western consumerist culture with open arms is, for Rasputin, part of a historical tendency of the Russian elite to embrace foreign ideas without discrimination and with disastrous consequences, a theme Dostoevskii addresses in *Besy* and *Dnevnik pisatelia*.[517] If the import of European rationalism and socialism in the nineteenth century led to a possessed nation hurling itself toward destruction in the Revolution, the 'nekrasivost'' of Western mass culture is seen by Rasputin as precipitating the death of Russian culture from within in the post-Soviet period, which, he argues, amounts to a spiritual death of the nation. Moreover, in Rasputin's opinion:

> Вторая революция на этом веку в России, происходящая на наших глазах, еще страшнее, разрушительней, подлей первой. Теперешние революционеры вкатили машину разрушения тайно и предательски.[518]

Since the mid-1990s, Rasputin's articles display a shift in emphasis from the role of cultural memory in a national renaissance to a more specific discussion of Russian literature as part of this. The idea of wholeness is central to Rasputin's discussion of Russian literary history and the contemporary importance of Russian literature in these articles, albeit understood in a more universal and more authentically Slavophile context than previously. The ideal whole appears not only in terms of a chain of existence, or even as the perfect unity of a state, but as the integration of all aspects of being and life of the individual, the collective and the nation, with their history, their culture and

[516] Ibid., p. 19. For nationalist debate on the composition of the Russian literary canon and use of the concepts *russkii* (genuine Russian), *russko-iazychnyi* and *lzhe-russkii*, see: Kathleen Parthé, 'The Empire strikes back: How Right-Wing Russian Nationalists tried to recapture Russian Literature', *Nationalities Papers*, 1996, 24 (4), pp. 601-24 (p. 602).
[517] Rasputin, 'Kul'tura', p. 30.
[518] Valentin Rasputin, 'Vidimoe i nevidimoe: Dva slova v pol'zu nadezhdy. My ne sdali krepostei, na kotorykh stoit Rossiia', *Nash sovremennik*, 2000, 2, pp. 184-87 (p. 186).

their literature.[519] This shift in emphasis, one could argue, brings Rasputin much closer to Kireevskii's all-encompassing 'integral existence' (*tsel'nost' bytiia*). In Rasputin's discussions, this organic unity is understood specifically in terms of an immutable essence of Russianness or *russkost'* which, like the idea of Russian culture, is defined in narrow terms. Notions of *russkost'*, as Kathleen Parthé has demonstrated, have become a powerful and often contentious part of Russian nationalist debate since the 1980s. Parthé argues that although *russkost'* can be understood from different perspectives, as ethnic, spiritual, artistic or political, its supporters consistently identify its indivisibility and unity as its main feature. Moreover, she notes that 'The concept *russkost'* presupposes the enduring cultural importance of *dukhovnost'* (spirituality, attention to spiritual qualities) and of "righteousness"'.[520] In Rasputin's articles, Russian literature embodies the ideal of *tselostnost'* as a repository of an original and intact Russianness, and is accorded a central role in the process of reconstructing the Russian nation by putting it back on its historically 'vernaia doroga'.

Rasputin's 1997 literary manifesto 'Moi manifest. (Nastupaet pora dlia russkogo pisatelia vnov' stat' ekhom narodnym)', is, as its title suggests, an argument for a return of Russian literature and Russian writers to an influential role in national affairs.[521] In this piece, aimed at refuting claims 'o smerti russkoi literatury', Rasputin asserts a powerful continuity between past and present through literature despite attempts to disrupt it. The original spirit of Russianness expressed in ancient chronicles like 'Slovo o polku Igoreve', which Rasputin has described elsewhere as an 'entsiklopediia russkoi dushi', has survived intact in the classical tradition of Russian nineteenth-century

[519] See, for example, Rasputin's statement as a people's deputy calling Russians to consider setting up their own state to protect Russian interests in the face of attempts by the Baltic republics to leave the Soviet Union. In a phrase which echoes Slavophile thinking on the *sobornyi* character of Russian communal life, he advised them to 'sobrat'sia v edinoe dukhovnoe telo'. Valentin Rasputin, 'Vystuplenie na s''ezde narodnykh deputatov SSSR', *Nash sovremennik*, 1989, 8, pp. 133-36 (p. 135).
[520] Parthé, 'The Empire strikes back', p. 602.
[521] Rasputin, 'Moi manifest'.

literature and its twentieth-century inheritors.[522] Literature appears as both a unique articulation of the national spirit and an image of Russian *tselostnost'*. Rasputin argues that although attempts were made to dismember the literary canon after the Revolution by banning such writers as Dostoevskii, Leskov and Bunin, 'natsiiu otmenit' bylo nevozmozhno', and this resulted in the tradition living on in the works of many Soviet writers.[523] The explanation offered for this phenomenon – 'Chuzhoe ne khotelo i ne moglo ukoreniat'sia, svoe ne moglo ne dat' vskhody' – once again reflects Kireevskii's view of the impossibility of alien ideas flourishing in a Russian soil.[524] In 'Moi manifest', however, Rasputin develops on this theme by portraying the *rodnoi* as a natural centre of gravity to which Russia must inevitably return. Throughout Russia's history,

> ее тянули в сторону, а она возвращалась к себе, ее разрывали, ломали – она срасталась; ее степи топтали чужие подковы и чужие гусеницы – она вздымалась горой и сбрасывала непрошеных гостей. Удивительная живучесть и странная сила, состоящая, казалось бы, из одних слабостей и ошибок.[525]

For Rasputin, the point of equilibrium to which Russia will always return has always been the 'rodnoi dom' and 'rodnoi dukh':

> Дом – как природная историческая обитель, удобная только для нас, в углах и стенах повторившая нашу фигуру. И дух – как настрой на Божественное и земное, степень нашего тяготения к тому и другому, какая-то незапечатленная дробь с числителем и знаменателем, стремящаяся к цельности.[526]

Russia is connected here with the concept of some original and natural wholeness, but also appears as an active force for the achievement of unity.

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[522] Valentin Rasputin, 'Vechnyi rodnik', *Pamiatniki otechestva*, 1985, 2, p. 23. For a detailed discussion of Rasputin's views on the interrelatedness of a nation's culture and spirit, see: Rasputin, '"Nashi uchitelia teper' iz porody potverzhe…"', p. 3.
[523] Rasputin, 'Moi manifest', p. 3. For Rasputin's view of the *derevenshchiki* as part of the 'seamless cloak' of the Russian realist tradition, see: Rasputin: '"Nashi uchitelia teper' iz porody potverzhe…"', p. 4.
[524] Ibid.
[525] Ibid. Compare with similar views and imagery used by Pavel Tulaev, a 'neo-Slavophile' thinker discussed by James Scanlan. See Scanlan, 'Interpretations and Uses of Slavophilism', p. 46.
[526] Ibid.

This recalls Kireevskii's assertion of Russian culture as innately *sobornyi* in character, with a natural tendency towards 'free unity' rather than the imposed 'unity without freedom' of Western structures. It also reflects Dostoevskii's messianic vision of the universal, *vsestoronnyi* character of Russia among nations, a country of the *vsechelovek* with a unique role to fill in the world. If, as in *Pozhar*, Rasputin compared the process of social collapse to a whole number which disintegrates into incomprehensible fractions, then a reconnection of Russia with its past appears here as the way to reverse this process and re-establish a uniquely Russian, organic unity: 'Russkii narod, v otlichie ot drugikh […], sostavliaiushchikh summu, sostavlial organizm, srashchennost''.[527]

In 'Moi manifest', the Russian literary canon emerges as a unique repository of Russian historical continuity which has survived in spite of the series of internal and external attacks on its integrity by disappearing temporarily like Kitezh: 'Podlinnaia [Rossiia], khraniashchaia sebia […], znaiushchaia sebe tsenu, otstupila, kak partizany v lesa, v svoe tysiacheletie.'[528] In articles written since 1997, Rasputin employs this concept of Russia's literary heritage to argue that contemporary Russian literature, represented collectively by the Writers' Union of Russia, has an active role to play in the recovery of Russia as a nation. Rasputin's earlier argument for the unifying power of memory in general is here applied to literature, which he sees as capable of the 'spasenie kul'tury i nravstvennosti'.[529] Salvation appears here as a process of putting back together the fragments of the broken nation. Writers, according to Rasputin, must 'vosstanavlivat' razrushennoe, skladyvat' razroznennye chasti voedino'.[530] The Writers' Union

> все последнее десятилетие не столько занимается творческой работой, сколько работой державно-духовно-цементирующей – по

[527] Ibid., p. 5.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Valentin Rasputin, interviewed by Nadezhda Gorlova, 'Samaia bol'shaia beda literatury – bez''iazykost'', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10-16 April 2002, p. 11.
[530] Rasputin, 'Vidimoe i nevidimoe', p. 184.

> склеиванию и собиранию народа, ‘единоутробного’, разметанного реформами и развалом Советского Союза.’[531]

For Rasputin, Russian literature has always been a redemptive force in Russian history. He argues that the Bolsheviks’ gravest error was to fail to wipe out classical Russian literature, thus allowing it to ‘spasti kul’turu XX veka i tem samym spasti Rossiiu.’[532] In this analysis, Russian literature’s power is attributed to its status as a unique expression of the Russian national spirit:

> Одна художественность, то есть красота русской литературы, в которую облекалась красота нашей самобытности, способна была спасти Россию и не дать забыть ее духовные и нравстенные формы. Один русский язык, это неумолчное чудо в руках мастеров и в устах народа, занесенное на страницы книг, - один он объявший собою всю Россию, способен был поднимать из мертвых и до сих пор поднимал.[533]

In asserting Russian literature as an articulation of *samobytnost’*, Rasputin emphasises it as more than an instrument of cultural renewal. It is connected with the distinct, pre-Petrine traditions of Russian social and political organisation held up as an ideal of unity and harmony by Kireevksii and Khomiakov. Historically, the defence of this way of life may have caused great suffering, but Rasputin argues that it was always simultaneously the source of redemption: ‘v etoi inakosti nashe spasenie’.[534] The proverbial powers of endurance of the Russian people throughout their troubled history are to be explained by their faithful adherence to their own, Russian worldview passed down to them over the centuries. In Il’in’s words, they were saved by walking ‘ne svorachivaia, po svoim iskonnym putiam’.[535]

[531] Rasputin, ‘“Nashi uchitelia teper’ iz porody potverzhe…”’, p. 7.
[532] Rasputin, ‘Vidimoe i nevidimoe’, p. 185.
[533] Ibid., p. 185.
[534] Rasputin, ‘“Nashi uchitelia teper’ iz porody potverzhe…”’, p. 3.
[535] Rasputin, ‘Vidimoe i nevidimoe’, p. 186.

Conclusion

The examination in this chapter of memory and the vision of an ideally whole world in Rasputin's writings since 1966 demonstrates a clear shift in the dimension of his concerns as a writer. In his stories of the 1960s and 1970s, memory appears as a moral imperative for the individual, a duty to one's own *rod* to ensure that the eternal chain of life remains intact. By the 1990s, memory has been transformed into a patriotic duty to revive and reinstate the nation's past and thus reconnect the broken chain of Russian history. In the early stories, attitudes to the past determined the moral worth of the characters and places created by Rasputin. In his more recent writings, the same idea is used to separate the 'real' Russian literary tradition - defined by its continuity – from the 'new' literature, understood as either postmodernist or Western. Political structures, educational systems and even the economy are judged by essentially these same criteria too: they are either conducted in a Russian way, or 'vse na chuzhoi maner'.[536] Bound up with this is the transposition of Rasputin's 'obraz edinogo mira', which initially encompassed the traditional understanding of human existence as a divine oneness of 'all souls' – the dead, the living and those not yet born. Over time, this image of wholeness takes on a political meaning in Rasputin's writing: it becomes the model on which the reborn Russian state should base itself in its return to its 'immemorial path'.

This transformation in Rasputin's worldview was, as has been demonstrated, influenced by his exposure to the ideas of Russia as 'tselostnyi' and 'sobornyi' put forward by Slavophiles from Khomiakov and Kireevskii to Dostoevskii and Il'in. The path from a general idealisation of the Russian past as both moral and ideally whole to a politically radicalised version of this is a well-trodden one. The politicisation of Rasputin's vision, one could argue, echoes the process by which early Slavophile dreams of *sobornost'* and the *obshchina* later turned into the pan-Slavism of the late 1860s and 1870s. One could also mention the radicalisation of one man against this background:

[536] Rasputin, 'Samaia bol'shaia beda literatury', p. 11.

Dostoevskii's move from what Scanlan has called 'pochvennichestvo without chauvinism' to his vision of a superior Russia with a messianic role to play in the world.[537] The reasons behind the repeated politicisation of the Russian past over the past two centuries are clearly complex and lie beyond the scope of this chapter. One can state, however, that for those rediscovering the Russian nation and history from the 1960s, 1917 represented at least the same break in Russian historical continuity as Peter's reforms did for the nineteenth-century Slavophiles. Against the background of what both Il'in and Rasputin perceive as the attempt to 'otmenit'' Russia and Russianness through the Revolution, memory and the past emerged as highly emotive concepts in late twentieth-century Russia.[538] It is within this context that memory develops from a guarantee of individual morality to an instrument for national salvation in Rasputin's writings.

[537] Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p. 201.
[538] Ivan Il'in, *Sobranie sochinenii: Kto my? O revoliutsii. O religioznom krizise nashikh dnei*, Moscow, 2001, p. 460. Rasputin, '"Nashi uchitelia teper' iz porody potverzhe…"', p. 4.

Chapter Four

In search of an artistic expression of *tselostnost'*: Andrei Tarkovskii

Introduction

> Образ – это некое уравнение, обозначающее отношение правды и истины к нашему сознанию, ограниченному эвклидовым пространством. Несмотря на то что мы не можем воспринимать мироздание в его целостности. Образ способен выразить эту целостность.[539]

The whole world in Tarkovskii's 'dark glass': *Offret* (1986)

In a central scene from Andrei Tarkovskii's final film, *Offret* (1986), Alexander is woken from a series of mysterious apocalyptic visions by the postman Otto, who appears to be telling him how he can avert an impending nuclear catastrophe. Otto leaves, and Alexander, who is still confused by the postman's strange message, gets up and studies the reproduction of Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi* hanging on the wall. The viewer has already seen this picture from various points of view – as a close-up of its detail, from a distance and barely discernible, as a mirror to the faces of Alexander and Otto, and as a dark space in a frame. Earlier on, in a close-up of the two men's heads together, looking intently, searchingly at the picture, Otto expresses his fear of it: 'I can't

[539] Andrei Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', in P.D. Volkova (ed.), *Andrei Tarkovskii: Arkhivy, dokumenty, vospominaniia*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 95-348 (p. 213).

see it clearly. It's behind glass and it's so dark.' Here, the picture appears in another variation which weaves together the previous images while adding a further dimension. Initially, we are presented with a close-up of the Madonna and Child. The camera then moves out and the painting becomes dimmer, partially obscured by the trees and sky reflected in the painting's glass. Finally, an image of Alexander himself is superimposed on the reflection of the outside world. Earlier shots show Alexander and Otto's faces mirrored quite clearly in the glass of the painting; here, by contrast, Alexander's image is so shadowy as to be almost a silhouette, the outline of a man.[540]

This arresting composition from *Offret* captures much of the spirit of the themes of *tselostnost'* and memory in Tarkovskii's work. Its extraordinary compression of images, ideas and allusions is a materialisation of his firm belief that the artistic image, and the cinematic image in particular, has the power to express the wholeness of being. In a diary entry for 5 January 1979, Tarkovskii writes: 'My raspiaty v odnoi ploskosti, a mir – mnogomeren. My eto chuvstvuem i stradaem ot nevozmozhnosti poznat' istinu…'.[541] For Tarkovskii, the human condition is at once an intriguing paradox and a tragedy. Through his very nature man has only limited perception, yet he senses the existence of an all-enveloping unity beyond the dimensions of the Euclidean space which he inhabits. Man's search for a glimpse of this unity takes him from art as a memory of humanity's attempts to express the wholeness of existence, through the mysteries of the natural world, and back to himself as part of an inscrutable whole. It is this dynamic which is encapsulated in the scene from *Offret*. Ultimately, however, for Tarkovskii man seems destined to remain poised on the brink of an epiphany: tantalised by sudden glimpses of the whole, forever straining to discern a form in the 'dark glass' of the world. This view of man is underlined by the allusion which Tarkovskii seems to make to I Corinthians 13 in Otto's reaction to the *Adoration of the Magi*. Otto's 'I can't see it clearly. It's behind glass and it's so dark' echoes the twelfth verse of I Corinthians 13:

[540] *Offret* [Zhertvoprinoshenie], dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Swedish Film Institute, 1986.
[541] Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 194.

> Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.[542]

In this connection, it is worth pointing out the wider relevance of the whole of I Corinthians 13 to Tarkovskii's exploration of the *tselostnost'* of truth throughout his films.[543] It is a text which is illuminating of different parts of this chapter's discussion of Tarkovskii's work. St Paul's rejection of the 'eloquence of men' as a 'gong booming or a cymbal clashing' is echoed in Tarkovskii's distrust of words as a medium to convey 'truth' in art and life.[544] The idea of love as never-ending, as that which 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things' is illuminating of the way in which human love appears as the source of a fleeting glimpse of the truth in Tarkovskii's films.[545] Finally, verses eight to ten repay particularly close attention:

> Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue forever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear.[546]

The passing away of the 'vanity' of human knowledge resonates with Tarkovskii's apocalyptic preoccupations, which are particularly evident in his later films. Further to this, however, St Paul's contrast of the earthly and the divine in terms of the imperfect and the perfect touches on Tarkovskii's conception of wholeness as an ideal state which exists in contrast with the disintegration of the human world.

In this chapter, it will be argued that *tselostnost'* and memory are themes which are integral not only to Tarkovskii's films, but also to his views on art, his cinematic aesthetic and his personal worldview. Indeed, Tarkovskii's

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[542] I Corinthians 13. 12, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[543] See also how Andrei Rublev quotes I Corinthians 13 almost in its entirety in the 'Strashnyi sud' episode of *Andrei Rublev*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1966.
[544] I Corinthians 13. 1, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[545] Ibid., I Corinthians 13. 7.
[546] Ibid., I Corinthians 13. 8-10.

preoccupation with these concepts arguably springs from his own vision of the world and then spills over into his conception of art and cinema, and ultimately into the narrative and form of his films. Tarkovskii's various writings and statements on the art of filmmaking, which have already inspired extensive critical debate, are the focus and material of the first part of the chapter. Discussion will focus in particular on Tarkovskii's view of the relationship between man and the universe; his understanding of the meaning of truth in art and for the artist; and on his cinematic aesthetic as a serious attempt to 'express the whole'. In Tarkovskii's writings on cinema, it will be argued, memory appears as particularly important to his development of a 'truthful' alternative to traditional linear narrative. Memory is also central to what might be termed Tarkovskii's artistic credo, which is discussed in the fourth and final section of Part One. In his artistic credo, which is evoked by the spirit of his father's poem 'Zhizn', zhizn'', [547] memory forms the 'countless threads' which link each and all over time and space despite the impression that human life is arbitrary, isolated and unconnected. This belief in the connectedness of all existence in turn influences both the form and the content of Tarkovskii's films, which in many ways attempt to reveal and affirm the whole which is so often obscured by the narrowness of human vision. Throughout the discussion of Part One, it will be argued that Tarkovskii's preoccupation with an ideal wholeness of existence reflects the concept of *tselostnost'* developed by Russian religious philosophers in the nineteenth century. Tarkovskii's diaries and other writings mention some of these philosophers in passing, but it seems likely that *tselostnost'* as an idea was primarily transmitted to Tarkovskii through the broader channels of Russian culture.

The second part of this chapter examines Tarkovskii's treatment of wholeness and memory in the narratives of his films. This is approached through a discussion of the motif of the journey in his films. This classical metaphor for human life and striving for the ideal reflects Tarkovskii's view of

[547] Arsenii Tarkovskii, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Moscow, 1998, pp. 197-98. For the full text of 'Zhizn', zhizn'', see the Appendix.

man, and of art, and is employed by him in ever different variations. Particular attention will be paid to three different variants of the journey of life: the 'false' path; the journey through space and memory in search of the whole; and life as a return to some common *nachalo*. In each case, it will be argued that the concept of *tselostnost'* from the Russian philosophical tradition is important to a fuller understanding of the way that Tarkovskii takes up the motif of the journey of life.

Comparatively speaking, more has been written on the subject of Tarkovskii's work than on virtually any other Soviet or Russian film director. It is hoped that the discussion in this chapter will make a contribution to the existing critical debate, extending and deepening understanding of the unusually multifaceted nature of Tarkovskii's art. The exploration of his writings and films through the prism of the Russian philosophical tradition and its emphasis on *tselostnost'* brings, it is contended, some important insights both into Tarkovskii's filmmaking method and into the detailed reading of the individual films.

Part One: Tarkovskii and the art of truthful filmmaking

I Man and the universe: Tarkovskii's worldview

One of the most immediately striking aspects of Tarkovskii's various writings and statements is the frequency with which he invokes the lofty term 'truth', as the four sections in Part One of this chapter will demonstrate. In the last interview he gave before his death, in 1986, Tarkovskii stated 'Mne kazhetsia, chto chelovecheskoe sushchestvo sozdano dlia togo, chtoby zhit'. Zhit' na puti k istine.'[548] For Tarkovskii, while man will always be 'raspiat v odnoi ploskosti', he is impelled forever to seek the truth, understood by

[548] Andrei Tarkovskii, 'Poslednee interv'iu', in N.M. Zorkaia and others (eds.), *Mir i fil'my Andreia Tarkovskogo: Razmyshleniia, issledovaniia, vospominaniia, pis'ma*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 323-26 (p.324).

Tarkovskii as the *tselostnost'* of the universe, of all being. In *Zapechatlennoe vremia,* Tarkovskii is quite specific about the nature of this path towards truth, stating that

> В определенном смысле индивид каждый раз заново познает и жизнь в самом своем существе, и самого себя, и свои цели. Конечно, человек пользуется всей суммой накопленных человечеством знаний, но все-таки опыт этического, нравственного самопознания является единственной целью жизни каждого и *субъективно* переживается всякий раз заново. Человек снова и снова соотносит себя с миром, мучительно жаждая обретения и совмещения с внеположенным ему идеалом, который он постигает как некое интуитивно-ощущаемое начало. В недостижимости такого совмещения, недостаточности своего собственнного 'Я' – вечный источник человеческой неудовлетворенности и страдания.[549]

The path to truth emerges here as a personal 'way of the cross' whereby each man's experience is a unique variation on an eternal pattern. The most important characteristic of this journey is that man is involved in a constant attempt to 'relate himself to the world', to understand his existence as a part of a whole which he cannot grasp but to which he is bound. This whole is described by Tarkovskii as a 'nachalo', a beginning which is intuited by man and with which he longs in vain to be united.

Tarkovskii also argues that 'S togo momenta, kogda Eva s''ela iabloko s dreva poznaniia, chelovechestvo bylo obrecheno na beskonechnoe stremlenie k istine.'[550] In essence, Tarkovskii understands the universe as an ideal unity from which man severed himself at Eden, giving rise to his tormented attempts to reunite himself with the whole. This view of the world reflects the influence of Russia's nineteenth-century religious philosophers in two important ways. Firstly, it clearly reflects the idea of man's 'fall' from an original wholeness expressed by Kireevskii and afterwards Solov'ev. Secondly, in broader terms Tarkovskii's conception of life as a personal way of the cross reflects the anthropocentric emphasis of Russian thought as defined by Zen'kovskii:

[549] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 132.
[550] Ibid., p. 132.

> Русская философия не теоцентрична (хотя в значительной части своих представителей глубоко и существенно религиозна), не космоцентрична (хотя вопросы натур-философии очень рано привлекали к себе внимание русских философов), она больше всего занята темой о человеке, о его судьбе и путях, о смысле и целях истории.[551]

Man stands at the very centre of Tarkovskii's world, despite the importance of religion and faith in his writings and films, and his interpretation of the Christian motif of life as the way of the cross is a good example of the dominance of the anthropocentric over the theocentric in his work. Tarkovskii emphasises Christ's way of the cross as a model which every human is fated to follow individually. It appears as a path with all its stations and suffering, in which the most important aspect (from a religious point of view) – the resurrection and salvation of man through this one act – is secondary. Even in Tarkovskii's last two films, *Nostalghia* [Nostal'giia] (1981-1982) and *Offret* (1986), where, as will be argued later in this chapter, the act of self-sacrifice is connected with the idea of redemption, the focus remains firmly on the human element of the act rather than the divine.[552]

II Tarkovskii on art and truth

> Каждый художник во время своего пребывания на земле находит и оставляет после себя какую-то частицу правды о цивилизации, о человечестве. […]. Художник свидетельствует об истине, о своей правде мира. Художник должен быть уверен, что он и его творчество соответствуют правде.[553]

> я сторонник искусства, несущего в себе *тоску по идеалу*, выражающего стремление к нему.[554]

Tarkovskii's writings are punctuated by references to art's mission to express some ultimate truth and to the artist's role as witness to the truth. The

[551] Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, I-1, p. 16.
[552] *Nostalghia* [Nostal'giia], dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, RAI TV Rete 2 and Sovinfil'm, 1981-1982.
[553] Tarkovskii, 'Poslednee interv'iu', p. 323.
[554] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 313.

uncompromising and elevated style and tone of many of these statements has often served to distract from their content. Depending on the reader, they have been interpreted variously as self-evident truths about the higher calling of art, or incomprehensible views based on an outmoded and somewhat pompous vision of the role of art and artist in society. However, if examined together with his worldview and his cinematic aesthetic, these views emerge as part of a consistent, sustained attempt to perceive an absolute and *tselostnyi* truth. If man, in Tarkovskii's view, is driven to seek the whole despite his innately limited perception, then art, as one of humankind's greatest modes of expression and investigation, contains the same striving and the same limitation, while yet offering something more. Just as man has his eternal 'toska po tselostnosti sushchestvovaniia', art encompasses an essential 'toska po idealu', and is thus always an attempt to 'express the whole', even though each separate attempt remains necessarily partial, 'svoia pravda mira'.[555] Tarkovskii's definition of the artistic image, quoted at the opening of this chapter, is an unequivocal statement of faith in the role of art as man's best chance of glimpsing the whole. Despite man's inability to perceive the universe in its wholeness, the artistic image as such has the power to 'express the whole'; it can open a window onto the beyond.

Of particular relevance to a deeper understanding of Tarkovskii's views on the relationship between art and truth is what one could call his 'theory of spheres' expounded in the second chapter of *Zapechatlennoe vremia*, entitled 'Iskusstvo – toska po idealu'. Having stated his view that man is constantly relating himself to the world, Tarkovskii goes on to argue that 'iskusstvo, kak i nauka, iavliaetsia sposobom osvoeniia mira, orudiem ego poznaniia na puti dvizheniia cheloveka k tak nazyvaemoi "absoliutnoi istine".'[556] He insists, however, on the fundamental differences between the scientific and artistic modes of understanding the world. If science approaches the apprehension of

[555] See Tarkovskii's comments on *Nostalghia* as expressing man's 'global'naia toska po tselostnosti sushchestvovaniia', 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 325. This is quoted in full at the beginning of Part Two below.
[556] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 133.

truth as a more or less linear process of accumulating a series of 'objective' truths through separate scientific discoveries which frequently contradict one another, then the aesthetic approach is quite the other way round. Instead of concentrating on the objective but necessarily partial, the artistic work is always a 'new and unique image of the world', a 'hieroglyph of absolute truth', the impulse to capture the workings of the universe as a unity, individual and 'subjective' as this may be.[557] Tarkovskii formulates this opposition in spatial terms:

> И если позитивистское научное и холодное познание действительности представляет собою как бы восхождение по нескончаемым ступеням, то художественное – напоминает бесконечную систему внутренне завершенных и замкнутых сфер. Они могут дополнять друг друга и друг друга противоречить, но они не отменяют друг друга ни при каких обстоятельствах – напротив, они словно обогащают друг друга и, накапливаясь, образуют особую сверхобщую сферу, разрастающуюся в бесконечность.[558]

The clear distinction which Tarkovskii makes here between the artistic and scientific perceptions of the world and their relative 'truth value' echoes Russian philosophy's development of the concept of *tselostnost'* in several ways. In the first place, it recalls Kireevskii's and Khomiakov's epistemological theories, with their emphasis on the need for *tsel'noe znanie* in order to perceive the 'tsel'naia istina'. Secondly, Tarkovskii's description of scientific knowledge here echoes their critique of the rational West as 'odnostoronnyi' and therefore limited.

Tarkovskii's vision of art as an infinite system of complete spheres is illuminating of the way in which the concept of *tselostnost'* informs both his theories on cinema as a specific art form, and his theories on art as a whole. Referring to cinema in particular, Tarkovskii writes:

> оно [cinema, C. M-R] возникло, чтобы выразить особую специфическую часть жизни, часть Вселенной, которая до этого

[557] Ibid., p. 133.
[558] Ibid., p. 135.

> осмыслена не была и до поры не могла быть выражена другими жанрами искусства.[559]

In Tarkovskii's view, each art form is like one of the spheres, complete and separate in itself, with a unique potential to illuminate a particular side of the overarching truth.[560] Seen in this light, Tarkovskii's insistence on the 'separateness' of cinema is more than an attempt to force acknowledgment of cinema's equal status with older art forms. Rather, Tarkovskii is objecting to what he sees as the overly dependent relationship cinema has had with other arts since its inception. In using film as a screen onto which to project a visual version of other arts, literature or painting, for example, filmmakers were failing to exploit cinema's unique potential as an art form to explore the truth.[561] Tarkovskii's reservations about the traditional use of music in film are also informed by these considerations. Beyond a number of general reasons he cites for rethinking the role of music in film, Tarkovskii notes that:

> если говорить строго, то мир, трансформированный кинематографом, и мир трансформированный музыкой, – это параллельные миры, находящиеся в конфликте.[562]

As far as art in general in concerned, if one returns to Tarkovskii's assertion that every artist leaves behind him 'kakaia-to chastitsa pravdy', and bears witness to 'svoia pravda mira', it can be argued that he envisions the entire history of human art as a constellation of spheres, each one representing a separate and unique attempt to articulate the all, each one an artist's 'chastitsa pravdy'.[563] Referring to film in particular, Tarkovskii asserts:

> Любая картина, любое произведение в конечном счете стремится к какому-то идеалу, но, как правило, никогда его не достигает, в каком-то смысле отражая проблему иллюзорности абсолютной истины, к которой она стремится. Поэтому я и говорил об отсутствии совершенного произведения искусства.[564]

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[559] Ibid., p. 185.
[560] See also Tarkovskii's comment that 'Kazhdoe iz iskusstv zhivet i rozhdaetsia po svoim sobstvennym zakonam': 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 160.
[561] See especially the discussion of this in ibid., pp. 115-16 and p. 164.
[562] Ibid., pp. 277-78.
[563] Tarkovskii, 'Poslednee interv'iu', p. 323, cited at the beginning of this section.
[564] Andrei Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinoreshissure', in M. Rostotskaia (ed.), *Andrei Tarkovskii: Nachalo… i puti: Vospominaniia, interv'iu, lektsii, stat'i,* Moscow, 1994, pp. 81-155 (p. 123).

Moreover,

> Достигнуть *правды* кинематографического образа – это только слово, название мечты, констатация стремления, которое, однако, всякий раз, реализовавшись, продемонстрирует специфичность отбора, предпринятого режиссером, индивидуальное в его позиции.[565]

By definition, then, although a work of art can never express the entire truth of the universe because of man's innately limited perception, if it aspires to this aim it has its own completeness: that of a personal vision and truth. It is only by taking the sum of these personal truths, which in this case would be all the films of different directors, that one can approximate the truth of reality. The expression of an ultimate truth through art appears here as an endeavour that is at once necessarily personal and collective: each work of art in itself is a partial truth, but as a whole, the history of art is an accumulation of different views of the universe which add to human knowledge and understanding. This vision of art throws light on one of the seeming paradoxes of Tarkovskii's work, namely that his avowal of the uniqueness of cinema, and indeed of every other art form, goes hand in hand with the wide use of 'quotations' from the other arts in his films. It is possible to interpret Tarkovskii's fondness for cultural references as stemming from his insistence on cinema's right to a place among the high arts along with painting, music and literature, or indeed as his personal claim to be considered on the same level as the great classical artists whom he quotes. When seen in the context of the history of human art as an endless system of spheres, however, another reading is suggested. His demand that his films are considered alongside the great masterpieces of art history, and perhaps even that he himself as artist should stand beside the great masters themselves, is a statement of his beliefs about the nature of human art as a collective search for truth which started at the beginning of the world and will continue into eternity. He invokes works of Bach, Pergolesi, Dante, Dostoevskii, Leonardo and Bruegel as landmarks in the history of man's attempt to express the entirety of

[565] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 192.

the universe through art. Each work is like one of the spheres, a unity in itself with its own intimation of the truth, located at different points of a larger sphere, where Tarkovskii's films are also to be found.[566]

III Tarkovskii's cinematic method: ways of expressing the whole

> Прежде всего, я стремлюсь к максимальной правдивости всего происходящего на экране.[567]

In *Zapechatlennoe vremia*, Tarkovskii writes of *Zerkalo* (1974) 'v kartine net nikakogo drugogo zapriatannogo, zashifrovannogo smysla, krome *zhelaniia govorit' pravdu*.' [568] This remark could be applied to any one of Tarkovskii's films, and his writings about his own experience of filmmaking are filled with references to *pravdopodobie* [verisimilitude] and *pravdivost'* [truthfulness]. Indeed, it could be argued that his entire aesthetic as it develops through his filmmaking career hinges on a search for the most successful cinematic means to achieve this *pravdopodobie*, conceived of as a proximity to the *tselostnost'* of the universe. In this sense, Tarkovskii's views on art and truth discussed above emerge as far more than an abstract position. Indeed, Tarkovskii's films can be seen as a deeply serious attempt to realise the ideas expressed in these statements about art. This section explores a number of aspects of Tarkovskii's ongoing experimentation with the expression of reality in its *tselostnost'* in film: the 'creation' of one's own world on screen; the attempt to realise the innate *neposredstvennost'* [immediacy] of film; and the search for a more 'truthful' form of narrative.

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[566] For a discussion of *tselostnost'* as a key characterstic of the artistic masterpiece, see 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 143.
[567] Andrei Tarkovskii, '"Ia stremlius' k maksimal'noi pravdivosti…"', in Rostotskaia (ed.), *Andrei Tarkovskii*, pp. 37-44 (p. 37).
[568] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 248. The italics are Tarkovskii's. *Zerkalo*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1974.

The creation of a *tselostnyi mir*

> [Мне] нравится не столько реконструировать окружающую действительность перед обьективом аппарата, сколько создавать свой собственный мир.[569]

In his 'theory of spheres', Tarkovskii describes the artistic, as opposed to the scientific, 'discovery' of truth as 'kazhdyi raz kak novyi i unikal'nyi obraz mira'.[570] His discussions of his own cinematic practice suggest that this image of truth is achieved through what Tarkovskii calls the artist's 'creation of his own world'. Tarkovskii sees this ideal as embodied in his own work and also in that of the filmmaker for whom he expressed most admiration, Robert Bresson:

> Он превращается в своих картинах в демиурга, в создателя какого-то мира, который почти уже превращается в реальность, поскольку там нет ничего, где бы вы могли обнаружить искусственность, нарочитость или нарушение какого-то единства.[571]

Tarkovskii's insistence on the divide between 'rezhissery-realisty' who 'reconstruct' the reality around them and directors who are 'sozdateli mira' can be seen as an extension of his views on the divisions between artistic and scientific perception of the truth.[572] In cinematic practice, attempts at a 'photographic', ostensibly 'comprehensive' reproduction of reality will remain necessarily partial, a painstaking accumulation of facts which is both incomplete and lacking any unity. Paradoxically, what is generally considered to be 'objective' appears entirely divorced from reality and subjective:

> Можно документально разыграть сцену, натуралистически точно одеть персонажей, добиться наружной схожести с подлинной жизнью, и все же возникшая картина в результате окажется очень далекой от реальности и будет выглядеть вполне условной, то есть не похожей на нее буквально, несмотря на то, что именно условности хотел избежать автор.[573]

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[569] Tarkovskii, quoted in O. Musienko, 'Tarkovskii i idei "filosofii sushchestvovaniia"', in Zorkaia (ed.), *Mir i fil'my Andreia Tarkovskogo*, pp. 268-73 (p. 272).
[570] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 133.
[571] Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinorezhissure', p. 121.
[572] Ol'ga Surkova, *Tarkovskii i ia: Dnevnik pionerki*, Moscow, 2002, p. 342.
[573] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 114.

In this connection, one should note the importance Tarkovskii ascribes to the concept of 'real'nost'' in his comments on his own method of filmmaking. Reality is not a documentation of the 'okruzhaiushchaia deistvitel'nost'', but the filmmaker's own 'truth', and its faithful expression is the filmmaker's ideal. Just as truth in general is infinitely greater than the sum of separate, apparently objective truths, so reality in its entirety goes far beyond the recording of the detail of what is 'seen'. For Tarkovskii, cinema should be 'kak mozhno blizhe k zhizni'[574], even a 'vtoraia real'nost'[575], but crucially, he argues that 'Dlia menia pravdopodobie i vnutrenniaia pravda zakliuchaiutsia ne tol'ko v vernosti faktu, no i v vernosti peredachi oshchushcheniia.'[576] Thus the goal of creating a 'realistic', truthful film involves an attempt to recreate the *feeling* of the 'all' of life, and this recording of perception in all its inevitable subjectivity and partiality comes closest to the truth.[577] As Tarkovskii's comment on Bresson makes clear, it is the individual artistic vision which, in its integrity and unity, has the power to approximate reality.

Neposredstvennost' and film

> Поэт - это человек с воображением и психологией ребенка, его впечатление от мира остается непосредственным, какими бы глубокими идеями об этом мире он ни руководствовался. То есть он не пользуется 'описанием' мира – он его создает.[578]

Within the overall framework of the ambition to 'create whole worlds' on screen, Tarkovskii explores some specific means by which this might be achieved. In his writings, he also refers to directors who create whole worlds as 'poets', and frequently compares his own work to poetry. The influence of the poetic form on Tarkovskii's films is significant, and will be discussed in detail

[574] Ibid., p. 115.
[575] Ibid., p. 296.
[576] Ibid., p. 116.
[577] See also the French director Olivier Assayas' comment that '[…] the object of cinema is not to film the real, but to film *perception*' in Bérénice Reynaud, 'Tarkovsky: Seeing is Believing', *Sight and Sound*, 7, 1997, 1, pp. 24-25 (p. 24). The emphasis is Assayas'.
[578] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 139.

in the section on narrative below. The poetic analogy is, however, also central to his discussion of *neposredstvennost'* [immediacy], which he sees as a defining feature of the cinematic form, one which is crucial to his vision of expressing the whole. It emerges as the key to capturing the 'reality of perception' that is Tarkovskii's ideal. In the context of cinema, Tarkovskii's understanding of the term *neposredstvennost'* is quite specific: 'kinematograf i muzyku ia otnoshu k *neposredstvennym* iskusstvam, ne nuzhdaiushchimsia v oposredovannom iazyke.'[579] *Neposredstvennost'* for Tarkovskii refers to the idea that cinema, like music, is quite literally 'unmediated' by language, and for Tarkovskii this gives both these art forms unique possibilities in terms of capturing the truth of reality.[580] This special relationship to 'reality' is emphasised in his comment that 'Fil'm rozhdaetsia iz neposredstvennogo nabliudeniia nad zhizn'iu'[581], and also his assertion that 'Khochu eshche raz pocherknut', chto vsled za muzykoi kino eshche odno iskusstvo, operiruiushchee real'nost'iu.'[582]

The loss of cinema's innate *neposredstvennost'* is fundamental to Tarkovskii's criticism of the way cinema as an art form developed in the twentieth century. Cinema, for Tarkovskii, has had the fatal if understandable tendency to imitation of other, more well-established art forms, which it has merely transposed onto the screen. He argues that:

> Одним из последствий в таких случаях является частичная утрата фильмом непосредственности воплощения действительности своими средствами – без трансформации жизни с помощью литературы, живописи или театра.[583]

In borrowing from other art forms, the filmmaker not only fails to make use of cinema's unique immediacy, but also constructs an additional barrier between his art and the reality which he is trying to express:

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[579] Ibid., p. 296.
[580] See Tarkovskii's comments on the principle difference between literature and cinema: 'literatura opisyvaet mir pri pomoshchi iazyka, a kino iazyka ne imeet. Eto neposredstvenno demonstriruiet nam samoe sebia'. 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 160.
[581] Ibid., p. 167.
[582] Ibid., p. 297.
[583] Ibid., p. 115.

> Между ними возникают посредники в виде решений, осуществленных более старыми искусствами. В частности, это мешает воссоздать в кино жизнь такой, какой человек ощущает ее и видит, то есть подлинной.[584]

Tarkovskii's attempt to exploit the innate *neposredstvennost'* of the cinematic form is most obvious in two areas of his cinematic method: his distrust of words and consequent aim to prioritise visual means of expression, and his treatment of the aural realm and music. In Tarkovskii's last film, *Offret*, the failings of human speech as a means of expression are set against the concept of the original, biblical Word. This is reflected in Alexander's despairing citation from *Hamlet* '"Words, words, words!"' and his quotation from the opening of St John's Gospel '"In the beginning was the Word"'. On his conception of the film, Tarkovskii noted that:

> What I wanted was to pose questions and demonstrate problems that go to the very heart of our lives and thus to bring the audience back to the dormant, parched sources of our existence. Pictures, visual images, are far better able to achieve that end than any words, particularly now, when the word has lost all mystery and magic and speech has become mere chatter, empty of meaning, as Alexander observes.[585]

Words as a conduit of truth are also treated with distrust in the narratives of Tarkovskii's earlier films. In *Andrei Rublev* (1966), Rublev takes an actual vow of silence, and in most of Tarkovskii's films his characters frequently fail to communicate verbally with one another. In *Zerkalo* (1974), during the uncomfortable telephone conversation between the invisible narrator and his mother, the former complains that '"Slova ne mogut peredat' vsego, chto chelovek chuvstvuet, oni vialye."' In *Stalker* (1979), the Writer echoes this when he notes the tendency of things to 'melt away' once formulated: they 'vanish and dissolve as soon as one has given them a name'.[586] Paradoxically,

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[584] Ibid., p. 116.
[585] Andrei Tarkovskii, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair, Austin, TX, 1994, p. 228. The quotation is from the ninth and final chapter on *Offret* which is omitted in the Russian *Zapechatlennoe vremia*.
[586] *Stalker*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1979. See also the conversation between the bathers from the the published screenplay of *Nostalghia*: '"It would be much better if everyone spoke the same language."

as has been noted by a number of commentators, Tarkovskii's films actually became more reliant on verbal means of expression as time went on, culminating in *Offret,* where the very rejection of words as a conveyer of meaning is set out in the most extensive philosophical dialogue of any of Tarkovskii's films. This shift from the visual to the verbal has frequently been judged detrimental to the quality of the films, explaining in some part why *Nostalghia* and *Offret* are the least popular of Tarkovskii's films. Speculation as to the causes of this development has tended to focus on the idea that, as time went on, Tarkovskii felt the need to communicate certain views with increasing urgency and directness, and attempts to do this via predominantly visual means proved inadequate. In this connection one could argue that Tarkovskii's preoccupation with *tselostnost'* follows this trend. His expression of this theme becomes more overt over time and appears ever more emphatically through dialogue.[587]

As has been seen, Tarkovskii saw cinema as sharing its innate *neposredstvennost'* with music. In addition, according to his 'theory of spheres', music is an independent art form with its distinct approach to expressing truth, and is therefore 'parallel' or even 'conflicting with' cinema.[588] These two related ideas underlie Tarkovskii's rejection of the traditional use of music in film. Following the same reasoning behind his objection to the transposition of literature, theatre and painting onto the screen, Tarkovskii argues that in overlaying a film with music the cinematic image is prevented from speaking in its 'own' language and thus reaching its own, unique truth of reality. More specifically, Tarkovskii argues that

> инструментальная музыка настолько самостоятельна как искусство, что ей гораздо труднее раствориться в фильме, стать его органической частью. Так что применение ее – по существу всегда компромисс, ибо оно всегда иллюстративно.[589]

"Of course, it's a babel." "People would be happier if it weren't for speech. Speech divides people."' This dialogue was not included in the final version of the film. Andrei Tarkovskii, *Collected Screenplays,* trans. William Powell and Natasha Synessios, London, 1999, p. 479.

[587] See the discussion in Part Two of this chapter.

[588] See discussion of this in II: 'Tarkovskii on art and truth' above.

[589] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 280.

The traditional use of music is in fact incompatible with his attempt to create his ideal of the *tselostnyi* world in each film: its very completeness and independence clash with the aim to make an organic whole. In theory, then, the only role left for instrumental music in film is as a part of what he calls the 'zvuchashchaia real'nost', zapechatlennaia v kadre', by which he seems to refer to pieces of music appearing as part of the cultural and contextual material of the plots of his films.[590] It is these considerations which informed Tarkovskii's experimentation over the course of his career with the broader realm of sound in film, his project to 'zastavit' zazvuchat' kinematograficheskii obraz po-nastoiashchemu polno i ob''emno'.[591] He states that

> Образ мира возникает, как известно, не только благодаря зрению, но и слуху. Поэтому звучащую реальность, вероятно, надо использовать так же, как и изобразительный ряд, где мы создаем массу концепций. Как правило, никто не умеет работать со звуком так, чтобы он становился равноправным ингредиентом кинообраза.[592]

Tarkovskii's attempt to capture the aural alongside the visual reality of the world can thus be understood as an integral part of his aim to work with the unique possibilities of cinema as an art form to express the 'mirozdanie v ego tselostnosti'. In recreating the reality of perception, the use of the aural realm alongside the visual and verbal expands significantly the range of each film, forming what Tarkovskii termed a 'novaia tselostnost''.[593]

In terms of the actual realisation of these principles in practice, Tarkovskii was far more successful in exploiting cinema's *neposredstvennost'* in his work to transform the aural realm than he was in overcoming the mediating effect of words. After what Julian Graffy terms the 'crassly illustrative music' of the first three films, from *Zerkalo* on Tarkovskii's

[590] Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinorezhissure', p. 130.
[591] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 277.
[592] Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinorezhissure', pp. 130-31.
[593] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 276.

soundtracks are increasingly based on what one might call a *shum mira*.[594] They employ a huge span of natural and electronic sounds. In her discussion of *Zerkalo*, Natasha Synessios argues that 'Artemiev created not a musical composition, but a realm of sound, which underlay the image and was suggestive of an invisible, but existing reality.'[595] She also points out that if heard without the film, the soundtrack of *Zerkalo* is far more extensive than one would suspect, and sees in this: 'evidence of the organic way it has been married to the image.'[596] The extent to which Tarkovskii achieved his dream of 'giving a voice' to the cinematic image, making sound an equal and integral part of it, is open to debate and certainly varies from film to film, from image to image. This was, after all, a process of experimentation on Tarkovskii's part. However, it is arguable that the widely acknowledged universal quality of his films owes much to his success in precisely this field. The intuitive sense of recognition and identification experienced by many viewers of Tarkovskii's films, in spite of the many specifically Russian cultural references which they contain, seems to be connected with their 'vernost' peredachi oshchushcheniia', creating a truly unmediated sense of reality.[597]

Narrative and truth

> Нам хотелось бы уйти от традиционной драматургии с ее канонической завершенностью, с ее логически-формальным схематизмом, так часто мешающим выразить сложность и полноту жизни.[598]

A central element of Tarkovskii's search to express the whole in his films is formed by his experimentation with narrative. As the above comment on *Andrei Rublev* indicates, Tarkovskii was concerned with issues of narrative

[594] Julian Graffy, 'Tarkovsky: The Weight of the World', *Sight and Sound*, 7, 1997, 1, pp. 18-22 (p. 20).
[595] Synessios, *Mirror*, p. 57.
[596] Ibid., p. 56.
[597] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 116. See above discussion in the section 'The creation of a *tselostnyi mir*'.
[598] Tarkovskii talking about *Andrei Rublev*, in Andrei Tarkovskii, 'Iskat' i dobivat'sia', *Sovetskii ekran*, 1962, 17, p. 9 and p. 20 (p.9).

from very early on in his career. Although this should be seen in the wider context of the questioning of the validity of classical linear narrative in Western European culture and thought at that time, Tarkovskii's discussions on narrative are shaped in significant ways by the discourse on *tselostnost'* in Russian religious philosophy. His fundamental objection to classical, linear narrative is essentially based on its incompatibility, as he sees it, with the ideal of expressing the wholeness of reality. This echoes his more general rejection of a rational, logical approach to apprehending truth which he associates with science in his 'theory of spheres'. Traditional, linear narrative can only artificially simplify and thus distort what is an endlessly complex and multifaceted reality. In such a case, Tarkovskii argues, what emerges is randomly produced and entirely arbitrary, where 'logika sviazei zizhdetsia na uproshchenii zhiznennoi slozhnosti.'[599]

Tarkovskii's writings demonstrate his intense interest in developing an alternative type of narrative, one which would contribute to his aim of achieving a maximum of *pravdopodobie* in his art. The important links Tarkovskii saw between poetry, music and cinema have already been mentioned, and it appears that both music and poetry informed Tarkovskii's search for an alternative narrative structure. He notes the importance of what he terms the 'logika muzykal'nykh zakonov: tema, antitema, razrabotka' which, he argues, underlay the structure of *Zerkalo*.[600] However, and perhaps unsurprisingly for the son of a poet, it is the poetic form which features most prominently in Tarkovskii's discussion of narrative. He argues that

> В кино меня чрезвычайно прельщают поэтические связи, логика поэзии. Она, мне кажется, более соответствует возможностям кинематографа как самого правдивого и поэтического из искусств.
>
> Во всяком случае, мне она более близка, чем традиционная драматургия, где связываются образы путем прямолинейного, логически-последовательного развития сюжета.[601]

[599] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 112.
[600] Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinorezhissure', p. 95.
[601] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', pp. 111-12.

Critical opinion has frequently associated Tarkovskii's filmmaking with the poetic form. On the most general level, his work has been seen as belonging to what is known as the 'poetic cinema', a link which Tarkovskii emphatically rejected.[602] Maya Turovskaya's book, entitled in its English version *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, sees Tarkovskii's cinema as one of poetry rather than prose in the sense of Viktor Shklovskii's definition, and notes how with each successive film the importance of external plot to the structure recedes, as internal content moves ever more into the foreground. If *Katok i skripka* (1960) and *Ivanovo detstvo* (1962) still rely on a predominantly logical narrative structure, Tarkovskii's subsequent films are associative in structure.[603] Peter Green sees the poetic element of Tarkovskii's films as lying more in his concentrated use of imagery, arguing that

> Their true poetry lies in the concentration of images, sometimes allusive or associative, sometimes reinforcing an idea, compressing further layers of meaning into a scene without extending its length – a distillation of cinematographic expression.[604]

The analogy drawn here between poetry's economy of language, its use of a limited number of very specific images to suggest the universal, and Tarkovskii's films is an important one, as will be seen in Part Two of this chapter. In terms of Tarkovskii's reflections on narrative, however, it is the associative character of poetry which is of key significance, for:

> Рождение и развитие мысли подчиняются особым закономерностям. Для своего выражения они требуют подчас формы, отличающейся от логически-умозрительных построений. На мой взгляд, поэтическая логика ближе к закономерности развития мысли, а значит, и к самой жизни, чем логика традиционной драматургии.[605]

In its associative structure, poetry mimics the functioning of human perception, and is crucial to Tarkovskii's attempt to allow the 'raskrytie logiki

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[602] See Robert Bird's discussion of Tarkovskii and poetic cinema in Robert Bird, *Andrei Tarkovsky: Elements of Cinema*, London, 2008, pp. 13-16.
[603] Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, trans. Natasha Ward and edited and introduced by Ian Christie, London, 1989, pp. 99-101. *Katok i skripka*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1960, and *Ivanovo detstvo*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1962.
[604] Peter Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky: The Winding Quest*, London, 1993, p. 10.
[605] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 112.

myshleniia'.[606] He writes of the need to find a 'printsip montazha, kotoryi pomog by izlozhit' ne siuzhetnuiu logiku, a logiku sub''ektivnogo (mysl', mechta, vospominanie)'.[607] This logic of human thinking, a kind of 'logic of memory', takes as its source all that is rejected by the rational approach: it springs from the irrational, internal and subjective aspect of humanity which Tarkovskii views as ultimately more truthful, and eschews spurious external, superficial links. Tarkovskii's mention of thoughts, dreams and memories as examples of the workings of such a 'subjective logic' is confirmed by his films, where all these elements play an important structural role. All three are different expressions of what Tarkovskii believes to be the essentially associative nature of human perception of the universe.

On a general level, then, Tarkovskii attempted to structure the material of his films by employing an associative logic based on memory and 'human thinking'. This, in his opinion, would facilitate a more truthful expression of human reality, one which would dispense with the 'schematic' shortcomings he attributed to traditional narrative structures. However, Tarkovskii's writings and films also show evidence of an ambition to work differently with other, more specific aspects of narrative. In this connection, Tarkovskii's criticism of traditional narrative's 'kanonicheskaia zavershennost'' is important, for in his films Tarkovskii appears as constantly engaged in the process of not 'saying all', of purposely leaving his narratives open. In his study of *Andrei Rublev*, Robert Bird argues that Tarkovskii developed an 'aesthetics of discontinuity' in the film.[608] In his detailed analysis of the film's production history, he finds evidence to support the idea that Tarkovskii deliberately chose discontinuity over 'completeness' in the film's narrative. He cites Tarkovskii's 'tendency to obscure narrative connections and stress non-narrative visual motifs and images' as the main point of contention between Tarkovskii and Andron Mikhalkov-Konchalovskii in their work on the film. Mikhalkov-Konchalovskii

[606] Ibid., p. 112.
[607] Tarkovskii, 'Iskat' i dobivat'sia', p. 20.
[608] Robert Bird, *Andrei Rublev*, London, 2004, p. 61.

claimed that Tarkovskii's goal was to 'destroy the structure' of the film.[609] Furthermore, Bird argues convincingly that the protracted controversy which surrounded the making and final release of *Andrei Rublev* can be attributed far more to Tarkovskii's 'startling manner of storytelling' than to any ideological considerations.[610] That this was the case is proved by the changes made by Tarkovskii in editing the original 205-minute version of the film down to the final 185-minute one accepted for release. In addition to the well-documented cuts of scenes and sequences, Tarkovskii made a series of subtle but significant changes to the overall shape of the film. Drawing attention to the introduction of a number of more traditional narrative cues between sequences, both aural and visual, Bird suggests that the 185-minute version of the film can be understood as 'a retreat into more explicit narrative causation', which in turn sheds light on Tarkovskii's choice of scenes to be excluded from the second edit. Hence, for example, the disappearance of a number of Andrei's flashbacks and visions, which had given the film a more complex and ambiguous narrative point of view.[611]

Tarkovskii's preoccupation with avoiding 'completeness' in his films can be seen in many aspects of his cinematic practice. His statements on the problem of colour in film are one example of this. He argues that

> Необходимо наконец серьезно задуматься о парадоксе цвета в кино, чрезвычайно затрудняющего воспроизведение *доподлинного* ощущения правды на экране.
> […].
> *Живописность* кинематографического кадра (очень часто просто механическая, объясняемая свойством пленки) нагружает изображение *еще одной дополнительной условностью*, которую приходится преодолевать, если тебе важна жизненная достоверность. Цвет надо стараться нейтрализировать, избегая активности его воздействия на зрителя.[612]

Thus, for Tarkovskii, instead of creating an artistic image which is closer to reality, colour paradoxically distances the filmmaker from this objective,

[609] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[610] Ibid., p. 7.
[611] Ibid., pp. 32-35.
[612] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 254. Tarkovskii's emphasis.

instead producing a sense of 'fal'sh''.[613] Since the actual physiological perception of colour is so personal, the attempt to reproduce it on screen through the limited palette of technology is misguided. Instead of making it more 'real', and thus more universal, it in fact acts to narrow down the cinematic image into 'one dimension', thus leading to a narrow subjectivity. Black-and-white film, in its colour neutrality, is 'blizhe k psikhologicheskoi, naturalisticheskoi i poeticheskoi pravde iskusstva' precisely because it does not have the pretension of expressing the all, leaving this open to the viewer's perception.[614]

Tarkovskii seems to have been guided by similar considerations in his attitude to working with actors, whom he frequently accused of 'overplaying', of an 'expressiveness' that was achieved at the expense of the all-important 'truthfulness'.[615] In a parallel to his criticism of the modern tendency to an expressive interpretation of Bach which, in his opinion, not only detracts from the beauty of the music itself, but also narrows down its universality and polyphony, Tarkovskii saw an expressive style of acting as leading to a subjectivity at odds with the kind of openness he sought in his films.[616] Instead of working to express a thought for the viewer, the actor has quite simply to be absolutely sincere and truthful in his behaviour, in accordance with the scenario. As with Bach, by 'playing straight' the artist will ultimately achieve a more truthful and thus more universal result. In this Tarkovskii is attempting to reveal what he saw as the essence of human experience of the world: an endless multiplicity of phenomena and outcomes which neither man nor artist can grasp, and which constitute the genuine 'truth' of reality.

Integral to these views on colour, music and acting is Tarkovskii's insistence on the importance of the viewer to his narratives. He argued that the use of poetic, associative links in narrative 'activates' the viewer, forcing his involvement in a way that a more complete, linear narrative offering ready

[613] See also Peter Green on Tarkovskii's fear of the 'false realism' produced by the dominating role of colour in film. Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 15.
[614] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 255.
[615] Ibid., pp. 274-75.
[616] Tarkovskii, 'Lektsii po kinorezhissure', pp. 133-34.

explanations cannot.[617] Of particular importance to the issue of 'completeness' is his remark that

> Следует найти и выработать прицип, по которому можно было бы действовать на зрителя индивидуально, то есть чтобы тотальное изображение стало приватным. […] Пружина, как мне кажется, вот какая – это показать как можно меньше, и по этому *меньшему*, зритель должен составить мнение об остальном целом.[618]

According to this view, the task of the director is to create an image of the world as free from authorial emphasis and interpretation as possible, and open enough to suggest the multiplicity of the whole. Each viewer is then able to continue the narrative for themselves, building on the chain of associations which has already been set in motion by the film. It is by adopting this approach that a maximally truthful image of the whole can be achieved – one which is necessarily partial and individual but nevertheless far more real than the structured, false completeness of traditional narrative.

Finally, one should mention the comparison which has been made by a number of critics between Tarkovskii's film images and the tradition of icon painting, as it provides further insights into Tarkovskii's narrative strategies. Both Angela Dalle Vacche and Robert Bird see parallels between the conscious ellipses of Tarkovskii's films and the composition of icons. In her study of *Andrei Rublev* as a 'restoration' of icon painting, Dalle Vacche suggests that Tarkovskii makes deliberate omissions in visual terms and cites the scene where Boriska is interrogated by soldiers who are off screen but audible. She argues that Tarkovskii is thus better able to 'charge the image with the unknown and make its incomplete edges and asymmetrical space resonate well beyond the sheer documentation of an environment'.[619] Furthermore, Dalle Vacche's discussion of the traditional inverse perspective of icon painting recalls Tarkovskii's insistence on the role of the viewer in in 'completing' his films. She cites John Baggley's view of inverse perspective:

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[617] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 112. Tarkovskii's emphasis.
[618] Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 81.
[619] Angela Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting: How Art is used in Film*, Austin, TX, 1996, pp. 149-50.

> 'When this technique is used, the lines of perspective are reversed, to converge not at some distant point in the scene, but in front of the icon in the eyes of the beholder; one is left feeling that the beholder is essential to the completion of the icon.'[620]

It is also worth noting Bird's discussion of Pavel Florenskii's conception of the icon:

> Cherishing aporias and discontinuities as irruptions of eternity into our world, Florenskii attached great significance to the peculiarities of iconic composition (which to this day are sometimes dismissed as artistic naivety and backwardness.) As a visible image of the invisible realm, the icon is filled with spatial and temporal discontinuities which are tangible traces of the compression of spiritual reality into two dimensions.[621]

Although Bird relates this to the spatial and temporal discontinuities of specific images from the film *Andrei Rublev*, one could argue that Florenskii's vision of the icon is illuminating of Tarkovskii's narrative style in a more general sense, with its 'conscious aesthetics of discontinuity', its refusal to present an illusory completeness, and indeed its decision to recognise that the artist is confined in his perception into 'two dimensions'. With their deliberately stylised and consciously restricted composition, icons are based on the limitations of human vision, and strive to provide a 'window' on the eternal, on the divine wholeness that exists beyond the human world but which will remain 'inexpressible'. These are all ideas which are fundamental to Tarkovskii's aim to express the whole through his films.

IV Tarkovskii's artistic credo: the essential unity of human existence

> Все мои фильмы так или иначе говорили о том, что люди не одиноки и не заброшены в пустом мироздании – что они связаны бесчисленными нитями с прошлым и будущим, что каждый человек своею судьбой осуществляет связь с миром и всечеловеческим путем, если хотите...[622]
>
> Eugenia: 'How can we get to know each other?'

[620] Ibid., p. 147.
[621] Bird, *Andrei Rublev,* p. 76.
[622] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 326.

Gorchakov: 'By destroying frontiers.'[623]

The above section examined some of the ways in which Tarkovskii experimented with 'expressing the whole' in terms of his cinematic method. Here, it will be argued that this process of experimentation went hand in hand with, and was even ultimately inspired by, an overarching and very personal belief that 'all is linked'. Of himself, Tarkovskii noted 'Mne neobkhodimo oshchushchat' svoiu preemstvennost' i nesluchainost' v etom mire', and he asserts his films' aim to show and affirm that, contrary to subjective human experience, man is not isolated and alone in the world but part of an overarching wholeness.[624] This wholeness appears in his writings as a unity of existence over time which embraces each and every human, binding them by 'countless threads' to one another and the whole world. In his perception of the artist as a creator of whole worlds, Tarkovskii saw it as his responsibility to reveal these elusive threads, 'ustanovit' sviazi, kotorye ob''ediniaiut liudei'.[625] It is this concept of the artist as unifier that is expressed so well in Arsenii Tarkovskii's poem 'Zhizn', zhizn'', read by the poet over the Sivash footage in *Zerkalo*.[626] The whole of the second stanza of the poem is a joyful affirmation of the artist as an all-powerful conqueror of time. He can summon up past and future, walk into them and bring them together. This idea is captured in the image of the 'one table' for different generations of a family. The poem's final stanza concludes with an arresting image of life's 'flying needle' drawing the poet like a thread through the world.[627] This resonates with Tarkovskii's vision of his own role in his films: to let his directorial needle flash back and forth to spin a web of fine threads. In this connection, Tarkovskii's conception of time is significant:

[623] Dialogue from the scene in *Nostalghia* in the hotel lobby which follows the 'miracle' scene in the church. All quotes from the dialogue of *Nostalghia* are the text of the English subtitles to the Italian original.
[624] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', pp. 313-14.
[625] Ibid., p. 313.
[626] For the full text of 'Zhizn', zhizn'', see the Appendix.
[627] Arsenii Tarkovskii, *Stikhotvoreniia*, pp. 197-98.

> Боже, какая простая, даже примитивная идея – время! Да это простой способ дифференцировать материально и соединить единовременно наши существа, ибо в материальной жизни ценятся синхронные усилия отдельных людей. Время - лишь способ общения, в него завернуты мы словно в кокон, и ничего не стоит сорвать эту вату веков, окутывающую нас, с целью получить общие, единые и единовременные ощущеия.[628]

In his ambition to reveal the wholeness of existence in his films, Tarkovskii frequently tears apart the 'cocoon of time', and memory plays a vital role in this process. Human memory is supremely able to explode the rigid constructs of linear time and space by its associative connection of things, people and places normally considered separate or discrete.

Many of the most recognisable characteristics of Tarkovskii's cinematic style spring from these concerns. His juxtapositions of different layers of being – dream, vision, memory, and the here and now – are at once an assertion of their equal 'reality', and an attempt to capture them as a unity. Although all of Tarkovskii's films experiment with these different human states, including his diploma film *Katok i skripka*, the way they are juxtaposed varies over time. In general, the shifts from one state to another became ever more sliding and subtle, so that in *Nostalghia*, for example, the famous scene in the hotel room which moves from the room to Gorchakov's vision or memory of his family is accomplished in a single shot of the camera.[629] This attempt technically to erase divisions of time and place in order to reach a maximally truthful expression of the whole is also at the centre of one project that Tarkovskii never realised: 'Hoffmanniana'. Tarkovskii's notes for the screenplay of a film on E.T.A. Hoffmann show him planning to capture the life and work of the author as a unity by using an extraordinary circular set. Hoffmann was to be seated in the centre, and around him 'walls with gaps between them, representing several places of action simultaneously.' He goes on to note that

> It would be ideal to construct the set on location; then we could include both interiors and the natural landscape in the frame.

[628] Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 243.
[629] See Peter Green's comment on the way Tarkovskii handles the different 'planes' in *Nostalghia*: 'All states, all times form a continuum.' Green, *Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 118.

> In this case we could use panning, shifting from one place of action to another instantly, without having to edit bits together. This will give us a more definite sense of phantasmagoria, of continuous action, the possibility of being in different places simultaneously.[630]

This is an example of Tarkovskii's experimentation with the different technical possibilities for capturing an entirety in physical terms. By using a special set and long takes, he hoped to communicate the multiple levels of reality and consciousness found in Hoffmann's stories and also in Hoffmann's life as a writer. Writer and work are viewed here as a unity, an approach Tarkovskii also planned to use in a film about Dostoevskii. The way he describes his vision for this Dostoevskii film is significant: 'plasty – nastoiashchee, byvshee, ideal'noe i ikh soedineniia.'[631]

Tarkovskii's employment of cultural quotations in all his films was discussed above in the context of his 'theory of spheres'. These cultural references are also a powerful tool used by Tarkovskii to weave the web of universal experience into his films. On one level, their function is 'poetic'. As compressed images of human experience, they elevate particular scenes or images in the films from their concrete, specific nature to the level of the universal. This is true, for example, of the scene in *Zerkalo* where Asaf'ev's ascent of a snowy hill is presented as a visual echo of a Bruegel landscape. It is also true of the documentary sequence in *Zerkalo* showing soldiers crossing the Sivash to a recording of Arsenii Tarkovskii reading his poem 'Zhizn', zhizn''. As Synessios notes in her discussion of the interplay between word and image in Tarkovskii's films:

> The poetry in *Mirror* brings a new quality into being, *transforming* rather than *explaining* the unfolding events. At the same time, it creates a parallel world of images through words. Tarkovskii uses them, as he does the music, in order to extend the life of the film outside the boundaries of the film frame.[632]

[630] Tarkovskii, *Collected Screenplays*, p. 371.
[631] Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 129.
[632] Synessios, *Mirror*, pp. 102-03.

Examples from other films could include the use of several of Bruegel's paintings in the library scene in *Soliaris* (1969-1972) when Kris and Khari float in embrace, and also the framing of *Offret* with Bach's chorale 'Ebarme Dich' from his *St Matthew Passion*.[633] These cultural quotations act to expand the dimensions of what is experienced when one views Tarkovskii's films, creating a fuller, more entire image of reality. In addition, though, because they are universally recognisable as part of a commonly held cultural memory, they create a powerful sense of the specifics of individual experience as a part of a larger experience of humankind as a whole: they are part of the visible signs that mankind is linked over time by countless threads.

The overlapping of different characters and different generations is another device used by Tarkovskii to emphasise the interconnectedness of human experience despite its apparently disparate nature. This is most clearly articulated in *Zerkalo*, in which the narrator's wife and his mother as a young woman are both played by Margarita Terekhova, and Tarkovskii's actual mother takes the role of the mother as an old woman. This merging of separate identities, within the semi-autobiographical narrative and outside it in the case of Tarkovskii's mother, is an example of Tarkovskii deliberately breaking down the barriers of time and the divisions between art and reality to allow a larger picture to emerge. In the final sequence of the film, Tarkovskii literally enacts the image of the all-powerful artist from his father's poem, 'Zhizn', zhizn'', and explodes the strictures of time by showing both the youthful and the old mother with the narrator as a boy on screen at the same time, all at 'one table'. Tarkovskii's other films also contain instances of this kind of connection, many of which involve a 'doubling' of female characters as in *Zerkalo*. This occurs between Khari and Kris's mother in *Soliaris* and Adelaide and Maria in *Offret*. In both cases Tarkovskii uses a similar shot to transform one female character into another. In *Nostalghia*, Gorchakov's dream of his wife and Eugenia embracing explodes space rather than time, bringing together that which is geographically divided.

[633] *Soliaris*, dir. Andrei Tarkovskii, Mosfil'm, 1969-1972.

Individually, Tarkovskii's films all bear traces of these different attempts to reveal the 'countless threads' uniting man and the world. Further to this, one should mention the view expressed by some critics that Tarkovskii's films taken together comprise a unity. Johnson and Petrie identify parallels in philosophical concerns, visual imagery and metaphor between Tarkovskii's films as evidence that his films are best understood as, 'a single unified artistic whole, a "visual fugue"'.[634] In this connection, one could mention Tarkovskii's preference for working where possible with the same actors in his films. This contributes, however incidentally, to a sense of interconnectedness across his entire cinematic oeuvre. The appearance of Anatolii Solonitsyn in *Andrei Rublev*, *Soliaris*, *Zerkalo* and *Stalker* creates connections between these films which go beyond a straightforward recognition of a familiar face. Solonitsyn, with his striking physiognomy, is both instantly recognisable and yet, as an excellent actor, completely transformed in the very different roles he plays. Turovskaya sees Tarkovskii's films as 'chapters' of a greater project, and argues that

> The subjects, the stories that the film-maker is telling, are the variable parameter of the film, while the inner world of the author remains the constant. The subject is but the peg upon which to hang a revelation of this inner world, a world that is not merely a collection of memories, but a universe furnished with laws of its own.[635]

If one invokes Tarkovskii's own 'theory of spheres', his films can be interpreted as discrete explorations of the same eternal questions, each contributing their own 'chastitsa pravdy'. Equally, if one recalls his interest in the laws of musical composition ('tema, antitema, razrabotka'), his oeuvre appears as a 'theme with variations'.[636] This is an idea which underlies the argument of Part Two of this chapter.

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[634] Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 232.
[635] Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, p. 99.
[636] See discussion in III: 'Tarkovskii's cinematic method: ways of expressing the whole', in the section on 'Narrative and truth'.

Part Two: The quest for the whole. Life's journey in Tarkovskii's films

> я стремился к тому, чтобы в сценарии 'Ностальгии' не было ничего лишнего или побочного, мешающего основной моей задаче – передать состояние человека, переживающего глубокий разлад с миром и с собою, не способного найти равновесия между реальностью и желанной гармонией, – переживающего *ностальгию*, спровоцированную не только его удаленностью от Родины, но и глобальной тоской по целостности существования. Сценарий не устраивал меня до тех пор, пока, наконец, не собрался в некое метафизическое целое.[637]

In the discussion of Tarkovskii's worldview in Part One, it was argued that he sees man as living out his life 'na puti k istine'. Tarkovskii's path is a personal way of the cross, which is unique for each individual yet follows an eternal pattern encompassing suffering and the search for a universal 'beginning' which has been lost. This personal vision of human experience as a journey with many stations towards some ultimate truth is reflected in all of Tarkovskii's films from *Ivanovo detstvo* to *Offret*. Many critics identify the quest or journey as a recurrent motif in Tarkovskii's films, which occurs alongside other repetitions of theme and image.[638] However, it can be argued that the metaphor of the journey of life is much more than just a recurrent motif to the films: it forms the framework around which Tarkovskii builds all of his narratives from *Ivanovo detstvo* onwards. One could point to Ivan's dark journey of revenge, Rublev's search for divine inspiration as an artist, Kris Kelvin's travels into space and his past, Aleksei's journey back through memory, the quest to find the 'komnata zhelanii' in *Stalker*, Gorchakov's attempt to find truth and harmony in Italy, and Alexander's quest to save a fallen world. It is also worth noting the ubiquity of paths and journeys in the visual imagery of these films. The journey figures as a way of the cross fraught with difficulties, as a Dantean winding path which is never a 'straight way', even as a path crossing a field in a visual echo of the Russian proverb 'Zhizn' prozhit': ne pole pereiti''.

[637] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 325.
[638] See, for example, Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 232-34.

The way of the cross: *Andrei Rublev* (1966)

The path through the Dantean 'dark wood': *Zerkalo* (1974)

Crossing the field of life: *Zerkalo* (1974)

All these variations of the journey occur repeatedly on the level of discrete images and sequences in the different films. Particularly striking examples of this include the 'Russian Passion' in *Andrei Rublev*, the entire printing press sequence in *Zerkalo,* the many crossings of fields in a deliberately zigzag way: at the beginning of *Zerkalo*, the three monks at the beginning of *Andrei Rublev*,

Kelvin at the opening of *Soliaris*, the three men crossing the field in the Zone in *Stalker*, and most strikingly the winding path of mother and children at the close of *Zerkalo*.

In considering the wider context of Tarkovskii's liberal employment of the metaphor of life as a journey, the quote he includes in the printing press scene in *Zerkalo* from the opening of Dante's *Inferno* is of key importance: 'Midway through the journey of our life/ I found myself within a dark wood,/ for the straight way had now been lost'.[639] Critical literature has tended to focus on an autobiographical reading of this reference, seeing in it an allusion to the difficult path of Tarkovskii at this point in his career and life.[640] In the context of this discussion, however, the Dante reference (which indeed can be seen as one of a web of references to Dante mostly on the visual level) is illuminating of the way in which Tarkovskii seems to have conceived of his use of the metaphor of life as journey. As M. H. Abrams notes in his discussion of the trope of the *peregrinatio vitae* [life's journeying], Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the most well-known and admired of the literary examples of the much more ancient Christian plot form which has its roots in the Old Testament, is expressed most symbolically in the New Testament's narration of Christ's Passion, and shapes works from St. Augustine's *Confessions* to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and beyond.[641] In employing this classical trope to express his ontological concerns, Tarkovskii weaves his web of countless threads back to the beginning of human history and thus lends his films a greater universality. He also, if one recalls his theory of spheres, makes his unique contribution to the wider artistic search for the *tselostnost'* of truth by adding his own variations to this classical metaphor. In his hands, the trope is given new life and vitality, appearing as it does on a multitude of levels, and in a multitude of guises. Indeed, Tarkovskii's treatment of the *peregrinatio vitae* provides a fascinating insight into the idea of his work as a 'theme with

[639] Dante, *Inferno*, p. 3.
[640] Synessios, *Mirror*, p. 2.
[641] For an overview of the trope of *peregrinatio vitae* in the Western tradition, see: M.H. Abrams, 'Spiritual Travellers in Western Literature', in Bruno Magliocchetti and Anthony Verna (eds.), *The Motif of the Journey in Nineteenth-Century Italian Literature*, pp. 1-20.

variations'. In returning to the same metaphor again and again, each time from a slightly different angle, he constantly tests the potential of an image, a metaphor, a motif to reveal something further about the questions of human life.

Tarkovskii's concern with *tselostnost'* and memory is apparent on many different levels in his films. For reasons of focus, the second part of this chapter uses the theme of life's journey as a prism through which to examine Tarkovskii's expression of these ideas in his cinematic practice. The following discussion comprises a series of close readings of Tarkovskii's seven full-length films which look at three important variants of the motif of life's journey, each one of which has its own sub-variations. In exploring Tarkovskii's work as a theme with variations, the analysis below in many cases involves the discussion of the same films from different points of view. The aim here is to elucidate some of the subtleties of Tarkovskii's approach. The first section examines Tarkovskii's preoccupation with humanity's choice of the 'false' path of rationalism and materialism over the spiritual, and the consequences of this choice. This theme is particularly important to *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, and also to Tarkovskii's last two films, *Nostalghia* and *Offret*. The second section looks at how in Tarkovskii's films man's individual search for truth is realised both as a physical journey forward through space and as an internal journey back through memory and time. Finally, the third section investigates Tarkovskii's interpretation of the journey of life as a 'return to the beginning' which reaches its culmination in Tarkovskii's last two films. In *Nostalghia* and *Offret* the protagonists' acts of self-sacrifice represent an attempt to become one with the whole.

I The false path: from *tupik* to apocalypse

> Alexander: 'Humanity is on the wrong road, a dangerous road.'[642]

[642] Part of Alexander's long monologue early in *Offret,* when he stops with his son in a small wood on his way home. All quotes from the dialogue of *Offret* are the text of the English subtitles to the Swedish original.

In an interview conducted in 1984, Tarkovskii states:

> Я неожиданно для себя обнаружил, что все эти годы я занимался одним и тем же: пытался рассказать о внутреннем конфликте человека – между духом и материей, между духовными нуждами и необходимостью существовать в этом материальном мире. Этот конфликт является самым главным, потому что он порождает все проблемы, с которыми мы сталкиваемся в процессе нашей жизни...

He describes how, in his opinion, this tension between the spiritual and the material has affected the whole course of human history:

> Мне кажется, мы можем сказать, что в результате исторического процесса возникла огромная разница между духовным развитием и материальным, научным. И в этом причина нынешнего драматического положения нашей цивилизации. Мы стоим на грани атомного уничтожения, именно в результате разрыва между духовным и материальным...[643]

The idea that man is defined by an eternal conflict between his spiritual and material sides can be traced through all of Tarkovskii's films. It reflects his view of man's tragic awareness of both his mortality and his link to a divine whole. The more concrete, historical concerns of the latter part of the statement, however, are particularly relevant to the narratives of his two science-fiction films, *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, and his last films, *Nostalghia* and *Offret*. Critical literature has frequently referred to the increasing pessimism and apocalyptic preoccupations of Tarkovskii's films, culminating in his narrative of nuclear disaster in *Offret*.[644] In this section, the discussion of the 'road' of materialism as both 'wrong' and 'dangerous' suggests that the ever darker mood of Tarkovskii's films over time is inextricably linked with his preoccupation with what he perceived as the terrible consequences of man's choice of the material over the spiritual. It is indicative of the extent to which *Offret* voiced Tarkovskii's personal concerns 'gromko i chetko' that Alexander's analysis of

[643] Andrei Tarkovskii, 'Dlia tselei lichnosti vysokikh: Andrei Tarkovskii o sebe', *Forum*, 1988, 18, pp. 97-103, quoted from: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheBibliography/Articles/Russian/Tarkov_4.htm. Consulted on 8 September 2010.

[644] See, for example, Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 235.

the catastrophic state of modern civilisation at the beginning of the film parallels exactly Tarkovskii's own in word and tone. He decries man's exploitation of nature and technology for evil means and notes: '"We have acquired a dreadful disharmony, an imbalance, if you will, between our material and our spiritual development."'[645] These words are particularly significant as they echo the discussions of Kireevskii and Khomiakov on the disastrous results of the division of man's 'tsel'nost' dukha' and the 'one-sided' pursuit of rationalism.[646] As the following discussion suggests, Tarkovskii's portrayal of humanity's choice of the material over the spiritual as a false path in *Soliaris*, *Stalker, Nostalghia* as well as *Offret* reflects these debates on man's essential *tselostnost'*.[647]

Soliaris and *Stalker*: the *tupik*

In his conversation with Berton early on in *Soliaris*, Kris Kelvin says '"Mne kazhetsia, chto soliaristika zashla v tupik v resul'tate bezotvetsvennogo fantazirovaniia. Menia interesuet istina.'" This statement, which so upsets and infuriates Berton, perfectly expresses the scientific worldview which is portrayed as dominant in *Soliaris*. Kris, at the opening of the film, is a seeker of truth like all of Tarkovskii's protagonists, but his concept of truth is a narrowly scientific one based on pure reason and excluding other more intuitive modes of perception. He and the other scientists are an embodiment of the scientific approach to understanding which Tarkovskii describes in his theory of spheres, encompassing a search for 'absoliutnaia istina' through 'kholodnoe poznanie' and a linear process of accumulating objective truths through scientific

[645] This is also from Alexander's monologue in *Offret*, referred to above.
[646] See the discussion of Khomiakov and Kireevskii in Chapter One of this study.
[647] See also Tarkovskii's plan to make a film about St. Anthony, to be focused on the opposite: the domination of the spiritual. Charles H. de Brantes, 'Faith is the Only Thing that can save Man', in John Gianvito (ed.), *Andrey Tarkovsky: Interviews*, Jackson, MS, 1986, pp. 178-87 (p. 184).

discovery.[648] Kris's judgement of the Soliaris project as having run into the sand is significant: it has indeed failed, but for quite other reasons than the ones he gives. Tarkovskii seems to suggest that 'soliaristika' will inevitably come to a dead end precisely because the entire scientific worldview, if pushed to extremes and to the exclusion of all else, is a dead end for humanity. In making reason the sole accepted mode of perception of reality, man restricts his ability to apprehend truth. At every stage he is seduced into thinking that he grasps truth in part through the series of 'objective truths' which he has established through his narrow, separate investigations. In sum, however, these truths amount to nothing as they are built on misguided premises.

In taking Stanislaw Lem's classic of the science fiction genre as the base of his film, Tarkovskii chose a narrative where, by definition, the rational worldview prevails. Although the film is in many ways remarkably faithful to the text of Lem's novel, Tarkovskii transformed it to fit his own narrative purpose. Here the main point of interest is not his rejection of a Kubrick-style futuristic set, but the fact that he shifted the entire emphasis of the story by giving it a significant spiritual element. The 'Earth' scene with which the film opens is frequently referred to in this connection. This extended elegy to the beauty of nature and to the home which Kris will leave behind him is not part of Lem's narrative. In choosing to open his film in this way, Tarkovskii immediately conveys the superior power of the irrational and the emotional over the scientific. *Soliaris* is in essence the story of a conversion from the materialist worldview to the spiritual one, and this conversion, paradoxically, takes place in the space station, the symbol of man's ambition to achieve total knowledge. Indeed, whereas Kris was able on earth to divorce his scientific search for truth from any emotional considerations, as seen by his and the other scientists' reactions to Berton's extraordinary revelations, the arrogant assurance of knowledge seems to vanish as soon as he arrives in space. The space station, instead of being a shiny temple to confident science seems

[648] For the discussion of Tarkovskii's theory of spheres, see Part One, II: 'Tarkovskii on art and truth' above.

neglected and hopeless, and the scientists stationed there reflect this mood. Gibarian has committed suicide because of his inability to cope with the implications of the apparitions which the Ocean has conjured up, and Snaut appears as a resigned eccentric whose work is more dabbling than scientific research. Finally, Sartorius's seriousness as a scientist seems both superficial and misplaced. He dismisses Kris's questions about Berton's experiences with the admonition to Kris as a fellow scientist that '"Seichas sleduet dumat' lish' o dolge pered istinoi…'", and when Kris, who has already lost his belief in the certainties of science, replies '"Znachit, pered liud'mi", Sartorius's answer, pointing at the Ocean, '"Vy ne tam ishchete istinu. Vot…"' seems supremely unconvincing.

Tarkovskii's depiction of both the space station and its scientists in *Soliaris* refutes the idea that scientific knowledge and truth can be equated, and the Ocean itself appears inscrutable throughout the film. Sartorius's reaction to the 'visitors' from the Ocean is characterised by an unthinking and unproductive violence: unable to rationalise them, he liquidates them and radiates the surface of the Ocean. Ironically, in doing so he further narrows the possibilities for coming closer to some ultimate truth because, in the words of one of the scientists at the beginning of the film, these are merely disparate facts '"kotorye nevozmozhno vtisnut' v ramki kakikh-libo kontseptsii"'. In the discussion between Kris and Sartorius about the reasons for Gibarian's death, they express respectively the 'human', irrational view and the scientific view. Sartorius is incensed by Kris attributing Gibarian's suicide to a feeling of 'bezvykhodnost''. His assertion that '"Chelovek sozdan prirodoi, chtoby poznavat' ee. Dvigaias' k istine, chelovek obrechen na poznanie"' forms a twisted echo of Tarkovskii's own statement that man lives 'na puti k istine'. Its depressing and arrogant determinism echoes just that sense of 'bezvykhodnost'' which Kris sees as having killed Gibarian, it is 'beschelovechno' in the literal sense: man cannot live like this.

If the pursuit of truth through science seems, in *Soliaris*, to lead man into a *tupik*, the irrational is a locus of hope. Initially, Kris reacts to the

reappearance of his dead wife with panic and violence, but by the time she returns in her second reincarnation he has opened his mind to the inexplicable, and no longer seeks to destroy her. In Tarkovskii's narrative, Kris rediscovers hope and love by accepting the irrational. He has the chance to be reconciled with a wife for whose suicide he feels culpable, and in the final scene of the film with an estranged father. The point, it seems, is not whether these reconciliations are 'real', but that Kris has changed. In conversation with Snaut, Kris says: '"Vopros, eto vsegda zhelanie poznat', a dlia sokhraneniia prostykh chelovecheskikh istin nuzhny tainy. Taina schast'ia, smerti, liubvi."' This is Tarkovskii's living 'na puti k istine': man is driven to search for the truth but must do this openly and with all his faculties. The uncertainties that accompany such a path are suggested by Kris's monologue near the end of *Soliaris*. He wonders whether to return to Earth with his memories of Khari, or to stay in the space station where they were together. The latter course, however, would mean that he hoped for her return, something which he cannot do. Instead, he decides to 'wait for new miracles'. The connection of the irrational with the miraculous, as will be seen, is something which Tarkovskii develops in his other science fiction film, *Stalker*.

Stalker forms a pair with *Soliaris* in terms of the theme of mankind's false choice of the materialist path over the spiritual one. Before looking in detail at the parallels in Tarkovskii's treatment of this theme, it should be noted that the motif of the journey in general is realised in a very particular way in *Stalker*. This metaphor for human life rises to the surface in the film, and structures both its narrative and its visual world. In effect, Tarkovskii maps the idea of life as journey onto the physical contours of the Zone. Turovskaya, who sees *Stalker* as a turning point in Tarkovskii's career, talks of a 'landscape of the soul', but it is more than this.[649] The landscape of the Zone is a metaphorical one: it is filled with dangers to be circumvented, obstacles to be overcome, 'stations' to be passed on the winding way of the cross. This is

[649] Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, p. 109.

reflected in the Stalker's description of the Zone: '"eto ochen' slozhnaia sistema lovushek, chto li, i vse oni smertel'nye"', and his assertion that, when man is present, the Zone is constantly in flux: '"Put' delaetsia to legkim, to zaputyvaetsia do nevozmozhnosti."' Tarkovskii's projection of the *peregrinatio vitae* onto the landscape of the Zone is so masterly that the viewer of the film hovers between belief and disbelief just as the Writer and the Professor do. This is achieved by the overlaying of the physical landscape with another, more ethereal and infinitely complex one. The landscape of the film has its own crossings, paths and points of reference: the abandoned buildings of the border area; the natural wilderness of the interior of the Zone with its debris of human existence; the interior of the building with the 'komnata zhelanii'. Over this, however, is stretched a path which is not merely 'winding' but positively convoluted. Every stage of the three men's journey from the border area to the supposed location of the 'komnata' at the heart of the Zone is characterised by improbably complicated and seemingly irrational manoeuvres. In the jeep at the beginning they drive backwards, forwards, round, through apparently unnecessarily difficult places. In the Zone they proceed through the undergrowth in what seems to be exaggerated zigzags. At one point the Stalker and the Writer leave the Professor behind only to find that they have returned to where he was. Finally the whole interior landscape of the final approach to the 'komnata' is in compact form a path like Christian's in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with all its obstacles and challenges. They pass through the watery tunnel of the 'miasorubka', over human debris, through a door with the argument about the Writer's gun. They then have to cross over the water in the room by holding onto the rail, and finally end in the sand room. Here, the unnatural-looking dunes are themselves a miniature landscape, requiring the Writer to proceed at a zigzag to pass them.[650]

[650] See the similarity between this miniature landscape, the one in Domenico's house in *Nostalghia* and the model of Alexander's house made by his son in *Offret*. The sand room, framed by huge shadowy columns like trees, can also be understood as a further allusion to the difficult path through Dante's 'dark wood'.

To return to Tarkovskii's portrayal of the false path in *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, one of the most immediately obvious parallels is in the alignment of characters with respectively the material or spiritual worldviews. In *Soliaris*, Snaut, Sartorius, and Kris initially stand for the scientific worldview and Khari and Berton for the spiritual one, with Kris and Gibarian being 'converted' to the spiritual worldview. In *Stalker* it is the Stalker, the Stalker's Wife and their daughter Martyshka who are clearly identified with the irrational, the emotional, and even the mystical in the case of the daughter with her strange powers. On the other side of the equation are the Professor and the Writer with their generic titles, aligned with the materialist world. The Professor is depicted as a rational man of science who is calm, well-equipped for the expedition with his clothing and provisions, and his methodical plan to blow up the 'komnata'. The Writer is his opposite: impulsive, disorganised, garrulous but also a materialist both in his extravagant lifestyle compared to the Stalker's asceticism, and in the commercialism of his art.

Tarkovskii's treatment of the science-fiction genre in *Stalker* parallels *Soliaris* in a number of respects. In *Stalker*, Tarkovskii's rejection of the usual kinds of technological accoutrements of science fiction films is even more pronounced. The Japanese urban scene in the car and the, albeit shabby, space station of *Soliaris* are replaced by the rusting and abandoned tanks in the Zone. As in *Soliaris*, Tarkovskii departed from the narrative of the Strugatskii brothers' *Piknik na obochine* by making the spiritual and the irrational the focus of his film. Tarkovskii's Stalker is an eccentric truth-seeker in the 'iurodivyi' mould instead of a hardened semi-criminal who earns his living with dangerous work.[651] The Writer's soul-searching monologues are concerned with the evils of materialism, and the mysteries of the Zone are explained in terms of faith and not science. Equally, whereas the multiple zones of *Piknik na obochine* are strewn with scientifically valuable extra-terrestrial debris left behind by the attack from space, Tarkovskii's Zone is abandoned nature grown wild, strewn

[651] For comparison of *Piknik na obochine* and the screenplay for *Stalker* written by Arkadii Strugatskii, see Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 140-42.

with the rusting remnants of a broken civilisation. Together with the grim, polluted and decaying industrial look of the area outside the Zone, the impression is one of man-made catastrophe, a human end of time where all has been destroyed. This is an effect which is magnified for all those who have viewed the film after 1986, given the striking visual similarity with the post-nuclear landscape around Chernobyl. Tarkovskii once described *Stalker* as being 'o pobede materializma', and indeed it dramatises the imbalance between the material and the spiritual by taking it to an extreme.[652] In *Soliaris* science appears as a mistakenly optimistic and limiting way of approaching truth, but in *Stalker* science is already utterly discredited: the despoiled world and man's lack of hope are offered as evidence of this.

Turovskaya makes the point that, in Tarkovskii's version of the Strugatskiis' story, 'the journey transformed from an adventure into an extended debate. Never, before *Stalker*, has the text of a Tarkovskii film had such an important role to play.'[653] Tarkovskii's increasing reliance on dialogue to put across certain ideas more forcefully, despite his innate distrust of 'words', has been discussed above in Part One.[654] This tendency is illustrated by a comparison of *Soliaris* and *Stalker*. In *Soliaris* the conflict between the material and spiritual is realised primarily through Tarkovskii's depictions of the space station and of nature, as well as through his characters' emotions. It is also suggested by the conflict of Kris with Sartorius. In *Stalker*, by contrast, these ideas are played out in the dialogue of Tarkovskii's protagonists, particularly through the disillusioned writer. At the beginning of the film, he complains to his female companion:

> "Дорогая моя, мир непроходимо скучен. И поэтому ни телепатии, ни привидений, ни летающих тарелок, ничего этого быть не может. Мир управляется чугунными законами, и это невыносимо скучно. Законы эти, увы, не нарушаются. Они не умеют нарушаться."

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[652] Ol'ga Surkova, 'Khroniki Tarkovskogo: *Stalker* (II)', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2002, 10, pp. 122-33 (p. 124).
[653] Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry*, p. 107.
[654] See Part One, III: 'Tarkovskii's cinematic method: ways of expressing the whole', in the section '*Neposredstvennost'* and film'.

This is an expression of the inflexible rationalist worldview which does not admit anything which does not fit within its 'kontsepstii', as in *Soliaris*. When his companion asks him how, then, he can explain the Bermuda Triangle, his response is withering: given that the only triangle which 'exists' is the mathematical triangle 'abc', then the Bermuda Triangle cannot exist. Explaining to her how dreadful a world based on these laws is, he notes: '"Vy ne chuvstvuete, kakaia skuka zakliuchena v etom utverzhdenii. V srednie veka bylo interesno. V kazhdom dome zhil domovoi, v kazhdoi tserkvi – Bog."' His fear is that the Zone may be exactly the same, regulated by the same laws, devoid of the unexplainable, and that God may not be there at all, or even worse than that, God may in fact be the dreaded triangle 'abc'. As the narrative of the film shows, what the Writer ironically calls 'skuka' is in fact the same feeling of 'bezvykhodnost'' or hopelessness which features in *Soliaris*. The Writer's reason for undertaking the reputedly dangerous and illegal journey to the 'komnata zhelanii' is to rediscover hope in the unexplainable and the mysterious, things which no longer exist outside the Zone. In *Stalker* materialism has finally triumphed, and the Zone is the last, unexplainable thing – an island of the irrational. In the words of the Stalker: '"Ved' nichego ne ostalos' u liudei na zemle bol'she! Eto edinstvennoe mesto, kuda mozhno priiti, esli nadeiat'sia bol'she ne na chto."'

On learning that the Professor is a physicist, the Writer comments: '"Tozhe, navernoe, skuka. Poiski istiny. Ona priachetsia, a vy vsiudu ishchete."' This also refers to a simplistic conception of truth. The difference between them, he says, is that whereas the Professor 'digs' and finds 'protons or the triangle a=b=c', he digs, thinks he has found it and discovers that it is just rubbish. Later in the film he accuses the Professor of smuggling scientific instruments into the Zone in order to test the miracles of the Zone scientifically. In fact, as it emerges, the Professor is carrying a bomb with which he intends to blow up the 'komnata' so that it will be impossible for its power to be misused. This echoes the text of the scientific report describing the events surrounding the meteor's arrival which comes at the opening of the film. The reaction to this

'chudo iz chudes' was 'My srazu poslali tuda voiska'. As in *Soliaris*, man reacts with violence to the scientifically unknown and prefers to destroy it rather than allowing a window to be opened to a different kind of knowledge. This is science used as a 'cudgel', as Alexander says in *Offret*. The Writer, just like Kris initially, is also armed with a gun, even if it is ostensibly for the purposes of self-protection.

Against the Professor's cool rationalism and the Writer's foolhardy cynicism Tarkovskii sets the dogged Stalker, whose whole characterisation reflects the uncertainties of a worldview that goes beyond the exclusively rational. If, in *Soliaris*, hope, however irrational it might seem, emerges as essential to a humanity crushed by the 'bezvykhodnost'' of the coldly scientific worldview, by *Stalker* this hope appears as the idea of faith in however abstract terms. In a diary entry for 23 December 1978, Tarkovskii wrote of *Stalker*:

> В нем я хочу взорвать отношение к нынешнему дню и обратиться к прошлому, в котором человечество совершило столько ошибок, что сегодня вынуждено существовать как в тумане. Картина о существовании Бога в человеке и о гибели духовности по причине обладания ложным знанием.[655]

Tarkovskii here asserts the existence of the divine in man in spite of the false path he has taken, and in *Stalker* the concept of faith is repeatedly addressed. The Stalker's reprimand to the Professor after struggling to gain control of the bomb, '"Zachem vy unichtozhaete veru?"' is an echo of the Writer's complaints that God and house spirits no longer exist. On the threshold of the 'komnata', the Stalker tells the two men '"Glavnoe – verit'"', and at the end of the film on his return home he vents his frustration with them to his wife: '"Oni zhe ne veriat ni vo chto! U nikh organ, kotorym veriat atrofirovalsia za nenadobnost'iu!"' This, it seems, is the result of the choice of materialism over the spiritual: man is incapable of belief, despite realising his need for the hope offered by the mysterious. This conflict is expressed in the character of the Writer. Suspended between a desire to believe and an inability to take a final leap of faith, he subsides into renewed recriminations and cynicism:

[655] Tarkovskii, *Martirolog*, p. 188.

> “Вот еще эксперимент. Эксперименты, факты, истина в последней инстанции. Фактов вообще не бывает, а уж здесь и подавно. Все это – чья-то идиотская выдумка. Неужели вы не чувствуете?”

Significantly, even the Stalker himself refuses his wife’s offer to go with him to the ‘komnata’, because he is afraid that nothing will happen, and the ‘final’ hope will be destroyed. This is followed in the film by the speech of the Stalker’s wife about the difficulties and suffering of her life, a speech which ends with a direct expression of the importance of hope:

> “А если бы не было в нашей жизни горя, то лучше бы не было. Хуже было бы. Потому что тогда и счастья бы тоже не было. И не было бы надежды.”

In *Zapechatlennoe vremia*, Tarkovskii identifies this scene as pivotal to his conception of *Stalker*. In the film, he argues, ‘vse dolzhno byt’ dogovoreno do kontsa’. The narrative demonstrates that the ‘metaniia “v poiskakh istiny”’ of the Professor and the Writer are all just ‘sueta’, and that the real miracle is the unconditional love of the Stalker’s wife:

> Ее любовь и ее преданность – это и есть то последнее чудо, которое можно противопоставить неверию, цинизму, опустошенности, пронизавшим современный мир, жертвами которого стали и Писатель, и Ученый.[656]

At the end of *Soliaris*, Kris decides that he must ‘wait for new miracles’, and *Stalker* is also about the power of miracles to sustain man in an apparently hopeless world. The Zone, the ‘chudo iz chudes’, is conceived of as a place where impossible wishes can be granted: it is a place of pilgrimage for those who have lost hope. *Stalker* contains repeated references to the miraculous, and constantly plays with the fragility of the human ability to perceive miracles. The Zone itself has seemingly miraculous characteristics, like the disembodied voice which orders the Writer to stop when he is trying to approach the ‘komnata’ by a direct path. One could also mention the scene in which the Stalker and the Writer return inexplicably to the place where they left the Professor with its strange glowing embers. In the sequence of the Stalker’s

[656] Tarkovskii, ‘Zapechatlennoe vremia’, p. 317.

dream, Tarkovskii weaves the biblical context of the miraculous into his story. The 'earthquake' of the vibrating bog and dust of the Zone is followed by a voice reading from the sixth chapter of the Book of Revelation, with its depiction of an apocalyptic end of time with a 'great earthquake' in which mountains and islands move and the powerful are reduced to a state of terror.[657] This quotation, which is rich in meaning for the film as a whole, is illuminating of the role of faith in the miraculous. In particular, the phrase 'all the mountains and islands were shaken from their places' recalls Christ's rebuke to his disciples for their 'little faith' in St Matthew's gospel:

> 'I tell you solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say this to a mountain, "Move from here to there", and it would move; nothing would be impossible for you.'[658]

Indeed, immediately after the Stalker wakes from his dream, he begins to quote from St Luke's account of the apostles' meeting with the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus, one of the most powerful Christian narratives of man's persistent failure to recognise the truth.[659]

The Christian context also informs the scene in which the crippled Martyshka appears to be walking in the snow. Tarkovskii uses the biblical theme of the lame or paralysed person who can suddenly walk to create the impression of a miracle, only then to reveal it as an illusion created by the camera. The camera zooms out, and the viewer sees that Martyshka was just being carried on her father's shoulders. In this sequence, Tarkovskii involves the viewer in the fragile nature of perception by this simple matter of camera angle. The sense of wonder and then disappointment generated in a single shot echo the experience of the Writer in *Stalker*: in spite of a desire to believe in the miraculous, man often prefers the safety of rational cynicism. This scene also suggests that even in his perception of miracles, man holds on stubbornly to a limited view. The miraculous is often located somewhere quite else to where man searches for it. Thus, Tarkovskii sets up the 'miracle' of the healed

[657] Revelation 6. 12-7, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[658] Matthew 17. 20, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[659] Luke 24. 13-35, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

daughter, reveals this as mere illusion, and then offers quite another 'proof': the love of the Stalker's Wife as the 'final miracle'. Furthermore, even if the Stalker's daughter has not been miraculously cured, she is possessed of the miraculous ability to 'move mountains' in her moving of the glass across a table.

In this connection, it is interesting that the whole of *Stalker* is, as it were, suspended between two moving glasses. For, if at first the moving glass on the table at the beginning of the film appears to be explained by the vibrations of a passing train, the scene at the close of the film which mirrors it suggests a reinterpretation. The latter scene appears to offer concrete proof of the existence of the mysterious in the power of the little girl to move the glasses across the table, and the parallels between the two scenes, which are both accompanied by the sound of the trains and distant music, are unmistakeable. This seems to suggest that the marvellous is everywhere to be found if one only has eyes to see it, often in the most unexpected places, and causes the viewer of the film to question his or her own interpretation of the meaning of the film. On one level, at the end of the narrative of *Stalker* the Professor and the Writer have not entered the 'chudo' which is the 'komnata zhelanii'. Thus the question of whether there is something particularly miraculous at the heart of the Zone, or whether it is in fact another 'tupik', a product of limited human knowledge, remains open. The Writer accuses the Stalker of having made the entire story up, and the final scene with the three men returns them to their point of departure in the bar. The narrative of the film does not make explicit the idea that they may have experienced some kind of conversion during their journey into the Zone. However, the long scene on the threshold of the 'komnata' where the three men sit together on the floor suggests intense reflection.

Against this uncertainty, Tarkovskii sets the last scene of the film. It is imbued with a brightness and optimism which are entirely absent from the sombreness of all that has gone before. The room in which the little girl sits is light and filled with floating poplar down. If the Zone was devoid of natural sounds, here birdsong is audible. The miracle of the moving glass is preceded

by what appears to be the voice of the little girl reading from a poem by Tiutchev about the transforming power of love, followed by the sound of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy'. This weaves a link between the Stalker's daughter's power and the power of love represented by her mother. It also seems a joyful affirmation of the existence of hope in spite of man's poor choices which have brought him, in Tarkovskii's words, 'to the brink of destruction'.[660] If the Zone seems to be a 'tupik' for the protagonists of *Stalker* in their search for truth, this final scene suggests that the potential for salvation on both an individual and collective level is to be found in the power of human love and faith, indeed the spiritual, to provide man with the everyday miracles which sustain and transform him.

Nostalghia and *Offret*: materialism and the West

In *Zapechatlennoe vremia*, Tarkovskii describes the ruins of a Benedictine monastery which appear in the final scene of *Nostalghia* as 'oskolki vsechelovecheskoi i chuzhoi tsivilizatsii – tochno nadgrobie tshchete chelovecheskikh ambitsii, znak pagubnosti puti, na kotorom zaplutalo chelovechestvo.'[661] This comment suggests the centrality of the false path to Tarkovskii's conception of *Nostalghia*, and it is also illuminating of the different complexion of this theme in the last two films. In *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, as has been seen, Tarkovskii investigates the effects of relying on a scientific approach to understanding. In *Nostalghia* and *Offret*, however, the 'pobeda materializma' is cast in different terms and dramatised as the decadence and hollowness of modern, Western society. Western civilisation appears here as 'materialist' in the modern sense of the word, but also as located at an endpoint of a false path of development. In this, Tarkovskii echoes the view of Western civilisation expressed by the majority of Russia's nineteenth-century religious

[660] Tarkovskii, 'Dlia tselei lichnosti vysokikh'. See discussion of this at the beginning of this section, I: The false path: from *tupik* to apocalypse.
[661] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 325.

philosophers, who believed the West to be in crisis because of their 'one-sided' espousal of rationalism.

As in *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, Tarkovskii uses both the landscapes and characters of *Nostalghia* to dramatise the tension between the materialist and spiritual worldviews. Eugenia is associated with a vision of decadent and spiritually empty Italy, the crumbling remains of a once-great civilization which has exhausted its potential. Her beauty and her sumptuous Titian hair, reminiscent of Renaissance paintings, simultaneously attract and repel Gorchakov. He rejects her just as he rejects what he terms the 'sickeningly beautiful sights' of Italy which she wants to show him. Tarkovskii's comments in *Tempo di viaggio* (1982) indicate that he did not want 'beautiful Italy' as a backdrop to his film, and this unease with the 'slishkom krasivo' is reflected in the narrative of *Nostalghia*, where Gorchakov feels suffocated by it.[662] It is significant that the film opens with a beautiful, harmonious Italian landscape in the early morning mist, only to disrupt it with the bickering of Gorchakov and Eugenia. Perhaps the clearest juxtaposition of the opposite poles of the spiritual and the materialist is realised in the visual opposition of Gorchakov's hotel room and the interspersed dream sequences of his Russian home. The intense oppressiveness of this soulless room without any view seems to be a visualisation of a state of mind. Tarkovskii suggests here the unbearable sense of 'bezvykhodnost'' of an existence devoid of the spiritual. This is intensified when Eugenia comes to find him and they have yet another argument based on their clashing worldviews. By contrast, the visions of home which Gorchakov carries with him like the keys to his house in Russia are exaggeratedly idealized and dreamlike. Like the opening scene of the film, the landscapes of home are harmonious and all-encompassing: he sees his wife, his children, and his house, and after the argument with Eugenia, his wife and Eugenia appear in the idealized harmony of embrace.

[662] *Tempo di viaggio* [Vremia puteshestviia], dir. Andrei Tarkovskii and Tonino Guerra, Genius srl and RAI 2, 1982.

As in *Stalker*, the question of faith in a world dominated by the rational is central to *Nostalghia*. The presentation of various churches in the film recalls the Writer's despairing comment about life being more interesting in the Middle Ages because God 'lived in every church'. The churches in *Nostalghia* are either ruins, or, in the case of the church which contains the 'Madonna del Parto' at the beginning of the film, are the backdrop to a marginalized religious faith. Tarkovskii's portrayal of Eugenia has often been interpreted as expressing his personal critique of emancipated Western women, and she does form a contrast to the far more traditional female image represented by Gorchakov's wife. More importantly for this discussion, though, she is shown to suffer from the same essential loss of faith as the Writer in *Stalker* and Alexander in *Offret*, which appears as the result of the 'pobeda materializma'. Like Alexander, she no longer knows how to pray and is incapable of even taking up the physical pose of prayer. The entire scene in the church, despite the very different and ostensibly traditionally religious setting, is another variation of the discussion about faith in *Stalker*. The ritual procession of the women with the statue of the Madonna is plausibly authentic in itself, but the dialogue between the eccentric sacristan and Eugenia forms an unmistakable echo of the conversations between the Stalker and the Writer and Professor. When Eugenia, in answer to the sacristan's question about what she has come to pray for, tells him that she is 'just looking', he replies that if casual onlookers are present, nothing will happen. She asks what is supposed to happen, and he answers: '"Whatever you like, whatever you need most."' This is the 'innermost wish' which the 'komnata zhelanii' is supposed to fulfil, and with it comes the same contention that of faith is necessary to the miracle: '"Glavnoe – verit"'.

Eugenia is also shown to be incapable of understanding and communicating with Domenico, who like the Stalker is the character in the film most associated with the idea of the spiritual. Towards the end of the film, she is connected with the question of faith in her relationship with the Mafioso-like Vittorio who is 'deeply interested in spiritual matters' and with whom she plans to travel to India. The implication here seems to be that this is a kind of

inauthentic attitude to faith, one which is materialist in the modern sense of the word. The idea of the East as a place where modern Western man goes in search of a 'new' spirituality because he has completely lost his own is also present in Tarkovskii's depiction of the other Italian guests at Bagno Vignoni. The general, for example, devotes part of each day to listening to Chinese music.[663] The bathers, who are shown lounging around in the baths and amusing themselves with inane conversation, are an object of scorn for Domenico: '"You know why they're in the water? They want to live for ever."' This self-centred and superficial approach to acquiring eternal life is set against Domenico's attempt to cross the same baths holding a lighted candle to save the world in a 'via crucis' act of faith. The bathers repeatedly have Domenico ejected and mock him as a madman, but Domenico's concern to save the world from the stranglehold of the material is shown as far more sincere, despite the misguided and apparently random nature of some of his acts of faith. Through Gorchakov's comments, Domenico is clearly identified as a holy fool figure who, like the Stalker and Otto, in *Offret*, persuades the truth-seeking protagonist of the films that truth does indeed lie in the 'madness' of the irrational:

> 'Why do they think he is mad? He's not mad. He has faith. […] Who knows what madness is? They upset us, they're inconvenient. We refuse to understand them. They're alone. But they're certainly closer to the truth.'

Domenico's house stands as a symbol of the irrational in the film, with its strange contents, the door marooned in the middle of the room and the rain falling inside.[664] His statements are a reflection of the idea of the close proximity of madness – as understood in a rational world – and truth. In his conversation with Gorchakov and in his speech on the Capitoline, the bizarre

[663] See also the Eastern references to spirituality in *Offret*: the 'ikebana', the strange Japanese music, the 'yin and yang' symbol on Alexander's dressing gown.

[664] Note how Domenico, who represents the irrational, is connected to Dostoevskii's anti-rational position through quotations from *Zapiski iz podpol'ia*. In the scene in Domenico's house he pours out oil and tells Gorchakov 'One drop plus one drop makes a bigger drop, not two.' This is echoed by the '1+1=1' written on the wall of Domenico's 'irrational' room with rain pouring onto the bed and a door stranded in the middle of space.

alternates with the perceptive. In a very similar way to *Stalker*, and afterwards in *Offret*, Tarkovskii creates a strong sense of the unsettling instability of perception, something which is felt by the protagonist of the film, but equally by the viewer. If in *Stalker*, though, the irrational as a force was palpable through the portrayal of the mysterious powers of the Zone – the voice, the shaking mud of the dream, and even the moving glasses – by *Nostalghia* the irrational seems pushed to the very edges of the human world. It is present only in the 'madman' Domenico and his friends, almost imperceptible under the weight of the materialist reality of the modern Western European setting. There are no 'proofs' in this film, no epiphanies, only the constant uncertainty of whether Domenico's act of shutting his family away for seven years, his self-immolation which takes place with only the mad as witnesses, and the task of carrying the candle across the empty baths are acts of faith with meaning in themselves, or just the random acts of a man unhinged by contemporary reality.

Domenico's speech on the Capitoline, by far the longest piece of dialogue in the film, calls attention in eccentric terms to a world where there are '"no great masters left"', where people have '"brains full of long sewage pipes, of school walls, tarmac and welfare papers"' and where '"The eyes of all mankind are looking at the pit into which we are all plunging."'[665] In *Stalker*, Tarkovskii uses the Writer and the Stalker to express the bleakness of a world where science has destroyed man's capacity for belief, and the hope that is offered at the end of the film is of a rediscovery of a faith that will sustain man. In Domenico's speech, Tarkovskii takes this idea further. It speaks in no uncertain terms of the causes and effects of the catastrophe of gilded materialism, and is unequivocal in its expression of a solution to this dead end. Domenico calls for a return of hope through a rediscovery of the spiritual:

> 'We must fill our eyes and ears with things that are the beginning of a great dream. Someone must shout that we'll build the pyramids. It doesn't matter if we don't. We must fuel that wish. We must stretch the corners of the soul like an endless sheet.'

[665] See the parallels between this speech by Domenico and Alexander's monologue on the state of the world near the beginning of *Offret*, discussed at the beginning of this section, I: The false path: from *tupik* to apocalypse.

His description of his 'new pact with the world' is an affirmation of the irrational: '"It must be sunny at night and snowy in August."' Finally, the most coherent part of his speech refers in direct terms to the need to make whole again what has been fragmented by man's insistence on listening exclusively to his rational side:

> 'Society must become united again instead of being fragmented. Just look at nature and you will see that life is simple, that we must go back to where we were, to the point where you took the wrong turning. We must go back to the main foundations of life, without dirtying the water. What kind of a world is this if a madman has to tell you to be ashamed of yourselves?'

This scene on the Capitoline, which culminates in Domenico's pathetic attempts to set himself on fire to the sound of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', is set against Gorchakov's equally impeded progress across the empty baths. Both these actions are, it seems, Domenico's building of the pyramids. Whether they are 'successful' or not is unimportant, because their power lies in their sincerity. Both are attempts to turn man away from the false path and back to the 'main foundations of life', to faith.

In *Nostalghia*, Tarkovskii presents a panoramic view of Western civilisation in decline**,** realised in images of the crumbling architectural grandeur of Italy. This vision of the material is juxtaposed with the, albeit vague and idealised, spiritual images of Gorchakov's Russian home. In *Offret* the entire vision of the film seems pared down and concentrated. Here, the materialist society is depicted not in decline, but at its endpoint, on the verge of nuclear annihilation. This is the final result of the destructive path which man has chosen. The alternative spiritual vision, however vaguely expressed in *Nostalghia*, is reduced to passing references in *Offret*. Russia as a foil to the decadent West is briefly alluded to in Alexander's admiration of the spirituality of a book of icons. The more abstract 'East' is alluded to in the ikebana of the tree, the strange Japanese music and Alexander's kimono decorated with the

yin and yang sign, traces, it seems, of a modern trend to seek the spiritual in the Eastern.

From the very first scene, the viewer is struck by how different *Offret* is in visual terms from any of Tarkovskii's preceding films. The fecund, luxurious, complex nature which had been central to all of the other films has been transformed into an austere and elemental simplicity composed of flat land, sea and sky, rendered with absolute precision and relentless honesty by Ingmar Bergman's cameraman Sven Nykvist. This is the northern light rendered on screen in all its power and clarity: every contour, every line seems hyper-defined as if viewed through a powerful lens, everything seems to be exposed. The contrast between the romantic, 'nostalgic' look of the first scene of *Nostalghia* with its soft light, its sepia tones, gentle nature and idealized figures could hardly be greater. This paring down of the visual world is accompanied by a paring down of the way in which the conflict between the material and the spiritual is expressed in the narrative, and while Tarkovskii's lack of subtlety here may not be aesthetically pleasing, it is indubitably deliberate.

In *Offret*, too, Tarkovskii aligns his characters along the spiritual-material spectrum, although the film is far more concentrated on the main protagonist, Alexander. Alexander's family merge with the home as an expression of the material, and Otto and Maria clearly represent the irrational element like Domenico. Alexander is poised between them, at a crisis point in his life which reflects the collective crisis of the nuclear attack, and just like Kris and Gorchakov, he is converted. The landscape of modern civilisation is also reduced in *Offret*. The images of cities, streets, churches, and squares are absent in *Offret*, replaced by Alexander's house standing in the unadorned landscape. With his fondness for finding in the particular a poetically succinct expression of larger ideas, Tarkovskii seems here to have distilled the essential elements of European culture into this one home, around which the entire film revolves. Alexander's home appears as a microcosm of the 'height' of European civilisation: it is beautiful, filled with the traces of a cultured

existence, but it is also an oppressive space like the hotel room in *Nostalghia*. It is 'slishkom krasivo' and lacking in spirituality. This house forms the backdrop to Tarkovskii's most unequivocal critique of a materialism which, for all its cultured, aesthetic trappings emerges as empty of meaning. If the state of the world is far more extreme in *Offret* than in previous films, poised on the edge of nuclear destruction, then the critique of the road that has brought things to this pass goes correspondingly deeper.

Alexander's monologue at the beginning of the film is in many ways a continuation of Domenico's speech on the Capitoline towards the end of *Nostalghia*, but it is more lucid, more direct and denser in meaning. In it, he rejects the whole of modern culture and civilisation as 'basically defective': a product of man's aggressive attitude to nature and others. It is 'built on force, power, fear, dependence' and is founded 'on sin from beginning to end.' He demolishes the idea of science's technical achievements as having at best provided some spurious material comfort, and at worst 'instruments of violence to keep power.'[666] The 'dreadful disharmony' or 'imbalance' of man's material and spiritual development is such that even 'Savages are more spiritual than us!' It is the more oblique and conversational references at the end of this monologue, however, that convey just how thorough-going the case against materialism is in the film. Alexander's speech, unlike Domenico's, offers no recommendations for a way out of the crisis. Instead, he quotes Hamlet's despairing "Words, words, words!", adding "If only someone could stop talking and DO something instead! Or at least try to." Whereas in *Nostalghia* Tarkovskii's discussion of the crisis of materialism can be said to hinge on the more general idea of the loss of faith, in *Offret* the focus is on the moral problem of 'words' as opposed to action as a cause of this lack of spirituality.

The critique of the verbal in the film takes the critique of materialism right back to its roots: words have at every stage been crucial to the expression of rational thought. They are 'implicated' in its rise to dominance, for the power

[666] See also the Writer's comments in *Stalker*: '"vsia eta vasha tekhnologiia, vse eti domny, kolesa i prochaia maeta – sueta, chtoby men'she rabotat' i bol'she zhrat'. Vse eto kostyli, protezy."'

of words has drowned out spiritual and emotional claims on perception of truth. As was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, words appear in *Offret* as the 'gong booming' or the 'cymbal clashing' of I Corinthians 13.[667] They replace inner contemplation and the development of a will to act. The narrative of the film plays this idea out through the prism of one person's life, for Alexander has devoted his life to words and relied on them in the material sense. He made his living from them as actor, journalist, critic and lecturer in aesthetics, yet his sense of the crisis in the world and his and others' powerlessness to do something about it is based precisely on this reliance on words. The choice, Tarkovskii seems to suggest, is, as Domenico repeats, 'molto semplice'. Man can continue to hide behind the seductive power of words, or he can find the courage to act. The latter course is associated in the film with the other extreme: a complete renunciation of speech. This is a theme which is explored on a number of levels. Alexander's son is advised by Victor not to speak after an operation on his throat: Victor tells him that 'sociability is a burden'. Later, Victor tells Alexander about Gandhi setting aside one day a week for silence, which implies that silence is necessary for developing the will to action. Of particular significance, however, is the fact that in his prayer for deliverance, Alexander renounces not only his home and family, but the power of speech: '"I'll be mute, and never speak another word to anyone. I will relinquish everything that binds me to life"'.[668] Thus the repudiation of material comfort is inextricably linked here to a rejection of words, which are inexpressibly dear to man, but essentially compromised, and a barrier to salvation. As at the end of *Nostalghia*, hope for redemption is only possibly if man returns 'to the main foundation of life' in a complete renunciation of the material to rediscover the spiritual in the divine Word.

[667] I Corinthians 13. 1, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[668] See also Andrei's vow of silence in *Andrei Rublev*, which can be interpreted as a preparation for artistic renewal.

II Journeys through space and memory

Tarkovskii, as was discussed in Part One, believed in the power of the artistic image to express infinitely more than words and express the *tselostnost'* of the universe. Even if he did not achieve the level of prioritisation of the visual over the verbal which he strove for, some of the most striking and impressive aspects of his work are to be found precisely in individual images from his films. Many of them are extraordinarily rich in meaning, and truly 'poetic' in the sense of which Tarkovskii wrote. They frequently express ideas which are explored at far greater length on the level of narrative, providing an intriguingly complex interplay between the visual and plot elements of the films. For this reason, the discussion in this section of life's journey as a travelling by Tarkovskii's protagonists through space and memory begins with an analysis of two different and indeed opposite visual images of man which Tarkovskii returned to in the different films in different variations.

Man as a 'detail' in Tarkovskii's 'boundless world of nature': *Stalker* (1979)

The first image is of man as a tiny figure on the screen. Graffy has described Tarkovskii's films as 'a boundless world of nature, rather than man, or rather a world in which man is but a detail in the picture', noting the prevalence in many of Tarkovskii's films of 'compositions of two or three figures huddling together at the centre of a vast space, without comfort or

shelter, with only each other to lean on.'[669] One could add that in all these compositions man appears to be constantly searching for something. This is true of the tiny figure of Ivan creeping with extreme watchfulness through the Dantean dark wood of the no-man's land between the Soviet and German lines. It is also true of the three monks crossing the field in a zigzag at the opening of *Andrei Rublev*. At the beginning of *Soliaris*, Kris crosses another field and passes the lake near his home, observing every detail of the nature there. In *Stalker* the three men are seen in miniature making their way with great care through the wilderness of the Zone. In all these cases, the narrative explanation of this heightened watchfulness may vary, but the meaning remains the same. These images are a striking expression of Tarkovskii's view of man as forever driven to seek to relate himself to the larger, mysterious whole, and are part of the continual journeying of all of his protagonists through physical, Euclidean space to find some final truth.

Man 'needs a mirror': *Nostalghia* (1981-1982)

The second image forms a pair to the above. This time Tarkovskii's protagonists appear in close-up, looking intently at their reflections in the mirror in an apparent effort to seek understanding through the self, through reflection in the mental sense. Mirrors and reflections in water or other shiny surfaces are everywhere in Tarkovskii's films, starting with his diploma film

[669] Graffy, 'Tarkovsky: The Weight of the World', p. 22.

Katok i skripka. Although they may in part have what Tarkovskii called a purely 'cinematic' and 'photogenic' function, as a motif they are also linked to Tarkovskii's preoccupation with man's search for truth.[670] In the films, this idea is realised in a multitude of different ways. On the most straightforward level, when Tarkovskii's protagonists study their reflection in a mirror, this frequently marks an attempt to understand the self through memory. In *Soliaris*, for example, Kris and Khari look at themselves in the mirror in an effort to make sense of what went wrong in their life together. In *Zerkalo*, the narrator's wife Natal'ia looks moodily into a mirror and ponders why Aleksei thinks she looks so like his mother as a young woman. In another scene from *Zerkalo*, the child Aleksei studies his dim reflection in a mirror in the house of the doctor's wife, and seems to reach self-awareness for the first time. In *Nostalghia*, when Gorchakov visits Domenico, he looks at his reflection carefully just before he agrees to help Domenico. Domenico does the same before explaining that he has understood that shutting up his family was wrong; because one needs to save everyone, and not just one's own family.

Mirrors and other reflective surfaces frequently provide dim, unclear images in Tarkovskii's films, which on a superficial level explains why his characters have to look so intently in them to discern anything. However, as was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, this phenomenon can also be interpreted more metaphorically. The 'dim reflection' which Tarkovskii's protagonists see expresses Tarkovskii's belief in the essential fragility and limitation of human perception of the whole.[671] In his films they are a medium through which man has a fleeting moment of 'seeing face to face', to 'know as fully as I am known'.[672] In *Zerkalo*, the limitations of space and time are overcome when the mother looks at her reflection in a very dim mirror and sees herself as an old woman, against the background of a landscape by Leonardo. Equally, in *Nostalghia* Gorchakov has a dream in which he studies himself in

[670] de Brantes, 'Faith is the Only Thing that can save Man', p. 182.
[671] I Corinthians 13. 12, *The Jerusalem Bible*.
[672] Ibid.

the mirror of a wardrobe and sees Domenico reflected, implying a symbolic link between them.

The dynamic of this pair of visual images is, as will be seen in the following discussion, reflected in the narratives of Tarkovskii's films. As Tarkovskii's characters, in their varying ways, travel through the landscapes of his films, they are also involved in an internal journey back through memory and history. It is through these internal journeys 'through the mirror' that they seem finally to achieve a fuller apprehension of their relation to the whole.

'Man needs man': the return to the self in *Soliaris* and *Stalker*

> Снаут: 'Мы вовсе не хотим завоевывать никакой Космос. Мы хотим раширить Землю до его границ. Нам не нужно других миров. Нам нужно зеркало. Человеку нужен человек.'[673]

In *Soliaris* and *Stalker*, as has been seen, Tarkovskii's interpretation of science fiction becomes a dramatisation of the tragic effects of the domination of humanity by a scientific worldview. The plots of both films revolve around the search for the whole conceived of as man's dream of reaching total knowledge by constructing an all-embracing explanation of the universe. In both films, Tarkovskii's protagonists seek to do this by locating the truth in actual, physical space, and in both cases this proves an illusion. Instead, man is returned to man in a journey through the self.

In *Soliaris* Tarkovskii expresses the search for truth in physical space through the theme of modern space exploration, itself the symbol of the scientific worldview and its ambitions. The film thus deals with the idea of literally 'conquering' space in terms of mapping the universe. It involves locating the outer boundaries of the universe: the ability to see the all. Kris's journey in the rocket to Soliaris symbolises the linearity of a scientific worldview, as understood by Tarkovskii in his theory of spheres. He is propelled in a straight line over a huge physical distance to what is apparently

[673] Snaut in the library scene of *Soliaris*.

the outer edge of human knowledge. It is significant that in the scientists' interrogation of Berton which Kris views before he leaves for Soliaris, Professor Messenger notes that '"Rech' idet o bolee vazhnom, chem soliaristika – o granitsakh chelovecheskogo poznaniia."'

Of all Tarkovskii's films, *Soliaris* is the one in which the simultaneous journey forward in space and back in memory is most explicitly realised on the level of the narrative. When Kris arrives at the space station in the hope of collecting conclusive scientific data on the Ocean, he begins instead a journey back through his past which leads to personal rather than scientific revelations. The Ocean of Soliaris is impervious to human attempts to analyse it as 'another world', in Snaut's words, and instead acts as a mirror held up to the lives of Kris and the other scientists. Its apparitions give shape to thoughts and memories, confronting the men with themselves, with their pasts, and with the earth which they left behind. The different 'Kharis' are in effect a physical manifestation of Kris's troubled memories of his past and the guilt he feels towards his dead wife. In watching together the film of home which Kris has brought with him, Kris and Khari undertake a visual journey back through the events of their lives. Like the memories of Aleksei which form the parts of *Zerkalo*, these apparently disparate episodes come together to form an image of a whole life lived: Kris as a boy with fire, autumn leaves, bird song, father and mother, mother standing in front of the pond and finally Khari standing in front of the house. It is significant that Khari, who was upset at her inability to remember her past, actually becomes more human as she begins to remember. Memory appears here, as in all Tarkovskii's work, as an essential part of being human.

The result of Kris's journey into his past in *Soliaris* is that he finally discovers his ability for human love. The theme of human flight, which figures in so many of Tarkovskii's films, forms an interesting subtext to *Soliaris* in this respect.[674] If one views space travel as the realisation of man's ancient dream to

[674] See also the reference to the history of flight in the print of early hot-air balloons which Kris looks at in his father's house in *Soliaris*.

lift himself up beyond the earth and 'see all' like God, then in *Soliaris* this dream emerges as a false hope. However, flight is also linked in the film through art to the idea of love as epiphany. Kris and Khari's 'flight' of love in the library is preceded by the camera's detailed exploration of Bruegel's 'Hunters in the Snow', and a copy of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* floats past them. This suggests that the flight of art and love offers the best chance for man to see the whole, even if only briefly. Moreover, his love for Khari also makes possible reconciliation with his father. In this connection, it should be noted that in *Soliaris* the physical journey is clearly entirely secondary in importance to the internal one. Indeed, the outcome of the film suggests that Kris's journey into space is a mere material landscape onto which Tarkovskii draws a spiritual search for truth. However one interprets the relative 'realities' of Kris's experience with Khari and the reconciliation with his father, it is clear that Kris's epiphany of love brings harmony and wholeness to what was previously a fragmented life, and that this is achieved through the power of memory.

A final image of wholeness: *Soliaris* (1969-1972)

It is this that is reflected in the final scene of the film, where the image of father and son, an expression of ideal harmony, is set in the unified image of home made up of house, tree, lake and road, set like an island in the bigger if ineffable unity of the Ocean.

In *Stalker*, Tarkovskii reverses the perspective on the search for truth in space. Instead of the humanly-known being an island in the vast expanses of unmapped outer space, in *Stalker* it is the unknown which is reduced to an island in the midst of the material world. The focus is not on the spatial limits of knowledge, but on the idea of truth as a kind of 'lost ark', a core of the ideal in a fallen world, expressed through the sanctuary idea of the 'komnata zhelanii' at the heart of the Zone. The travellers in *Stalker* journey out into the Zone in their hope to see for themselves the extraterrestrial 'komnata zhelanii', only to return having come full circle to their exact point and pose of departure round the table in the bar. They are thus literally returned to themselves. Their journey, however, has nothing of the high-speed linearity of Kris's rocket flying through space, consisting of random manoeuvrings forward and back, round and round almost as if the irrational power of the Zone overcomes any attempt at linear movement.

In this context, it is interesting to compare the space through which the protagonists of *Stalker* travel with that of *Soliaris*. In the 'Earth' scene at the beginning of *Soliaris*, nature appears as it does in many of Tarkovskii's earlier films, as mysterious and wonderful in all its detail. As in *Zerkalo*, both natural and man-made space is invested with a very personal meaning for the film's protagonist. Kris's intense scrutiny of what he is about to leave behind is directed at the detail of the countryside around his home, but also at the house and its objects. The emphasis here seems less on the attempt to 'read' nature to reach understanding. Instead, the impression is of a determined effort to imprint on his mind an indelible image of the places of his life, all of which are full of memories of his past, which he wants to take with him on his journey to Soliaris. These images of home recur in the film as symbols of the past, in the plants which he takes with him and which reappear near the end of the film, and in the dreams of home and childhood which are all firmly located in these places.

In critical literature, the natural world in *Stalker* is often seen as representing a turning point in Tarkovskii's depiction of nature. Synessios, who

sees nature as the 'central element' of *Zerkalo*, argues that nature is transformed in the last three films:

> It will never again possess the fecundity and potency it once had. In *Stalker* it is overgrown, infected, abandoned; in *Nostalghia* it is marginalised, theorised, while in *Offret* it is flat and cold – still beautiful in parts but no longer vital.[675]

The natural world may be transformed in *Stalker*, but it remains mysterious, the locus of an extraordinary though very different power, as beyond the 'limits of human understanding' as the Ocean of Soliaris. Tarkovskii's evocation of the overgrown, unkempt wilderness that is the Zone is the image of a kind of 'lost Eden' which yet bears the sad traces of failed human attempts to destroy it. [676] The 'komnata' itself may have been a red herring, but the Zone exudes a palpable sense of mystery and power in Tarkovskii's rendering of it. It has a life of its own quite untouched by man, with its vibrating bog and changing paths. Nature appears here almost like a veil around the material world, inscrutable but occasionally allowing glimpses into the beyond. In *Soliaris*, too, the natural world is portrayed as the locus of the mysterious in contrast to the distinctly banal effect of the space station, where, supposedly, the mysteries of outer space are being investigated. In both films, the natural world emerges as a more likely locus for the perception of an ultimate truth not merely in contrast to scientific attempts to conquer space, but also in contrast with an evocation of man-made space as the opposite. This is true of the depressing space station in *Soliaris*, which in contrast to Lem's original idea is set against the extended Earth scene which opens the film and which forms a kind of elegy to the beauty of the natural world.[677] In *Stalker* there are the gloomy, decaying interiors of the area outside the Zone.

Although the journey through space in *Stalker* is not as neatly paralleled by a mental journey back though memory as was the case in *Soliaris*, all the

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[675] Synessios, *Mirror*, pp. 1-2.
[676] See Igor' Evlampiev's comments on the grass-filled barn just inside Zone as displaying the first elements of a lost harmony and wholeness which characterise the whole Zone. Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, p. 237.
[677] See discussion of *Soliaris* in Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, pp. 101-02.

film's main characters seek understanding through a reflection on the past. The Writer wonders at the betrayal of his talent and where it has taken him, and the Stalker's Wife explains her love for her husband through what they have experienced together. Her speech is an attempt to understand the present through the past and make them one instead of them being divided. In addition, it can be argued that the 'Stalker's dream' sequence represents a reading of the present through the past by setting the biblical texts from Revelation against the present of the Zone. Of particular importance are the images of this present as the human debris under water which Tarkovskii shows. This debris appears as a collective memory of human existence: from works of art, to bombs and syringes. Though the mental journey of the three men in the film is more intimated through the repeated shots of their faces suspended in deep contemplation, the idea of the return to man is represented for all through the sheer humanity of the Stalker's family with its poverty but its capability to love. *Stalker* shares the final vision of *Soliaris*: of love as the real, humanly-achievable revelation rather than the illusory one man seeks in a scientific understanding of the world.

The fragmented self: war and exile in *Ivanovo detstvo* and *Nostalghia*

The human journey in *Soliaris* and *Stalker* is in search of a complete knowledge of the universe, envisioned by Tarkovskii as the presumptuous dream of science. In Tarkovskii's other films, however, the focus is on the search to recreate the whole out of the disparate fragments of human life. This is particularly true of the protagonists of *Ivanovo detstvo*, *Andrei Rublev*, *Zerkalo* and *Nostalghia*. Memory plays a crucial role in this, appearing as Tarkovskii's 'countless threads' which link past and present to form a whole, affirming the meaning of each human life.

Ivanovo detstvo can be seen as a prototype for Tarkovskii's multiple variations on the human journey through space and memory in his different films. The manner in which the journey is evoked in *Ivanovo detstvo* may seem

straightforward when compared with the later films, yet the instruments used are the same. Tarkovskii creates images of the protagonist making his difficult path through the world which he juxtaposes with dreams, flashbacks and visions which represent an alternative, internal journey. Ivan's journey centres on his attempt to understand the division of his life into two apparently irreconcilable parts: his past as a normal child with a family and home, and his present as an orphaned participant in a brutal war. In the film, Ivan is constantly seen traversing the broken landscape of war, undertaking a personal way of the cross which is fraught with suffering and danger.

The journey through space and memory is achieved in *Ivanovo detstvo* through abrupt cuts between the present of the narrative and the past of Ivan's dreams, which are realised as polar opposites in lighting, tone and music. The stark contrasts of the opening sequences of the film are a good example of this, immediately conveying the absolute break between Ivan's past and present selves. Ivan's dream of his childhood and mother is filled with strong sunlight, a flourishing natural world, laughter and his exhilarating flight. This is underlined by the positive mood of Ovchinnikov's score. An abrupt cut leads to Ivan's awakening in a derelict mill situated in a ruined agricultural landscape, a scene in which Ivan's physical transformation is as stark as the change in his surroundings, which are dark, gloomy and depressing. These two sequences set the tone for Tarkovskii's treatment of the contrast between past and present as seen from Ivan's point of view. The alternations in the film between the light, joyful, idyllic images of childhood proper and the dark, muddy, threatening scenes of wartime appear as a contrast between the ideal and its polar opposite. Ivan's memories of his pre-war childhood are characterised by a sense of harmony and unity, which are juxtaposed with the disharmony and destruction of wartime. In his philosophical reading of Tarkovskii's films, Igor' Evlampiev interprets the dream Ivan has before setting off on his mission as a vision of a 'complete' (sovershennyi) world, and argues that in *Ivanovo detstvo*

> Тарковский использует все ключевые образы, которые в дальнейшем будут неизменно выражать идею совершенства бытия:

> образ коня, олицетворяющий стихийную, но благую силу природы; проливной дождь, предстающий как прозрачная сеть, охватывающая мир и связующая его в живительное единство; образ яблока, выражающий благотворность бытия для нас, его готовность открывать и дарить себя человеку.[678]

Although Tarkovskii's framing of *Ivanovo detstvo* in terms of the stark, literally black-and-white contrast between two extremes seems entirely to exclude the ideal from the present, there is an intimation of how the world should be in the theme of love in the film. The encounter scene between Masha and Kholin conveys a sense of elation, and is the only present-time scene in the film where nature is portrayed in terms similar to those of Ivan's dreams. The natural world of the birch wood is intact and beautiful, and filled with light. In this early film too, one finds a reference to the connection between flight and love: Masha jumps from the fallen tree through the air into Kholin's arms. Another example is the beauty of the Shaliapin recording of a love song, which on three occasions is interrupted by the ugly brutality of the present, just as the birch wood scene is cut short by gunfire.[679] The fragment of the Virgin and Child fresco which is still visible on the remaining part of the destroyed church's cupola is also a marker of what is lacking in Ivan's present and war in general. The values of harmony and forgiveness, love and hope which this image traditionally represents are absent, as is maternal love for Ivan, whose mother has been killed. It is significant that the fresco itself is a fragment of an original whole, and that the building for which it was created is ruined. As in many of Tarkovskii's films, the man-made spaces which the characters inhabit are decaying and fragmented, reflecting the disjointed state of the world. The suffering and absurdity of war are expressed in the scene where Ivan comes across the half-crazed old man who invites him into the remains of his house through a redundant door, and attempts to hang a certificate on a remaining

[678] Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, p. 39.
[679] See also Evlampiev on love in *Ivanovo detstvo* and Tarkovskii's later films as 'tu *edinstvennuiu* silu, kotoraia sposobna spasti mir, predotvratit' ego polnuiu gibel', raspad, degradatsiiu.' Ibid., p. 31.

fragment of wall.[680] Even the natural world which surrounds this house has been destroyed, reduced to a featureless sea of mud which man can barely traverse.

The final scene of the film does not seem to suggest a reconciliation of Ivan's past and present lives, even in an afterlife, if indeed this is a vision of Ivan after his death. This provides an interesting contrast to the end of *Nostalghia*, as will be seen below. The uplifting character of this bright, sunny scene, similar in tone to Ivan's dreams of his childhood, and the exhilaration of his running is punctured by the sinister, blackened tree on which the camera stops. Perhaps this can best be seen as a coda to the shape and content of the whole film, in which harmony and disharmony, wholeness and fragmentation always coexist in the human world, with the latter always threatening to overcome the former. Ivan's journey through his memory does, in the film, restore to him to a sense of wholeness as represented by the values of his pre-war childhood in comparison to war, but it does not resolve the divide between the two separate parts of his life.

In his writings and interviews, Tarkovskii does not mention the idea of the trauma of a fragmented life as featuring in his original conception of *Ivanovo detstvo*, and thus the above reading remains necessarily a personal interpretation of the film. In the case of *Nostalghia*, however, in a series of statements Tarkovskii indicates quite clearly that he saw the tragic division of life through exile as the main subject matter of the film:

> Я делал фильм о русском человеке, совершенно выбитом из колеи, с одной стороны, нахлынувшими на него впечатлениями, а с другой стороны, трагической невозможностью разделить эти свои впечатления с самыми близкими людьми, фатальной невозможностью включить свой новый опыт в то прошлое, с которым он связан самой своей пуповиной.[681]

[680] Tarkovskii returned to this image in *Nostalghia*, where Domenico's home is full of absurd juxtapositions, including a door in the middle of the room through which he insists that Gorchakov must pass.
[681] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 322.

Gorchakov's suffering stems from the fact that in his travels through Italy he cannot 'soedinit' v sebe svoiu rodinu s Italiei',[682] and indeed he dies 'nesposobnyi perezhit' sobstvennyi dukhovnyi krizis, "soedinit'" i dlia nego, ochevidno, "raspavshuiusia sviaz' vremen"'.[683] Gorchakov's death, it seems, is the dramatic realisation of his aim of expressing in the film the impossibility of living in a divided world.[684] Tarkovskii's comments on *Nostalghia*, quoted at the opening of Part Two above, indicate that he envisaged the torment of exile in terms of man's innate striving to achieve a sense of *tselostnost'*. It was, he states, his 'main task' to

> передать состояние человека, переживающего глубокий разлад с миром и с собою, не способного найти равновесия между реальностью и желанной гармонией, - переживающего *ностальгию*, спровоцированную не только его удаленностью от Родины, но и глобальной тоской по целостности существования.[685]

Tarkovskii's treatment of the drama of a fractured life in *Nostalghia* has, unsurprisingly, a very different feel from his realisation of the theme in the much earlier *Ivanovo detstvo*. Situated virtually at opposite ends of Tarkovskii's career, *Ivanovo detstvo* was a project that the young Tarkovskii took over from someone else, whereas *Nostalghia* was entirely his own, made abroad by an experienced director. However, despite these differences, a comparison of the theme of the divided life in the two is instructive, providing an insight into the way that Tarkovskii literally returned to the same themes to vary them in subtle ways. Like Ivan, Gorchakov seems adrift in a reality which is entirely divorced from his 'other' Russian life, which he, too, only inhabits in dreams and memories. Gorchakov's dreams and visions consist of idealised images of the Russian home, wife and family, and in this respect they form a parallel to Ivan's visions of his childhood. This similarity is initially obscured, however, by the fact that the world of the dreams is not presented as the complete opposite of the present moment of the narrative: it is simply a faraway 'other'

[682] Andrei Tarkovskii, 'O prirode nostal'gii', *Iskusstvo kino*, 1989, 2, pp. 131-36 (p. 132).
[683] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 325.
[684] Tarkovskii, 'O prirode nostal'gii', p. 132.
[685] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 325.

for which Gorchakov longs. The break with the past exists in the film more as a conundrum than an irrevocable tragedy. In *Nostalghia*, Tarkovskii seems to explore his concerns with time and space as relative and limiting human constructs, which stand in the way of a vision of the whole. In answer to Eugenia's question about how it is possible for people from different countries to get to know each other, Gorchakov's reply is cryptic 'By destroying frontiers'. It is precisely the principle of breaking down frontiers, however, which informs Tarkovskii's evocation of Gorchakov's journey through memory in *Nostalghia*. It is here that Tarkovskii's treatment of the dreams and visions of his protagonist's past differs radically from that of his earlier film, for in *Nostalghia* past and present become one both through a merging of present and dream, and actually in the dreams themselves.

Tarkovskii's interest in revealing an obscured whole through experimentation with the technical possibilities of cinema has already been discussed in Part One of this chapter, and the merging of present and dream to create a sense of continuum in *Nostalghia* is one of the best examples of this. An analysis of the detail of these transitions indicates just how consistently Tarkovskii achieves this porousness of different levels of reality. After Gorchakov and Eugenia's conversation about the difficulties of cross-cultural understanding, ending with Gorchakov's comment on breaking down frontiers, Gorchakov looks over his shoulder, hears the sound of water and sees his wife in Russia cleaning a glass. Later, a conversation about extreme homesickness, ending with references to Gorchakov's 'double' Sosnovskii, is followed by the revelation that Gorchakov always carries the keys of his Russian home with him. Gorchakov walks forward, the sound of water and a barking dog are heard, and the camera slips into a scene of Gorchakov's wife, house, children and dog, all against the background of Eugenia's conversation with the hotel owner. The most masterfully realised shift from reality to dream is, however, effected in the depressing hotel room. After a confrontation with Eugenia which seems to exemplify the barriers to mutual understanding between cultures, Gorchakov lies down, his dog appears and the camera slides almost imperceptibly into

another vision in which past and present are literally united through the embrace of a weeping Eugenia and his wife. Tarkovskii's technique here is an extraordinarily effective translation of his belief that in spite of the apparent ubiquity of division and strife, all is linked, and that it is the artist's job to show how the 'countless threads' of memory weave a web beyond the confines of a narrowly-conceived reality of place and time.

In parallel with *Ivanovo detstvo*, the final scene of *Nostalghia* can be understood as a vision of life after death. It is, however, quite different in tone and meaning from the sequence of Ivan running through the water.

A final image of wholeness: *Nostalghia* (1981-1982)

Indeed, Tarkovskii himself admitted the openly metaphorical nature of the image of Gorchakov with his Russian house set in the ruins of the Italian monastery, and his description of its meaning is unequivocal:

> Это как бы смоделированное внутренное состоянние героя, его раздвоенность, не позволяющая ему жить, как прежде. Или, если угодно, напротив – его новая целостность, органически включающая в себя в едином и неделимом ощущении родного и кровного и холмы Тосканы, и русскую деревню, которые реальность повелевает разделить, вернувшись в Россию.[686]

As a composite image of an ideal *tselostnost'* of one man's life, this final scene recalls the conclusion of *Soliaris*, where the island of home is set in the Ocean

[686] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 334.

of Soliaris. It can be seen as Tarkovskii's realisation of the artist's power to have 'one table' for the generations, to unite in one that which is divided by time and place in the human world.

The artistic whole in a divided Russia: *Andrei Rublev*

Tarkovskii's *Andrei Rublev*, too, explores man's attempt to recreate a harmonious whole, but despite its biographical theme, the frame of this quest is not that of an individual life.[687] In contrast to *Ivanovo detstvo, Zerkalo* and *Nostalghia*, the fragments to be reassembled in *Andrei Rublev* are the shards of a human society repeatedly torn apart by war and violence. Indeed, the opposition between the part and the whole is central to the historical context of the film, which is the period prior to Russia's emergence as a unified nation state. The feuding between different parts of Russia, and the exploitation of this disunity by the Tatars, are the antithesis of the ideal of political unity, the 'edinstvo' of a Russian state which followed historically. More importantly, though, *Andrei Rublev* is concerned with art's role in bridging the gap between the fragmented reality of human history and the intuited, ideal wholeness of the divine. It is a direct investigation into Tarkovskii's belief in the power of the artistic image to express the essential wholeness of the universe.

Comments made by Tarkovskii in *Zapechatlennoe vremia* indicate the importance of Tarkovskii's personal view of humanity to his conception of *Andrei Rublev*. He notes that

> История жизни Рублева для нас, по существу, история *преподанной*, навязанной концепции, которая, сгорев в атмосфере живой действительности, восстает из пепла как совершенно новая, только что открытая истина. И только пройдя по кругам страдания, *приобщившись к судьбе своего народа*, Андрей, потерявший веру в несовместимую с реальностью идею добра, снова приходит к тому, с чего начал. К идее любви, добра, братства.[688]

[687] This study uses the 185-minute version of *Andrei Rublev* which was released in the Soviet Union in 1971. Any references to the longer, 205-minute 'director's cut' are explicitly stated in the text of the chapter.
[688] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 195. Tarkovskii's emphasis.

This conception of Rublev's life reflects Tarkovksii's vision of every life as an individual way of the cross, in which despite the experience of previous generations everything must be experienced and suffered anew. It also communicates the idea of life as a circular path, or a return to the beginning. Andrei starts as a follower of Sergei of Radonezh's teaching, but in order to realise for himself the truth of his wisdom he has to go out into the violent world of his times and experience life at first hand. The Russian Passion sequence in the film forms a direct reference to the theme of life as a way of the cross, here made specific to the Russian context. It can be argued, though, that the entire structure of *Andrei Rublev* springs from this theme. The eight episodes which make up the main part of the film are the stations on the journey of Rublev's life in which he is tested by carnal temptation, despair, loss of belief and loss of artistic inspiration.

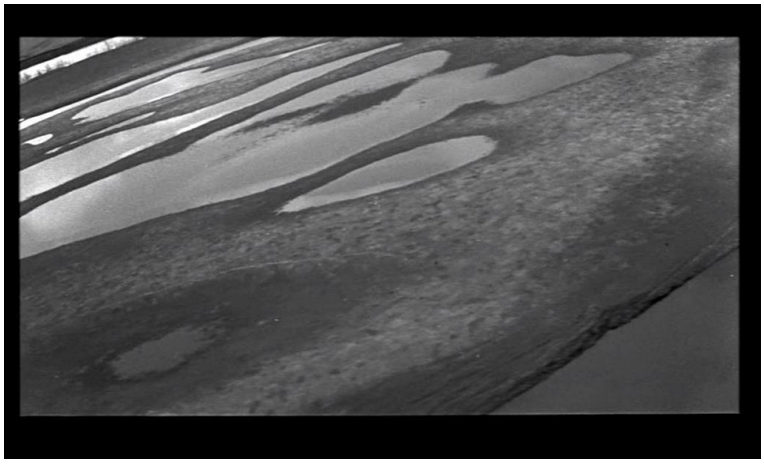
In a parallel with Tarkovskii's preceding film, *Ivanovo detstvo*, the opposition between the poles of wholeness and fragmentation is expressed in terms of sharp contrasts in the various episodes. In the second episode, 'Feofan Grek', Tarkovskii juxtaposes the noisy cruelty of the torture of a man on a square with the peaceful serenity and beauty of the church interior where Feofan is working. Similarly, in the fourth episode, 'Prazdnik', the light-hearted, joyful tone of the pagan midsummer ritual is disrupted by the violence of the Church's soldiers. In the following episode, 'Strashnyi sud', the gory brutality of the blinding of the stonemasons takes place in the peace and quiet of a wood, and is preceded by the peaceful, brightly lit scene of Rublev painting and playing with the prince's children in his palace.

With the exception of the 'Strasti po Andreiu' episode, Tarkovskii does not intersperse Rublev's journeying through the physical world with dreams and visions as he does in *Ivanovo detstvo*, *Zerkalo* and *Nostalghia*. [689] However, one can interpret the vision of harmony represented by the images from Rublev's icons in the epilogue, supposedly painted after the historical period of

[689] The only dream sequence is that of the younger prince, as he recalls his humiliation by his brother. This scene only exists in the longer, 205-minute version of the film.

the film, as the result of Rublev's reflection on the horrors of the present in relation to the past which are chronicled in the film. The scenes in which Rublev attempts to relate the fallen world around him with the divine through a reflection on the past are shown to be crucial to his personal path in life, and to his search to relate the part to the whole. In the episode 'Strasti po Andreiu', Rublev's personal vision of the Passion, which is entirely at odds with Feofan's, emerges from his consideration of the wisdom of the Gospels alongside the concrete experience of the suffering of the Russian people on their own way of the cross. Equally, Rublev's struggle to understand how he should paint the Last Judgement is resolved in the film through his meditations on the relationship between the present and the past understood through the Bible. His sudden insight into how to approach the Last Judgement comes as a direct result of his consideration of the reading from St Paul about the proper place of women alongside the appearance of the innocent and harmless but bareheaded Durochka: '"Kakie zhe oni greshniki?! Kakaia zhe ona greshnitsa, dazhe esli platka ne nosit?"' Moreover, this moment of enlightenment appears in the film as the culmination of Andrei's reflections in the preceding episodes. Feofan Grek's traditional view of a wrathful Old Testament God and sinful man is shown in the film to be the result of the appalling cruelty of man to man which he observes around him, and which his icons fail to transcend because they reflect this earthly vision. Rublev's epiphany comes out of a new consideration of the New Testament with the reality of the present. Finally, in the episode 'Kolokol', Tarkovskii shows how Rublev is forced to reconsider his past vow of silence and the renunciation of his art when confronted with Boriska as a fearless young artist determined to cast this new bell as a symbol of hope after war. In the scene where Rublev observes Boriska at work, Rublev is a silent onlooker of the action, but the intensity of his interest is palpable. In its focus on the detail of Rublev's icons, the epilogue suggests that Rublev has undergone a conversion, one which has inspired him to attempt anew the expression of the divine in the human, and thus transcend worldly suffering.

There is an important symmetry between the epilogue of *Andrei Rublev* and the prologue, one which is to be found in the connection between the motif of flight and art, a link discussed above with respect to *Soliaris*. Tarkovskii's rendering of the motif of human flight in the prologue recalls the ancient human dream of seeing all from a divine perspective rather than the search to locate truth in space which one finds in *Soliaris* and *Stalker*. Ivan's flight at the opening of *Ivanovo detstvo* offers a similar view of the world from above, but the impression it makes is quite different. Instead of the brief sense of the trees and ground rushing past as Ivan flies down the hill, the camera in *Andrei Rublev* pauses to encompass the dimensions of an elemental view of the 'whole' earth from above. Earth, water and the sky reflected in the water, before a swift descent as Efim crashes into the ground.



A divine view of the 'whole world': *Andrei Rublev* (1966)

This one sequence expresses the hope, elation and fear contained in the original narrative of man's dream of flight, the story of Icarus' vain attempt to be like the gods.[690] It is the dream of a divine vision of the world in its *tselostnost'*

[690] As Bird notes, Tarkovskii originally intended to have Efim attempt flight with 'wings' like Icarus, before rejecting this as too straightforward a reference. Bird, *Andrei Rublev*, p. 19. Tarkovskii also refers to the flight of Icarus in *Soliaris*. In the library scene, the camera moves over four Bruegels: three of his 'Four Seasons' series and 'Landscape with the Fall of Icarus', also an artistic reworking of the theme.

which Evlampiev identifies in his commentary on the prologue of *Andrei Rublev*:

> Сюжет пролога можно рассматривать как метафорическое выражение неискоренимого стремления человека к идеалу, к такому миру, в котором господствует абсолютная цельность и отсутствует несовершенство. Человек из своего эмпирического, земного состояния способен лишь на мгновение охватить, увидеть каким-то внутренним зрением этот идеальный мир, это мгновение высочайшего напряжения всех его сил, выводящее за грань обыденности в какую-то мистическую, сверхреальную сферу. [691]

Evlampiev attributes a similar meaning to the scene which follows Foma finding a dead swan in the 205-minute version of the film. Foma lifts the wing of the swan, and the camera moves over the landscape in a very similar manner to the way it does in the prologue, showing the texture of woods, land and water as if from the point of view of a flying swan. Evlampiev notes of the scene:

> в нем выражено *прозрение высшей полноты и гармонии*, прозрение воплощенного совершенства, открывающегося 'идеальному' взору, который возвысился над конфликтами и противоречиями бытия и в своем стремительном движении охватывает целое мира.[692]

The epilogue echoes the prologue's evocation of man's dream of capturing the whole through flight, but here the flight is a metaphysical one accomplished through art. If the ancient dream of physical flight through space is shown to end in tragedy, then the epilogue offers a vision of artistic flight, like the 'flight' of love in the other films, with its perception of a greater unity, however limited, fleeting and human this may be. Rublev's harmonious images of the divine with 'human faces' are, it seems, for Tarkovskii precisely that 'expression of wholeness' which should be the aim of all great art, through which the fragmentation of the world is transcended.

[691] Evlampiev, *Khudozhestvennaia filosofiia Andreia Tarkovskogo*, p. 52.
[692] Ibid., p. 53. Evlampiev's emphasis.

Pieces of a life lived: *Zerkalo*

Reflections of a whole life: *Zerkalo* (1974)

In *Zerkalo*, the idea that man needs a mirror to find truth which was expressed in *Soliaris* becomes a metaphor for an entire film. In restricting the focus of the narrative to the life of one individual, viewed from the perspective of its endpoint at the narrator's deathbed, *Zerkalo* explores the idea of the *tselostnost'* of a life lived. The fragments of this life are portrayed as a mosaic of episodes from the different parts of the narrator's own life, documentary footage of historical events from his lifetime, and even scenes from his mother's life before his birth. The wall of mirrors above the invisible narrator's sickbed, however, suggests that multiple versions of truth could be assembled out of these shards of the mirror. Like Tarkovskii's spheres, each of which is a 'chastitsa pravdy', each reflection of the narrator's life remains partial.

On one level, *Zerkalo* is above all else an internal journey through memory. In the framing narrative of the film the protagonist lies ill and physically immobile in bed. However, the episodes which form Aleksei's memories are punctuated by physical journeys through space. The main part of the film opens with the doctor's 'winding path' across the field in front of the family house. The mother's personal way of the cross is expressed in the Dantean scene at the printing press. Asaf'ev struggles up a hill and falls in the snow, echoing the motif of life as a way of the cross and his suffering as an

orphan of war. It is indeed in *Zerkalo* that the idea of space as imbued with personal meaning is explored with greater complexity than in any of his other films. The whole film is premised on the power of personal places to bring together past and present and give them integrity and meaning. This explains Tarkovskii's insistence on reconstructing his childhood home using family photographs on the exact site where it had originally stood, rather than following the simpler option of filming in a similar, existing house. The natural setting of the house was painstakingly recreated for the shooting of the film, including the replanting of buckwheat in the fields near the house, in spite of local opinion that it had never been grown there and would not flower. Tarkovskii's reaction to the 'miracle' of the flowering buckwheat is illuminating of what he was trying to achieve in *Zerkalo*:

> Это была как бы иллюстрация особых свойств нашей памяти – ее способности проникать за покровы, скрываемые временем, о чем должна была рассказать наша картина. Таков и был ее замысел.[693]

The film displays Tarkovskii's fascination with the material texture of past and present as inscribed in both the world of nature and the world of objects. The camera's intense, painterly focus on the objects in the house seems to suggest the belief in their power to reveal the past. The book of paintings by Leonardo is examined and seen in the hands of the different generations. The table in the garden, seen in various different states, is a visualisation of the image from Arsenii Tarkovskii's poem 'Zhizn', zhizn''. It is an image of the one table for the different generations. This same idea is expressed in the sequence at the end of the film, in which time as a continuum is explored through space and objects. The sequence begins with the young father and mother in front of the house before the birth of Aleksei. This is followed by a cut to the mother as an old woman with the narrator and his sister as children. The camera then travels slowly through the undergrowth past the overgrown, rubbish-filled well of the time of the making of the film, and finally the young mother is seen watching herself as an old woman cross the field with her own

[693] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 247.

young children. Just as the artist can 'go into any century' and have one table 'for the great-grandfather and the grandson', so a particular space with its objects can pierce the 'veils' of time by uniting in itself a whole history.

Tarkovskii also imbues man-made space in *Zerkalo* with different and opposite characteristics to natural space, as he does in many of his other films. The film is framed by the luxuriant 'dark wood', whose strange power is suggested by the mysterious wind which comes from it at different points during the narrative, and into which the camera retreats at the end of the film. This almost supernatural effect prefigures the shaking bog of the Zone in *Stalker*. Moreover, as Synessios has noted, of all Tarkovskii's films *Zerkalo* is the one with the most concentrated evocation of the natural world, and this is contrasted with the sterility of the human landscapes of the narrator's Moscow flat – virtually unfurnished and with no view on the outside world – and the Kafkaesque air of the printing press where the mother worked. The home of the doctor's wife, visited by mother and son, is the opposite of the narrator's flat in its luxurious furnishings, but it makes an equally oppressive impression.

The journey through memory frames *Zerkalo*, but within the various episodes from Aleksei's life one also finds Tarkovskii's characters recalling their pasts in different ways in order to make sense of their present. Examples of this from the film are many and varied, and show the reach and scale of Tarkovskii's preoccupation with this theme. One could mention the child's dreams or visions of his home and his parents' flight in embrace. Past and present are also juxtaposed in the conversations of the narrator and Natalia, and in the phone conversation between the narrator and his mother where both talk about different parts of their past, he about his father leaving and she about Liza. In both cases present conflict and an inability to communicate are connected to events in the characters' past. A further instance of this can be identified in the scene with the Spaniards. Their arguments and conflicts are set against documentary footage from the Spanish Civil War, making a direct link between the tragedy of their past and the dislocation of the present. Finally, one could mention Tarkovskii's decision to include a number of his father's poems

in the film. These poems are carefully positioned to achieve a process of reflection on the incidents which they are paired with. Thus 'Pervye svidaniia', with its theme of the transforming power of an early love, is set alongside the mother's loneliness and sorrow at the beginning of the film as she waits for the return of her husband during wartime. Similarly, Arsenii Tarkovskii's reading of 'Zhizn', zhizn'' to the documentary footage of Soviet soldiers crossing the Sivash acts to affirm the meaning of the suffering it depicts through the poem's declaration that death does not exist and its emphasis on faith and hope.

Zerkalo is commonly held to be Tarkovskii's most personal film, and this is true of far more than its autobiographical content. Tarkovskii saw it as the film closest to his concept of cinema, which, as was discussed in Part One of this chapter, was informed and inspired by his personal view of the world.[694] *Zerkalo* is undoubtedly the film in which Tarkovskii most fully explores the power of human memory to bring together the apparently disparate, to unite and ultimately to save man by showing him his 'preemstvennost' i nesluchainost'' in the world he inhabits.[695] The centrality of this theme to Tarkovskii's conception of *Zerkalo* and in particular to its structure emerges clearly from the commentary Tarkovskii appended to his proposal for the film submitted to the *Khudsovet* of Mosfil'm. In particular, his summary of two scenes stands out:

> Сон, где Мать моет голову, смотрится в зеркало, а в отражении Мария Ивановна, то есть Мать в старости, и пейзаж Леонардо: связь поколений, связь времен, призрачность реальности, взаимопроникновение эпох. […] Огородникова в квартире у Автора, точно овеществление духа квартиры, тех, кто где-то когда-то жил, преемственность, связь времен, ушедшие годы, одиночество, те же проблемы, все уже было…[696]

Zerkalo also remains both the clearest and most articulated statement of Tarkovskii's firm belief that all is connected, and his most comprehensive attempt to reveal the 'countless' threads through the means of narrative. The barriers of time are dismantled by the cutting together of disparate scenes from

[694] Synessios, *Mirror*, p. 47.
[695] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 314.
[696] Cited in Ol'ga Surkova, 'Khroniki Tarkovskogo: *Zerkalo* (II)', *Iskusstvo kino*, 2002, 7, pp. 106-23 (p. 119).

the narrator's life which reach from the present moment of his conversation with his mother, to personal and family memories of the past, collective recollections of the history of the nation, and include both fictional, acted scenes and documentary footage. By using the device of the narrator on his deathbed recalling the elements of his life, Tarkovskii seems to be directly testing the idea of his 'subjective logic' of thoughts, dreams and memories as an alternative way to knit together narrative.[697] The distinctive character of the film's structure, which aims to imitate the associative workings of memory, produces – in spite of its superficially disjointed nature – an extraordinary impression of the wholeness of one life as a part of collective human experience. Furthermore, if time is a central concept in all of Tarkovskii's films, it is in *Zerkalo* that he really investigates in detail the idea of the unity of existence over and in spite of time. The seemingly linear nature of human life – man is born, grows old and dies – means that time seems to be the only vector along which man can give meaning to his existence. In *Zerkalo*, however, Tarkovskii breaks time apart and exposes it as a limiting construct, the 'cocoon' which he saw as created by man. The faculty of memory emerges here as a paradoxical aspect of human nature. Man is tied to his material body and thus mortal and limited, yet through memory he is linked to the whole in a myriad of ways, and all this despite the apparently divided, partial, fragmented nature of human life which is so evident in the narrative of *Zerkalo*.[698]

In the opening scene of the film, a young man is cured of his stutter and is able to affirm 'gromko i chetko', as instructed by his speech therapist: 'Ia mogu govorit''. This confident assertion echoes the tenor of 'Zhizn', zhizn'', a text which is so important to the film. The first verse states 'gromko i chetko', without fear that death does not exist, that everything and everyone are eternal; and this conviction is borne out in the film's conclusion. The final scene of the film, with its composition of the unity of generations over time, affirms the

[697] See discussion on 'Narrative and truth' in Part One, III: Tarkovskii's cinematic method.
[698] See Synessios on this: 'It is a paradox that *Mirror*, a film which confirms the deep and unbreakable ties between people, between the generations, between the personal and the political, between ourselves and the world, is essentially a film about people who fail to communicate, who have failed to communicate.' Synessios, *Mirror*, p. 110.

tselostnost' of not just one life but all of human existence, perceived through the associative power of memory. The joyful, exhilarating tone of this scene is emphasised by the chorale from Bach's *St John Passion* which accompanies it and the whooping of the little boy at the end: no other film of Tarkovskii's offers such an optimistic, hopeful interpretation of the path of life. However, even here, the mysterious wind emitting from the forest suggests that this interpretation of the whole must remain a partial human one, and the camera draws back to reveal the 'dark wood'.

III The return to the beginning: the redemptive act in *Nostalghia* and *Offret*

> Domenico: 'we must go back to where we were, to the point where you took the wrong turning. We must go back to the main foundation of life.'[699]

> Alexander and his son: '"In the beginning was the Word."'[700]

As the above readings suggest, many of the journeys in Tarkovskii's films emerge as a return to some beginning point. This is particularly striking on the visual level of the films. *Ivanovo detstvo* begins and ends with the image of a single tree. The prologue and epilogue of *Andrei Rublev* are linked on a more complex level through the motif of man's striving through flight and art to see the whole. *Soliaris* and *Nostalghia* both end with a vision of the home which the films' protagonists have left behind and which appears as fused with the landscape of their present existence, respectively the Ocean of Soliaris and Italy. *Zerkalo* concludes with an image of the cyclical nature of human life: the mother as a young woman before the birth of her children watches herself as an old woman crossing a field with her own young children. *Stalker* returns to its start both in the scene of the three men standing at the table in the bar and in the image of the mysteriously moving glasses. Finally, the last scene of *Offret*

[699] From Domenico's speech on the Capitoline in *Nostalghia*.
[700] Alexander in the opening scene of *Offret*, repeated by his son in the final scene of the film.

reiterates its beginning both in word through the first line of St John's Gospel, and in the image of the bare tree, which itself forms an echo of the opening of Tarkovskii's first full-length film, *Ivanovo detstvo*.

Tarkovskii's use of this circular form in his seven main films can be read in many ways. One could argue that it reflects his love of the symmetries of the poetic form and music. Equally, it could be understood as expressing the idea of the circularity of the path of life, where each person, in spite of the experience of previous generations, must follow his own way of the cross. In Tarkovskii's last two films, however, the expression of life's journey as a return to the beginning takes on a new importance. It becomes central to the narrative of these films, emerging as the only choice for a world which has strayed so far down the false path that it faces destruction. Here, Tarkovskii goes beyond an exploration of a world which has reached the end point of the false path of rationalism to posit the idea of salvation in terms of a return to some common beginning point, Domenico's 'main foundation of life'. In doing so, Tarkovskii translates into his art his personal view of man as fallen from an original, ideal state of wholeness and unity and thereafter forever fated to try and return to 'nekoe intuitivno-oshchushchaemoe nachalo'.[701] It should be noted that the theme of salvation through a return to the beginning is one which emerges in the latter part of *Nostalghia*, and then becomes the central premise of the narrative of *Offret*. This is why, as will be shown below, there are many parallels between the characters of Domenico and Alexander, which are not reflected on the level of the two films as a whole.

It is possible to interpret *Offret* as a kind of coda to Tarkovksii's treatment of life as a journey in search for the whole in his films, both in terms of journey through space and memory, and in terms of the false path of materialism. The palpably different quality of *Offret* from Tarkovskii's preceding films has been alluded to above. It is as if everything is deliberately reduced to a minimum to allow the central question at the heart of the film to be

[701] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 132. See discussion of this in Part One, I: 'Man and the universe: Tarkovskii's worldview'.

thrown into sharp relief: the question of how to act when humanity stands before self-inflicted apocalypse. If one examines Tarkovskii's rendering of the journey through space and memory in *Offret*, it too seems muted and transformed. The only image in the film of Alexander travelling through space in the sense of the other films is when he follows Otto's advice and sets out to find Maria and ask for her help to stop the nuclear catastrophe. This scene, which shows him wobbling precariously from side to side on the uneven road and eventually falling off his bicycle and then picking himself up and riding on, echoes Tarkovskii's many visual expressions of the winding path of life with its difficulties. The other sequence is notable because it seems to constitute a denial of the whole idea of moving through space in a meaningful way in search of something. This is the scene after Alexander has set light to his house and is being chased by his relatives and the ambulance personnel. The exaggeratedly random nature of his motion in this scene, in which he runs back and forth followed at an unnaturally leisurely pace by his pursuers, seems to parody the images of man's journey of life found in the earlier films. Moreover, this wilfully aimless movement is continued in the motion of the ambulance which eventually takes Alexander away. The ambulance drives in a loop up to the burning house and past Maria before weaving its way across the field for no apparent reason. All this is prefigured by the beginning of the film. It opens starts with images of the journey recognisable from earlier films – a clearly winding track, and the progress across the screen from right to left of Alexander and his son – only to overlay this with the deliberately meandering motion of Otto circling back and forth around them on his bicycle.

Equally, although Alexander is seen in the film to reflect extensively and verbally on the past, finding in it the roots of both his personal crisis and the wider crisis of human society, there is no sense of a revelation in this journey into memory as was seen in the earlier films. The past in the film exists only as that which created the tragedy of the present, and the existence of the future seems uncertain, its horror suggested by Alexander's visions. Suspended between these two points, the narrative of *Offret* is fully focussed on the present

as an endpoint, an ultimate time of reckoning. Similarly, while in the earlier films Tarkovskii's vision of life as a way of the cross encompassed the different elements of this journey, in *Offret*, and in the ending of *Nostalghia*, the overwhelming focus is on the end of this path: the Christ-like act of self-sacrifice.

Tarkovskii himself identified the central question of *Nostalghia* as 'Kak my dolzhny zhit', kak my mogli by naiti vozmozhnost' k edineniiu v etom razdelennom mire?' the only answer to which, in his opinion is 'mutual sacrifice'.[702] In both *Nostalghia* and *Offret* the acts of sacrifice undertaken by Domenico and Alexander appear as the only way to bring humanity back from the edge of catastrophe to the 'nachalo', the point where they were before they set off down their path to destruction. This, one could argue, represents the culmination in narrative terms of the theme of the false path and reflects Tarkovskii's strong personal conviction that only by a return to the beginning, to the 'parched sources' of existence can man be reunited with the whole and be redeemed in what seems to be an irrevocably divided world.[703]

These redemptive acts can also be seen as a resolution of the journeys through space and memory undertaken by the protagonists of Tarkovskii's films. In a context where there seems no glimpse of the 'countless threads' which bind the individual to the whole, both Domenico's self-immolation and Alexander's renunciation of the world are final attempts to leap across the divide between themselves as individuals and the whole, the earthly and the divine and achieve the longed for 'sovmeshchenie' with the ideal which Tarkovskii talked of.[704] Tarkovskii's quotations in both *Stalker* and *Nostalghia* from Beethoven's setting of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' form an intriguing subtext to this idea of the act of sacrifice as a joining of man with the universe. The uplifting final scene of *Stalker*, as has been discussed, involves the Stalker's invalid daughter miraculously moving the glasses across the table to the sound

[702] Irina Brezhna, 'Interv'iu s Andreem Tarkovskim', in Marina Tarkovskaia (ed.), *O Tarkovskom: Vospominaniia v dvukh knigakh*, Moscow, 2002, pp. 506-18 (p. 515).
[703] Tarkovskii, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 228.
[704] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 132. See discussion in Part One, I: 'Man and the universe: Tarkovskii's worldview'.

of the first verse of the 'Ode to Joy', with its joyful affirmation of the power of the divine to reunite what has been divided:

> Your magic reunites
> What custom strictly parts.
> All people become brothers
> Where your gentle wing alights.[705]

It is precisely this text which is audible even over the distortions and false starts when Domenico sets fire to himself in *Nostalghia*, and which echoes the message of his speech that 'Society must become united again instead of fragmented.' *Nostalghia* contains a further reference to the 'Ode to Joy' at another crucial point in the narrative, when Gorchakov visits Domenico. This time, the quotation is from the last verse:

> Do you bow down, millions?
> Do you sense the creator, World?
> Seek him beyond the starry firmament!
> He must dwell beyond the stars.[706]

This is followed by the first line of the refrain, which bursts forth joyously 'Be embraced, millions!'[707] The sense of these lines is directly reflected in the sequence which follows, which is laden with Christian imagery. Domenico pours out oil, commenting that 'one drop plus one drop makes a bigger drop, not two', and then offers Gorchakov bread and wine before telling him about how he has understood that he needs to save the 'whole world' and not just his own family. During the process of filming, the character of Domenico became far more central to Tarkovskii's conception of *Nostalghia* than he had originally envisaged. For Tarkovskii, Domenico made clearer Gorchakov's anxiety about modern life 'v kotorom net real'noi vozmozhnosti kontaktov.'[708] In *Zapechatlennoe vremia* Tarkovskii describes Gorchakov's admiration for Domenico as follows:

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[705] From Beethoven's adaptation of Friedrich Schiller's 1785 poem 'An die Freude'. Translated from the German original by Clive R. Williams in the booklet to: Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, The Chamber Orchestra of Europe, cond. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, 1991, CD 9031-75713-2.
[706] Ibid.
[707] Ibid.
[708] Tarkovskii, 'O prirode nostal'gii', p. 134.

> Горчаков поражен поступком Доменико, его внутренней целостностью, почти святостью. В то время когда Горчаков только рефлектирует, переживая несовершенство жизни, Доменико берет на себя право реагировать и действовать самым решительным образом.[709]

Together with Tarkovskii's references to the 'Ode to Joy', with its emphasis on the mystery of man's relation to the divine and the rest of creation, this suggests that for Tarkovskii the act of self-sacrifice is indeed a redemptive act in imitation of Christ which will bind together all men in a world characterised by division and isolation. Moreover, as Tarkovskii's comments on Alexander's act of renunciation indicate, this step is understood as one in which man finally becomes one with the whole he seeks:

> Но он все же совершает этот шаг, переступает черту допустимого и нормального человеческого поведения, не опасаясь быть квалифицированным попросту сумашедшим, ощущая свою причастность к целому, к мировой судьбе, если угодно.[710]

From this point of view, one could argue that the narrative 'outcome' of Alexander's and even of Domenico's acts of self-sacrifice – that is, whether they appear to have successfully wrought a change in the world – is less important than the actual fact that they take this step.

In both films, the act of self-sacrifice is significant in and of itself, the courageous attempt to overcome the powerlessness of 'Words, words, words' and, fuelled by an innate 'toska po tselostnosti sushchestvovaniia', to become one with the whole through the renunciation of life itself for Domenico, and for Alexander of all that stands for a worldly life: his home, family, friends and the power of speech. These acts require a leap of faith into the unknown, a step which is also demanded of the viewer of these films, who is denied the comfortable certainty of the 'canonical completeness' which Tarkovskii deplored in traditional narrative. The final scene of *Offret* does not offer the synthetic vision of the whole which concludes *Nostalghia* or *Zerkalo*, *Soliaris* or *Andrei Rublev*; nor does it convey the uplifting, hopeful sense of the

[709] Tarkovskii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', p. 327.
[710] Ibid., p. 330.

miraculous which characterises the close of *Stalker*. The camera's slow ascent up the bare tree accompanied by the Bach chorale 'Ebarme Dich', with its plea for divine mercy for sinful man, brings the film back to its beginning. There, to the same chorale, the camera moved up the tree of Leonardo's *Adoration of the Magi*, taking in the fearful expression of one of the kings in Leonardo's evocation of the event of Christ's birth, the 'Word made flesh' as a cataclysmic and terrifying intervention of the divine into the world.[711] This forms a prelude to the apocalyptic concerns of the film. The ending of the film, however, conveys quite another mood. Tarkovskii described the tending of the tree which frames the narrative of *Offret* as 'a symbol of faith', and dedicated the film to his son 'with hope and confidence'.[712] The final scene of *Offret* is a return to the beginning in many senses, but one which is imbued with a cautious hope: hope that the tree may flower as in the legend, hope of renewal in the next generation in the person of the Little Man and indeed of Tarkovskii's own son. The repetition by the Little Man of his father's words at the opening of the film 'In the beginning was the Word' underlines this sense of hope for the future, while lending the ending a universal meaning. In quoting from the opening of Saint John's Gospel, Tarkovskii is weaving a link to the original Christian narrative of a return to the beginning as the divine 'Word', with the message of hope that this holds for mankind. Its wording specifically refers to the original oneness of all, and the nourishing and sustaining power this has for man:

> In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light which darkness could not overpower.[713]

Thus the last scene of *Offret* can be read as expression of his vision of man's eternal journey through life, relived from generation to generation, looking heavenwards to the mystery of the divine but firmly rooted in the earthly, with

[711] See the discussion of Leonardo's 'Adoration of the Magi' in A. Ottino Della Chiesa, *The Complete Paintings of Leonardo da Vinci*, London, 1969, p. 92.
[712] Tarkovskii, *Sculpting in Time*, p. 224.
[713] John 1. 1-5, *The Jerusalem Bible*.

the hope and tentative faith that he will achieve some measure of understanding of his part in the whole.

Conclusion

This chapter began by examining the crucial, framing role of the concept of *tselostnost'* to Tarkovskii's worldview, and hence to his theories on art and cinema. As the readings of Tarkovskii's films in Part Two demonstrate, this vision of the ideal wholeness of the universe and human existence shapes and informs the worlds of his films. From *Ivanovo detstvo* to *Offret*, Tarkovskii returned again and again to his image of man living 'na puti k istine' with his 'toska po tselostnosti sushchestvovaniia'. The multiple variations of the motif of life's journey which one finds in these films testify to his serious commitment to a highly nuanced and subtle probing of this view of human life. Across his seven films, Tarkovskii sets man's search for the whole against the background of a world which is depicted as divided and disconnected. The essentially fragmented or disintegrating state of the universe is shared by the fictional worlds of both Platonov and Rasputin, as has been shown above. In Tarkovskii's films, the divisions appear above all as a deep disharmony in human relations, and his exploration of an ideal *tselostnost'* which exists in spite of this is dominated by the enigma of human perception of this whole. This particular focus on *tselostnost'* is clearly influenced by the fact that Tarkovskii was working in a visual medium. His films explore the precarious nature of human perception by actually enacting it in visual terms, achieved through an exceptional richness of visual imagery and the attempt to express the whole in an associative and consciously elliptical way which parallels the workings of memory and human thought.

This brings us to a defining feature of Tarkovskii's art, and his treatment of *tselostnost'* and memory. Premised on a deeply personal vision of the world, his work is consciously and unashamedly universal in its ambitions. Indeed, as

has been seen, for Tarkovskii a glimpse of truth in its *tselostnost'* is only possible through faithfulness to a personal vision of the world. When the artist expresses his 'pravda mira', the personal necessarily becomes universal. Integral to this view is Tarkovskii's belief in the unique role of art as door through which man can perceive the whole. Through their attempt to achieve a 'vernost' peredachi oshchushcheniia', Tarkovskii's films strive to provide glimpses of the sense of the whole which man intuits beyond the veil of the world. They are mirrors which the viewer is invited to hold up to his own life in a 'return to the self'. In an echo of T.S. Eliot's vision of his art in *Four Quartets*, Tarkovskii's films are an attempt to 'apprehend the point of intersection of the timeless with time', bringing 'hints and guesses' of the whole which man cannot perceive in its entirety.[714] At his best, Tarkovskii realises to an impressive extent his own vision of the artistic image with which this chapter began. His films do indeed act as 'nekoe uravnenie' of which one could say: 'Here the impossible union / Of spheres of existence is actual,/ Here the past and future / Are conquered and reconciled.'[715]

[714] T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, London, 2000, p. 27.
[715] Ibid.

Conclusion

In his discussion of the centrality of the idea of *vseedinstvo* to the Russian philosophical tradition, Sergei Khoruzhii has argued that it is a concept peculiarly suited to the philosophical expression of both Russian Orthodox spirituality and Russian culture, for:

> Один из лейтмотивов русского менталитета – отталкивание от раздробленности, разорванности, раздельности (будь то в мире или в обществе или душе человека) и стремление к цельности, связности, единству.[716]

This assessment, one could argue, is as relevant to Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii as to the Russian philosophers examined in Chapter One. As the above discussion has demonstrated, the work of these three artists expresses an essential longing for an ideal whole, founded on a perception of the human world as tragically divided and fragmented. Physically eroded by hostile nature and fearing that in death their bodies will be dispersed 'v nichto' by the wind, Platonov's heroes are filled with a yearning to find out the 'tochnoe ustroistvo vsego mira'.[717] Rasputin's writing is inspired by the vision of human existence as a sacred unity of past, present and future, a 'neskonchaemaia tsep'', deviation from which leads to a disintegration of life and morality.[718] In both Tarkovskii's writings and his films, man is defined by a basic 'toska po tselostnosti sushchestvovaniia', and his work is imbued with the belief that for all the apparent divisions and fragmentation of the human world, man is bound to the universal by 'beschislennye niti'.[719] In the work of all three men, as has been seen, man's attempt to overcome division and achieve *tselostnost'* is accomplished by memory, which gathers and preserves, which is truth itself, and which binds the particular across time, place and the limits of human perception. Beyond the shared concern with these themes, the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii offers distinct interpretations of both

[716] Khoruzhii, 'Neopatricheskii sintez', p. 41.
[717] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 23.
[718] Rasputin, 'Poslednii srok', p. 391.
[719] Tarkovksii, 'Zapechatlennoe vremia', pp. 325-26.

tselostnost' and memory which reflect their wider differences in worldview, artistic medium and complexity, historical context and even political outlook.

One way of elucidating the complex interplay of parallel and contrast between these interpretations is to compare a number of common aspects which frame the expression of *tselostnost'* and memory in the work of the three artists. In the art of all three men, the search for the whole is associated with the idea of a journey through space and time undertaken by their protagonists. The following discussion focuses on the different ways in which Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii evoke the motif of the journey, and understand the seeker or wanderer; on how they construct the space through which their heroes travel; and on their conception of the ideal whole which is sought. Most of these themes have been touched upon earlier, in the chapters on the individual artists, though with varying degrees of detail, and the ensuing discussion builds on what has been established there.

Journeys and seekers

In Chapter Three, reference was made to an interesting crossover in imagery between Rasputin and Platonov: they both employ the *perekati-pole* or tumbleweed plant as a metaphor for the wanderer, but with opposed meanings. Rasputin's description of the *arkharovtsy* in *Pozhar* as 'living like the tumbleweed', rootless, irresponsible and possibly dangerous outsiders, on the one hand appears to reflect the standard figurative usage of the word in the period contemporary to his career as a writer. It is used negatively 'O cheloveke, sklonnom k chastoi smene mestozhitel'stva, raboty'.[720] Against this,

[720] Evgen'eva (ed.), *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, iii, p. 67. See also the entry in *Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, 17 vols, Moscow and Leningrad, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1948-65 for examples of literary usage of the image of *perekati-pole*, including Chekhov's story of the same name. It is interesting that the negative figurative meaning of *perekati-pole* appears to have entered common usage after Platonov's lifetime. Although it is referenced in the above Akademiia Nauk dictionary (Volume 9, 1959, p. 638), it does not appear in entries for *perekati-pole* either in the 1880-82 edition of Dal' or in the 1935-1940 edition of Ushakov: V.I. Dal', *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, 4 vols, Moscow,

one can set Platonov's compassionate image of the *perekati-pole* as wanderer. In *Chevengur*, Iakov Titych's house is buried under a drift of tumbleweed which has been blown into Chevengur by the wind from the plain. Platonov's description of the plant as 'bespriiutnaia perekati-pole, odninokaia trava-strannik' echoes his portrayal of the wandering, homeless *prochie*, who also arrive in Chevengur in drifts as if carried by the wind.[721] In *Dzhan*, as has been mentioned, the young Nazar Chagataev attaches himself to a tumbleweed plant, following its random rolling path over the steppe for several days until it leads him to a shepherd who looks after him. Chagataev finds consolation in this 'shershavyi kust – brodiaga, po-russki – perekati-pole', because like him it is alone and wandering through the world:

> Куст был пылный, усталый, еле живой от труда своей жизни и движения: он не имел никого – не родных, не близких, и всегда удалялась прочь.[722]

This parallel but contrasting use of imagery is revealing of the more complex, contextual differences between Rasputin and Platonov which go beyond basic differences in worldview and style. Their opposing images of the wanderer reflect different conceptions of the wanderer and indeed of wandering in Russian culture. Rasputin's writing echoes the negative image of the *brodiaga* expressed in some parts of the Russian philosophical tradition. One recalls Chaadaev's vision of Russia as a nation of rootless nomads, and Dostoevskii's description of Aleko and Onegin as uprooted blades of grass carried on the wind. It also reflects the distrust of the outsider and the rootless person in traditional peasant culture, where each community is its own world. Indeed, the physical journey plays a very limited role in Rasputin's fiction. The action of his stories takes place in one community, with some arrivals from or departures to the city. His heroes are not wanderers but *pravedniki*, whose journey is metaphorical rather than physical. Their progress is a reconnection to rootedness, a rejoining of the straight, 'iskonnii put''.

1999 [1880-82 edition], ii, p. 56; D.N. Ushakov (ed.), *Tolkovyi slovar' russkogo iazyka*, 3 vols, Moscow, 2001 [1935-1940 edition], ii, p. 329.

[721] Platonov, 'Chevengur', p. 253.

[722] Platonov, 'Dzhan', pp. 444-45.

Platonov's *stranniki* heroes draw on the tradition of the positive wandering truth seeker like the *iurodivyi*. If the wanderer in Rasputin's fiction is the outsider, the world of Platonov's stories is peopled exclusively by *stranniki*, from his protagonists to the *prochie*, the workers in *Kotlovan* and the Dzhan. The open steppes of Russia and Central Asia which form the backdrop to his writing appear to be the home of a nation of rootless, homeless and orphaned wanderers, and this gives artistic voice to Platonov's personal perception of his country in the early Soviet period. Moreover, like the *perekati-pole* native to these steppes, Platonov's *stranniki* are perpetually in random motion, wandering the face of the earth to where the wind carries them.[723] Wandering, in Platonov's stories, is the dominant mode of existence, equally motivated by physical necessity and a spiritual need to find truth.

If the images of journey and wanderer in Platonov's and Rasputin's writing can be understood as two very different responses to what Gogol' called the 'bespredel'nye russkie prostranstva', in Tarkovskii's films one finds something quite different.[724] At first glance, Tarkovskii's extensive variation on the motif of life as journey, and his ubiquitous wanderer heroes seem to suggest a strong parallel with Platonov. Indeed, in the works of both men the positive idea of the journey and wanderer is evoked in both physical and metaphorical terms: their heroes' journeys through space are clearly existential. Beyond the considerations of genre difference, it is particularly striking that Tarkovskii's films express a more universal conception of life as journey taken from the broader context of European cultural history. If Platonov's wanderers are *stranniki* and *iurodivye*, Tarkovskii protagonists are twentieth-century Romantic seekers in a Dantean mould. Their journeys, as has been seen, are physically and spiritually along difficult, often tortuous paths, and their search

[723] *Perekati-pole* is defined as the generic term for a group of plants which live in deserts and steppes, 'posle sozrevaniia otryvaiushchiesia ot kornia i perekatyvaemye vetrom'. Evgen'eva (ed.), *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, iii, p. 67.
[724] N.V. Gogol', 'Chetyre pis'ma k raznym litsam po povodu "Mertvykh dush"', in N.V. Gogol', *Sobranie sochinenii*, 9 vols, Moscow, 1994, vi, pp. 71-83 (p. 74). These letters were written by Gogol' in 1846. For a discussion of the concept of Russia's *neob''iatnost'*, see Emma Widdis, 'Russia as Space' in Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis (eds.), *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 30-49.

to relate themselves to the whole has a definite feel of the 1960s to it. On one level, these contrasting interpretations are a reflection of the very different personal backgrounds and temperaments of these two artists, but they also point to the vastly different intellectual context, environment and focus within which they worked. For all the very real restrictions that still existed in the Soviet Union until the 1980s, Tarkovskii belonged to a privileged artistic elite which de facto had a significant exposure to European literature, culture and philosophy and the possibility to express this artistically, even if this was not always popular with his superiors.[725]

Space and landscape

One way of looking at the different ways in which Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii construct space is in their evocation of two contrasting types of natural landscape: the dry, empty open steppe of Platonov's stories and the rich greenery of forests and fields which for the most part are the backdrop to Rasputin's fiction and Tarkovskii's films. This is a contrast which is powerfully expressed in visual terms by Larisa Shepit'ko in *Rodina elektrichestva* (1967) and in *Proshchanie* (1983), completed by her husband Elem Klimov after her death.[726] The open steppe and the forest represent two opposing but equally strong images of a 'Russian' landscape. They are central components of what Christopher Ely has described as the 'myth of Russian space' which began to be articulated in Russian art and literature in the nineteenth century as part of the wider search for a distinctly 'Russian' identity.[727] In this connection, it is no coincidence that the nineteenth-century Russian landscape paintings which spring to mind when one watches Tarkovskii's films or reads, for example, *Proshchanie s Materoi* are Ivan Shishkin's scenes of Russia's dense forests or

[725] Apart from samizdat publications, a case in point is the fact that Tarkovskii as a student of VGIK was able to watch a wide range of European and other non-Russian films which were not released in the Soviet Union. Johnson and Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, p. 27.
[726] *Rodina elektrichestva*, dir. Larisa Shepit'ko, Mosfil'm, 1967, and *Proshchanie*, dir. Elem Klimov, Mosfil'm, 1983.
[727] Christopher Ely, *This MeagerNature: Landscape and National Identity in Imperial Russia*, DeKalb, IL, 2002, p. 20.

Isaak Levitan's muted rendering of Russian fields, rivers, villages and birch groves. For all their differences, Rasputin and Tarkovskii share what is essentially a Romantic vision of a vibrant and mysterious natural world, which owes much to the expression of the 'special Russian mystique' developed by nineteenth-century painters.[728]

Platonov's depiction of Russia's open spaces clearly springs from a rather different sensibility. This is illuminated by a consideration of, for example, Levitan's rendering of Russia's open spaces in *Vladimirka* (1892), which does not 'fit' with Platonov at all.

Isaak Levitan, *Vladimirka* (1892)

In fact, this is probably the main reason why Aleksandr Sokurov's film *Odinokii golos cheloveka* (1978-87), based mostly on Platonov's 'Reka Potudan'', recalls Tarkovskii far more than it does Platonov.[729] The traces of Tarkovskii's influence are everywhere in this early film of Sokurov, from the camerawork to the focus on texture, and also through the echo of Tarkovskii's distinctive shots of man in nature, a small figure on a huge screen.

[728] Ely, *This Meager Nature*, p. 221.
[729] *Odinokii golos cheloveka*, dir. Aleksandr Sokurov, Lenfil'm, 1978-87. For a discussion of the links between Sokurov's film, Platonov's 'Reka Potudan'' and Tarkovskii's *Zerkalo*, see: Nariman Skakov, 'Intertextual Visions of the Potudan'', in B. Beumers and N. Condee (eds.), *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*, London, 2011 (forthcoming).

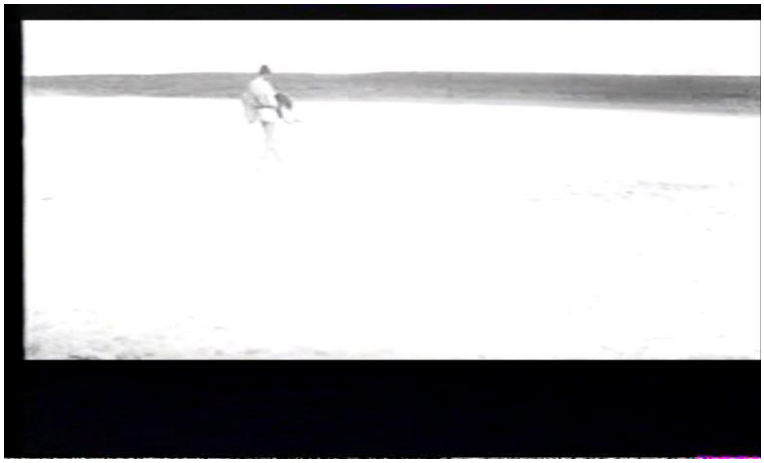
Sokurov's 'Tarkovskian' vision of Platonov in *Odinokii golos cheloveka* (1978-1987)

Beyond this, however, it is Sokurov's vision of the overgrown beauty of a Russian provincial landscape set under Levitan's 'pasmurnyi' sky which provides a direct connection with the world of Tarkovskii's films. In Shepit'ko's *Rodina elektrichestva*, by contrast, one finds a vision of natural space which is much closer in spirit of Platonov's stories. Shepit'ko's film is a masterful evocation of Platonov's blind nature with its erosive effect on humanity: the priest really does appear 'blackened' and the old woman seems to be about to disintegrate into dust. Its bleak steppe landscape, devoid of vegetation or water, is dominated by two planes: the dusty earth and the blazing sky. This minimal outline of a landscape recalls the images of Russia's open spaces which one finds in the peasant paintings of Kazimir Malevich, an artist with whom Platonov has been connected by a number of scholars.[730] In Malevich's 1932 *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie*, for example, a peasant stands against a landscape consisting of sky, horizon and earth realised as a series of bands of colour.

[730] See, for example: Robert Chandler, 'Platonov v prostranstvakh russkoi kul'tury', in E.I. Kolesnikova (ed.), *Tvorchestvo Andreia Platonova: Issledovaniia i materialy: Kniga 3*, St Petersburg, 2004, pp. 170-85; and Andrew Baruch Wachtel, 'Meaningful Voids: Facelessness in Platonov and Malevich', in Catriona Kelly and Stephen Lovell (eds.), *Russian Literature, Modernism and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 250-77 (pp. 262-63). Robert Chandler chose a series of Malevich's paintings, including *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie*, as the cover images for his English translations of Platonov's stories.

Kazimir Malevich, *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie* (1932)

In this connection, an intriguing resemblance can be noted between Malevich's tall, yellow-shirted figure and Shepit'ko's male peasants in *Rodina elektrichestva*. This is particularly true of the young engineer hero of the film who is barefoot and in a peasant tunic and appears strangely elongated in comparison to the bent villagers. In addition, Malevich's own conception of *Slozhnoe predchuvstvie* as composed '"iz elementov oshchushcheniia pustoty, odinochestva, bezvykhodnosti zhizni"' is illuminating of Platonov's vision of landscape.[731]



Platonov's 'blind nature' in Shepit'ko's *Rodina elektrichestva* (1967)

[731] Chandler, 'Platonov v prostranstvakh russkoi kul'tury', p. 175.

Platonov's construction of natural space is both absolutely material in the tradition of Fedorov and metaphysical: it is 'priroda-prostranstvo'. In Platonov's stories, landscape is always space, which, like time, appears as a vector alongside which man attempts to live out his life.

Parallels and contrasts can also be identified in the way that the three artists explore man's place in nature. Across the boundaries of historical period and worldview, all three men share a reverence for the natural world which is coupled with a fear that it will be destroyed by man's irresponsible actions. In Platonov, one finds the fear that socialist man is not fit to wield the huge power over nature which technology has given him. Rasputin's writing expresses a later despair at the ecological and social destruction wrought by Soviet projects to 'control' and exploit nature. In Tarkovskii's films, man's misuse of science leads to landscapes torn up by war (*Ivanovo detstvo*), ruined by industrial pollution (*Stalker*) and ultimately threatened with complete obliteration (*Offret*). Beyond this shared concern, however, the relationship between man and nature expressed in the work of the three artists is very different. In both Platonov's stories and Tarkovskii's films, their heroes are involved in an attempt to relate themselves to the whole in nature, but the spirit of this attempt is markedly different. For Platonov, as suggested above, nature is both a physical and a metaphysical problem for man, an issue of sheer survival both bodily and spiritually. In Tarkovskii's work, it is the question of perception which predominates, as man tries to understand the conundrum of his place in a whole which lies behind the veil of nature. Rasputin's writing, by contrast, is inspired by a vision of man as having a predetermined and immutable place in the natural world. Man exists as a part of nature's eternal pattern, to which he is bound by the cycles of sowing and harvesting.

Following on from these different interpretations of man's relationship to the world of nature, it is interesting to note how the opposition of human or man-made space to natural space is played out in the works of the three artists. As was discussed above, these two types of space are frequently set against each other in Rasputin's stories and Tarkovskii's films. If natural space is

always given a positive value in the work of both men, they make a similar distinction between different kinds of man-made space. In the case of Rasputin, the urban space and the buildings which are replacing the villages in his stories are always negatively coded, but the *izby* of his rural spaces are coded positively, reflecting his view of the peasant hut as the natural, traditional place in which man can live in nature in Russia. One is reminded of his vision of Russia's return to a 'rodnoi dom' and 'rodnoi dukh'.[732] In Tarkovskii's films, human space is often soulless and inhuman, like the space station in *Soliaris* or the hotel room in *Nostalghia*; and frequently claustrophobic, like the narrator's Moscow apartment in *Zerkalo* or Alexander's home in *Offret*. However, the house as image of a real home appears as a positive space: this is particularly true of the narrator's childhood home in *Zerkalo*, which is also a traditional wooden house, as well as the more impressionistic images of the home in *Soliaris* and *Nostalghia*. In Platonov's stories, by contrast, human space features mostly in terms of its absence or its inadequacy in the face of the erosive forces of nature, reflecting Platonov's vision of man's *bespriiutnost'*. The village *izby* in 'Rodina elektrichestva' are disintegrating into the ground, the 'obshcheproletarskii dom' in *Kotlovan* is never built and only at the end of *Dzhan* do Chagataev's people manage to build themselves houses.

A further interplay of parallel and contrast exists in the material objects which are set alongside man in the fictional spaces created by Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii. Like the space itself, these objects are both natural and man-made, and frequently act as material symbols or conduits of memory and the past for their heroes. In Platonov's stories these are the objects which his protagonists gather. They are 'vsiakaia neschastnaia meloch' prirody'[733]: leaves, remains of dead spiders and mosquitoes, worn-out shoes, wooden boxes, dead sparrows. Inspired by Fedorov's vision of the 'dust of the ancestors', each and every one of these humble objects is an equally important and unique component of the forgotten past. Each one is valued for itself rather

[732] Rasputin, 'Moi manifest', p. 4.
[733] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 49.

than having symbolic value, and exists as a physical particle of memory. In Rasputin's stories, by contrast, the equivalent material objects are defined by their symbolic value as touchstones of a traditional Russian past. This is true of the samovar, and also of the scythes which are brought out instead of machinery for the last harvest on Matera. A similar role is performed by the *izby* in both *Proshchanie s Materoi* and Rasputin's story 'Izba'.

Tarkovskii's films are filled with objects of memory which are both valued for themselves and have a symbolic aspect, although symbolism was something that Tarkovskii did not recognise in his own work. Everyday things, mirrors and other reflective surfaces, books and paintings function in Tarkovskii's films as 'doors' to memory and the past, expressing Tarkovskii's wider preoccupation with human perception and the experience of sudden and tantalising moments of a whole not bounded by time or space, a rending of the veil of the world. His intense visual exploration of the texture of these objects reflects both his personal aesthetic appreciation of the uniqueness of each thing and also his belief that time and the past exist as traces on these objects. This is particularly well illustrated in *Zerkalo*, in the camera's focus on the objects in the house and also on the well by the house in different states over time. Moreover, as has been discussed above, the books and paintings which as objects form such a contrast to Platonov's humble *meloch'*, both represent man's common cultural memory and provide access to it, revealing and affirming the whole.

The whole: truth, *nachalo* and home

As was demonstrated in the main body of this study, the 'whole' truth sought by the three artists' heroes reflects distinct visions of the world. In both narrative and image, Tarkovskii's films realise his belief that man lives 'na puti k istine'. Rasputin's protagonists know that truth is to be found in memory and in keeping faith with a traditional way of life. Platonov's humble seekers, like Voshchev, wander through the world with heads bowed by a longing for truth,

waiting for the time 'kogda mir stanet obshcheizvesten'.[734] These clear differences in conception and expression of the idea of truth, however, exist side by side with a striking parallel. In the work of all three artists the quest for truth appears as a journey 'home'. In this connection, Tarkovskii and Rasputin offer an illuminating comparison, for they both evoke the journey as a return to some common, lost beginning which is man's home or proper place. In the work of both men, one could argue, this is to be understood against the background of a human world portrayed as catastrophically divided, situated at some endpoint verging on apocalyptic self-destruction. Furthermore, in both cases this crisis is portrayed as the result of man having taken a false path. Within this similarity in framework, however, Rasputin and Tarkovskii offer diverging visions of both the path itself and the beginning or home which is sought.

In Rasputin's writing, the path is Russia's 'iskonnii put'', abandoned under communism. The return to this historical path is conceived of as Russia's return to her real self, to her *samobytnost',* a reuniting with her proper origins. The home sought here is a specifically Russian 'rodnoi dom', a 'prirodnaia istoricheskaia obitel'' which will reunite the Russian nation with its roots.[735] Against this, one can set Tarkovskii's more universal interpretation of path and *nachalo,* in which the false path of materialism with all its folly and violence springs from man's original fall from the divine at Eden. The beginning to which man must return is not a historically determined sense of place, but the Christian vision of the *nachalo*, a return to man's proper spiritual home through the Word. As discussed above, home is also a physical concept and theme in both Rasputin's stories and Tarkovskii's films. In this connection, Tarkovskii's films are particularly remarkable, as in every one of them his protagonists are in their different ways searching for home, frequently because they have lost theirs or because it was not a 'proper' home. Ivan tries to recollect the home

[734] Ibid.,'[Voshchev] eshche bolee ponik svoeiu skuchaiushchei po istine golovoiu' (p. 110); 'Do samogo vechera molcha khodil Voshchev po gorodu, slovno v ozhidanii, kogda mir stanet obshcheizvesten' (p. 26).
[735] Rasputin, 'Moi manifest', p. 4.

destroyed by war, and Rublev travels in search of the ideal way to express human experience in his art, a kind of 'artistic' home. On Soliaris, Kris seeks a harmonious sense of home in which he is reconciled with his family. *Zerkalo* represents Tarkovskii's own attempt to reconstruct his own family home and childhood in film, realised through the person of the narrator, but also through other characters in the film: Asaf'ev and the Spanish refugees. The protagonists of *Stalker* journey into the Zone because they secretly hope that it is 'doma', a place where man can return to the spiritual source of life in world of rationalism. In Gorchakov, Tarkovskii portrays the exile's longing for an ideal vision of home, and in Alexander the rejection of this ideal vision of home in order to renounce the worldly for the spiritual. Here one finds repeated reflections of Tarkovskii's own personal experience of the loss of home, as well as the echoes of the wider twentieth-century experience of a loss of home which is both physical and spiritual.

In Platonov's writing, too, one hears the resonance of a concrete experience of homelessness, albeit from another part of Russian twentieth-century history: the widespread destitution which he witnessed in the early years of the Soviet Union. As has been discussed, it is this, together with Fedorov's ideas, which informs one of his most important themes: man's essential *bespriiutnost'*. Like his conception of *bespriiutnost'*, the home in Platonov's stories is simultaneously an absolutely physical construct and a metaphysical one, corresponding to man's bodily and spiritual needs for shelter. If in Rasputin's and Tarkovskii's work the ultimate truth sought is often expressed as a vision of an ideal home, Platonov's writing expresses a far more radical view. For Platonov, one could argue, a 'truth' which does not encompass home both as physical and spiritual shelter cannot, by definition, be the whole truth. This idea is articulated in both *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, in which Platonov's protagonists – like Platonov himself – believe this truth to be communism. In a play on the official idea of 'building communism', communism in these stories is both a place which should provide protection from the elements, and a sheltering force, a condition where there are no more

orphans and everyone has a roof over their heads. Platonov's heroes journey in search of communism, and find Chevengur itself, or the construction site of the 'obshcheproletarskii dom', or glimpse the shimmering white buildings on the horizon in *Kotlovan* which seem to echo the idea of New Jerusalem. In depicting these material versions of communism as illusory or inadequate, Platonov emphasises the failure of communism to shelter the destitute as a physical and an ideological failure. In the narratives of both *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, Platonov's heroes come to the conclusion that communism is not the 'istina' they seek, and this is precisely because it fails as a home in either sense. Thus Nastia's death, which is an image of this failure, provokes Voshchev to wonder: 'Zachem emu teper' nuzhen smysl zhizni i istina vsemirnogo proiskhozhdeniia, esli net malen'kogo, vernogo cheloveka, v kotorom istina stala by radost'iu i dvizhen'em?'[736]

One finds the same conviction of truth as home in *Dzhan*, but with a positive outcome in the narrative. In an interesting parallel with Rasputin and Tarkovskii, the journey in *Dzhan* is also portrayed as a return to a beginning on a number of levels. Chagataev returns to the place where he was born and the Dzhan finally settle in their historical homeland the Ust'-Urt, fulfilling Chagataev's original wish for his people: 'pust' ono [the tribe, C. M-R] opravitsia i nachnet zhit' snachala'.[737] As in *Chevengur* and *Kotlovan*, the narrative of *Dzhan* suggests that Chagataev's original belief in communism as the location of a truth which would bring his people back to life was misplaced. In the contented state of his characters at the conclusion of *Dzhan*, Platonov seems to suggest that they have found some measure of 'istina', and this is clearly expressed in terms of the home they have gained: the houses for physical shelter, and a community to provide 'fathers' for the orphaned.

In this study, readings of the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii demonstrate their mutual concern with the idea of *tselostnost'* as well as

[736] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 114.
[737] Platonov, 'Dzhan', p. 522.

parallels in the way that they express it. In attempting to offer some explanation for why this should be the case, despite the differences in the historical periods in which they were working, and in their styles, mediums and general worldviews, it is useful to consider the ways in which *tselostnost'* has existed as an idea in the broader context of twentieth-century Russian culture. For, as was suggested in the three chapters on the individual artists, it seems likely that for all three, *tselostnost'* was an idea they inherited only in part through a direct contact with the theories of nineteenth-century Russian philosophers. Perhaps equally important is that they seem to have absorbed this idea through the more general channels of a common Russian cultural heritage based in the literature and philosophy of the nineteenth century.

In this connection, Gogol''s *Mertvye dushi* (1842) forms an illuminating point of departure. This most famous of all journeys in Russian literature is also a journey in search of a home, where home is a unified vision of Russia and the Russian soul to replace what Gogol' saw as fragmentary impressions of Russia, its 'poshlosti i strannosti'.[738] The three-part *poema* which Gogol' dreamed of but never completed was to provide an answer to the 'pustynnaia bespriiutnost'' of Russian 'prostranstvo', a phrase which Platonov was to take up word for word a century later.[739] For Gogol', in spite of Peter the Great's modernisation of Russia:

> до сих пор остаются так же пустынны, грустны и безлюдны наши пространства, так же бесприютно и неприветливо все вокруг нас, точно как будто бы мы до сих пор еще не у себя дома, не под родной нашею крышей, но где-то остановились бесприютно на проезжей дороге.[740]

In the context of the 1840s, Gogol''s vision of Russia's homelessness clearly resonates with the critique of Russia as a nation of rootless wanderers formulated by Chaadaev in his 1836 'Pis'mo pervoe', forming an early example

[738] N.V. Gogol', 'Pis'mo grafu L.A. Perovskomu ili kniaziu P.A. Shirinskomu-Shikhmatovu ili grafu A.F. Orlovu', in Gogol', *Sobranie sochinenii*, ix, pp. 484-87 (p. 484). The letter was written by Gogol' in July 1850. For a discussion of *Mertvye dushi* as a 'search for home and self', see Amy C. Singleton, *No Place like Home: The Literary Artist and Russia's Search for Cultural Identity*, Albany, NY, 1997, pp. 41-68.
[739] Gogol', 'Chetyre pis'ma', p. 74.
[740] Ibid.

of the overlapping of literary and philosophical discourses in Russia discussed in the Introduction to this study. Of his plans for *Mertvye dushi*, Gogol' wrote:

> Нам нужно живое, а не мертвое изображенье России, та существенная, говорящая ее география, начертанная сильным, живым слогом, которая поставила бы русского лицом к России.[741]

This ambition to provide his readers with a new and complete vision of Russia is one illustration of the centrality of the debate on Russian identity to both literary and philosophical traditions in Russia as they developed alongside each other from the 1830s, as well as to other areas of Russian culture like landscape painting.[742] In each of these areas of Russian culture, the attempt to establish a uniquely Russian way of writing, thinking or painting was a crucial factor determining the way in which these different traditions evolved and the parameters which guided them. Further to this, within the framework of this broad cultural discourse on identity, it was the vision of Russia first formulated by Kireevskii and Khomiakov, and to a lesser extent by Chaadaev, which emerged as the dominant one, an image of Russianness to which Russian culture still refers today. This is a vision of Russia's essential otherness from the West, founded on a perception of the unique *tselostnost'* of her culture.

The theme of *tselostnost'* as expressed in the work of Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii can be understood to form part of a continued search for a sense of identity in Russian twentieth-century culture, one which took its direct inspiration from the debates of the previous century. Their characters' longing for an ideal whole envisaged as an idea of home is also a search for a sense of identity, set against the shifting background of the upheavals and divisions of Russian twentieth-century history. Their distinct interpretations of this search, moreover, reflect different aspects of this historical period. In Platonov's stories, the longing to find a home in communism is set against the emptiness and uncertainty of a world suspended in time, in which 'nachalo […]

[741] Gogol', 'Pis'mo grafu L.A. Perovskomu', ix, p. 486.
[742] For an interesting discussion of the search for identity across nineteenth-century Russian culture, see Andrew Baruch Wachtel and Ilya Vinitsky, *Russian Literature*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 89-124, and also Ely, *This Meager Nature*.

vsemi zabyto i konets neizvesten'.[743] Rasputin's writing echoes the experiences of a later generation, who, in losing faith in communism, returned to Russia's forgotten past to seek a new sense of belonging and orientation. Tarkovskii's work, too, reflects this same experience of the loss of ideological belief, but in his films this is expressed as variations on a more spiritual, personal quest for belonging in a modern world devoid of faith. The work of all three artists is united by a common experience of the Soviet period: that time, in this state built on a denial of the past, is essentially 'out of joint'. This, one could argue, is why, for Platonov, Rasputin and Tarkovskii, memory emerges as way to achieve *tselostnost'*. In addition, the work of these three artists also offers evidence for the survival of the idea of *tselostnost'* into twentieth-century Russia in the fullness of the different interpretations of it given by a whole range of nineteenth-century thinkers. As has been seen, Kireevskii and Khomiakov's original ideas were developed in two different directions by their successors. *Tselostnost'* was understood as a more exclusive, national idea by later Slavophile thinkers, while philosophers such as Fedorov, Solov'ev and later Frank saw it as a more universal doctrine. Rasputin, on the one hand, and Platonov and Tarkovskii, on the hand, show how both these interpretations are present in twentieth-century literature and film.

Although the post-Soviet period lies outside the scope of this study, there are reasons to suppose that wholeness continues as an important concept in the vigorous debate about a new, post-Soviet Russian identity. In contemporary Russian cinema, films like Andrei Zviagintsev's *Vozvrashchenie* (2003) and Boris Khlebnikov and Aleksei Popogrebskii's *Koktebel'* (2003) explore issues of personal identity in an uncertain post-Soviet world through the motif of the journey.[744] In contemporary literature, one could cite the fiction of

[743] Platonov, *Kotlovan*, p. 63.
[744] *Vozvrashchenie*, dir. Andrei Zviagintsev, REN-TV, 2003; *Koktebel'*, dir. Boris Khlebnikov and Aleksei Popogrebskii, Roman Borisevich, with the Sluzhba kinematografii Ministerstva kul'tury Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2003. Both *Vozvrashchenie* and Zviagintsev's later film *Izgnanie* (2007) contain numerous 'quotations' from Tarkovskii's films: sudden downpours, mysterious winds issuing from woods, skeletons of leaves in old books and 'mothers' who echo the image

writers like Iurii Buida, Vladimir Sharov and Svetlana Vasilenko.[745] In terms of the two traditions of Russian philosophy with which *tselostnost'* is associated, it is clear that the Slavophile tradition is by far the more influential. In cultural and political life, Slavophile ideas are widely invoked as a way of defining what it is to be Russian in a world where the USSR no longer exists.

In the context of the revivified Russian philosophical tradition, attempts have been made to reconnect with both conceptions of *tselostnost'*. In the work of Evgenii Troitskii, for example, one finds a reinterpretation of nineteenth-century Slavophile thought for a post-Cold War 'multi-polar' world, which he sees as characterised by the conflict between many different, competing civilisations. The survival of Russian civilisation in this new environment is dependent on a new awareness of Russian identity, based on the principle of *sobornost'*. For Troitskii, *sobornost'* is a state of 'free unity' equally based on Christian love, as it was for Khomiakov and Kireevskii, and on what he calls 'priviazannost' k Otechestvu, k dukhovnym tsennostiam Sviatoi Rusi.'[746]

Far more inspiring, however, is Sergei Khoruzhii's vision of the future of Russian philosophy as a continuation of the metaphysics of *vseedinstvo* associated with Solov'ev and his inheritors in the first half of the twentieth century. Khoruzhii understands the concept of *vseedinstvo* as the crucial meeting of the worlds of Western philosophy and Russian Orthodoxy, which engendered a unique Russian philosophical tradition.[747] In Khoruzhii's opinion, the Revolution prevented the complete realisation of this 'meeting', and

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of the mother in *Zerkalo*. Khlebnikov and Popogrebskii have acknowledged the influence of Tarkovskii on their work, and *Koktebel'* also contains allusions to the imagery of Tarkovskii's films.

[745] See, for example: Iurii Buida, *Prusskaia nevesta*, Moscow, 1998; Vladimir Sharov, *Voskreshenie Lazaria*, Moscow, 2003; Svetlana Vasilenko, *Durochka*, Moscow, 2000. Of particular interest is Sharov, who has written a number of essays on Platonov, and whose *Voskreshenie Lazaria* is directly based on Fedorov's project for the resurrection of the ancestors.

[746] E.S. Troitskii, 'Russkaia tsivilizatsiia: Proshloe i nastoiashchee' in E.S. Troitskii (ed.), *Russkaia tsivilizatsiia i sobornost'*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 4-34 (p. 23). For a discussion of Troitskii and other neo-Slavophile thinkers, see Scanlan, 'Interpretations and Uses of Slavophilism', pp. 44-49.

[747] Khoruzhii, 'Neopatricheskii sintez', p. 42.

important elements of Orthodox spirituality were ignored.[748] Georges Florovskii's concept of 'neo-patristic synthesis', Khoruzhii argues, offers a way out of this impasse in Russian philosophy. It is a 'return to the beginning' which will connect the metaphysics of *vseedinstvo* developed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian philosophers to its origin in patristic thought, which underlies both Western and Eastern Christianity. In taking this path, Russian thought will finally come of age, becoming an 'independent theological-philosophical tradition' which can trace its roots back further than Chaadaev, and yet remains in 'dialogue with the Western tradition'.[749] Rather than deepening the division between Russian and Western philosophy, the return to this universal source of *tselostnost'*, together with the critique of reason characteristic of important parts of modern Western thought, offers hope of a future rapprochement between the two traditions.

[748] Ibid., pp.42-43.
[749] Ibid., p. 58.

Appendix: Arsenii Tarkovskii, ‘Zhizn’, zhizn’’ (1965)

Жизнь, жизнь

Предчувствиям не верю и примет
Я не боюсь. Ни клеветы, ни яда
Я не бегу. На свете смерти нет.
Бессмертны все. Бессмертно всё. Не надо
Бояться смерти ни в семьнадцать лет,
Ни в семьдесят. Есть только явь и свет,
Ни тмы, ни смерти нет на этом свете.
Мы все уже на берегу морском,
И я из тех, кто выбирает сети,
Когда идет бессмертье косяком.

Живите в доме – и не рухнет дом.
Я вызову любое из столетий,
Войду в него и дом построю в нем.
Вот почему со мною ваши дети
И жены ваши за одним столом, -
А стол один и прадеду и внуку:
Грядущее свершается сейчас,
И если я приподымаю руку,
Все пять лучей останутся у вас.
Я каждый день минувшего, как крепью,
Ключицами своими подпирал,
Измерил время землемерной цепью
И сквозь него прошел, как сквозь Урал.

Я век себе по росту подбирал.
Мы шли на юг, держали пыль над степью;
Бурьян чадил; кузнечик баловал,
Подковы трогал усом, и пророчил,
И гибелью грозил мне, как монах.
Судьбу свою к седлу я приторочил;
Я и сейчас, в грядущих временах,
Как мальчик, привстаю на стременах.

Мне моего бессмертия довольно,
Чтоб кровь моя из века в век текла.
За верный угол ровного тепла
Я жизнью заплатил бы своевольно,
Когда б ее летучая игла
Меня, как нить, по свету не вела.

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Koktebel', dir. Boris Khlebnikov and Aleksei Popogrebskii, Roman Borisevich, with the Sluzhba kinematografii Ministerstva kul'tury Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2003

Odinokii golos cheloveka, dir. Aleksandr Sokurov, Lenfil'm, 1978-87

Proshchanie, dir. Elem Klimov, Mosfil'm, 1983

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