

**The Development of the Image of  
Catholicism in Russian Literary Tradition:  
1820-1949**

**Elizabeth Anne Harrison**

**UCL**

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I, Elizabeth Anne Harrison 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.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

### *Abstract*

This thesis examines the development of the image of Catholicism in Russian literary tradition between the end of the Napoleonic War and the end of the Second World War. It analyses Catholicism as represented in texts from several different genres – poetry, drama, essays, letters, travel writing and novels. The texts are taken from the work of Chaadaev, Pushkin, the Slavophiles, Gogol', Tiutchev, the Russian Jesuits, Dostoevskii, Solov'ev, Rozanov, Merezhkovskii, Ellis and Dmitrieva, and Viacheslav Ivanov.

The thesis argues that although aspects of the negative image of Catholicism in Russian literary culture remained fairly constant through this period of Russian history, the literary development of this image differed substantially from its development in polemics and essays. The literary sphere allowed Catholicism to be seen in a more open way. The treatment of Catholicism in poetry, novels and travel writing suggested that it be seen as a faith, just like Russian Orthodoxy. Writers depicting Catholicism in a positive light were striving for a universalism that they saw as the essence of being Russian. The thesis therefore reveals that while for some writers, 'Russian' and 'Catholic' were antithetical concepts, others had a receptive attitude to Catholicism, sometimes culminating in the act of conversion could be seen as a step towards the Universal and unity with the rest of humankind that all Russians should strive towards.

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*Mosaic of St Peter from the St Paul Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, designed by Boris Anrep and Justin Vulliamy, 1964.*

## Introduction

‘When one reads Dostoyevsky – I believe that for us all he must be an author to read and reread, because he has wisdom – one perceives what the Russian spirit is, the Eastern spirit. It is something that will do us so much good. We are in need of this renewal, of this fresh air of the East, of this light of the East.’  
(Pope Francis, conversation with journalists, August 2013)<sup>1</sup>

Замкнулась тяжелая дверь.  
Во храме мы собраны к тебе.  
Мы стали как дети теперь.  
Мы дома, мы снова на небе!<sup>2</sup>

On the face of it this extract from a simple poem ‘V khrame’ (1930s) by the Russian Symbolist poet Lev Kobylinskii-Ellis (1879-1947) is unextraordinary. Yet behind the poem lies an interesting story, for Ellis was a Russian who converted to Roman Catholicism in the 1930s, and Catholics were (and remain) a tiny minority in Russia. For many years Russians were legally discouraged, if not prohibited, from becoming Catholic. Ellis’s poem describes an imagined, or universal, Catholic church as a place where he felt at home, and this poem evokes his spiritual experience of worshipping there. This strikingly subjective vision is turned by the poet into an appeal to a universal concept of spirituality, religious experience and brotherhood that goes well beyond the realms of the personal. The fact that by the 1920s and 1930s Ellis (and some of his contemporaries) felt able to express their Catholic faith in their poetry reveals the considerable cultural and religious distance travelled from the negative reactions to the publication of one of the ‘Lettres philosophiques’ written by Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856) a hundred years earlier. This thesis charts the ground covered between these two points and seeks to explain how such a change came about.

This study presents a cultural history of the development of the image of Catholicism in Russia in the period between the Napoleonic Wars and the end of the Second World War, a pivotal period in the formation of Russian national identity. Although Catholics are a minority in Russia, they have been a majority in Western Europe for centuries. The tension between the pervasive historical-cultural influence of Catholicism and Russian attempts to counter this influence has had a major, yet little

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript and translation of an interview with journalists, see <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=23070>, accessed 8/08/13.

<sup>2</sup> Lev Kobylinskii-Ellis, ‘V khrame,’ from *Krest i lira*, in Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, Tomsk: Vodolei, 1996, p. 270.

charted impact on Russian thought and literature. This research examines key texts taken from a wide range of sources and genres, including poetry, novels, essays, travel impressions, literary criticism and correspondence. The focus is on published or widely known texts, but also embraces ‘private’ genres such as personal letters. It is not a comprehensive study of literary works, nor of all polemics and correspondence touching on Catholicism, but it aims to analyse key examples in various genres and from different points in time in order to illuminate the trajectory of the image of Catholicism through this era. The thesis does not discuss the ecumenical movement in detail, nor does it go into depth on questions of theology, philosophy or ecclesiology, but instead takes an approach grounded in the disciplines of cultural history, intellectual history and literary analysis. No attempt will be made to compare Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism; the aim is to analyse the images of Catholicism created by Russian writers in order to gain insight into the development of this tradition through their works.

This tradition unfolded against a historical background that tended to marginalize Catholicism. As is well known, Russia has been an Orthodox country since it was Christianized, and never underwent a Reformation in the sense that many Catholic countries did. The notion of what it means to be Russian is partly based on the historical legend (laid out in the Primary Chronicle and elsewhere) that the ancestors of modern Russians ‘chose’ Orthodox Christianity over Islam and Catholicism. As the envoys reported to Prince Vladimir:

И пришли мы к немцам [i.e. Catholics] и видели их службу, но красоты не видели никакой. И пришли мы в Греческую землю, и ввели нас туда, где служат они Богу своему, и не знали мы — на небе или на земле: ибо нет на земле такого зрелища и красоты такой, и не знаем, как и рассказать об этом, — знаем мы только, что пребывает там Бог с людьми, и служба их лучше, чем во всех других странах.<sup>3</sup>

This re-telling of the choice of Orthodoxy over Catholicism by reference to beauty as a guiding principle rather than to any socio-political motivation (although this was, in reality, a major factor) foregrounds the importance of aesthetic criteria in matters of religion and a mystical sense of the Divine present in Orthodox liturgy. However, the extract implies that the particularity of the rites seen in Byzantium could unite believers by a universal sense of what was beautiful and spiritually correct. Some

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<sup>3</sup> See the online text of the Primary Chronicle: <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4869> (IRLI RAN), accessed 16/09/13.



writers would emphasize the mystical and aesthetic element in Catholicism while others would juxtapose it with Russian Orthodoxy.

In understanding Russian religion, the political dimension should not be overlooked. Several points in Russia's history were marred by clashes with Catholic nations. In the thirteenth century, Aleksandr Nevskii defeated the Catholic Teutons and Swedes. Later the subject of a film by Sergei Eizenshtein with a famous score by Sergei Prokof'ev, these victories can be seen as some of the turning-points in Russia's history. Indeed, Nevskii remains a highly regarded figure in contemporary Russia and was named the most popular historical figure in a national poll in 2008. Under Ivan IV (1547-1584), the Catholic Church sent Antonio Possevino, a Jesuit, to Muscovy to engage in negotiations – these were broadly amicable but needless to say unsuccessful.<sup>4</sup> In the 1590s, part of the Orthodox Church in Rome broke away and came under the papal primacy in the Union of Brest. The so-called Uniate Church (or Greek Catholic, Byzantine rite) retained many of the rites and traditions associated with Orthodoxy, while forming part of the Catholic Church and continues to be a thorn in the side of the Orthodox Churches. The *Smutnoe vremia* was a pivotal period in the formation of modern Russia. The nation was at a weak point, especially in comparison to what is now modern-day Poland, and historiography for many years emphasized the influence of the Catholic Poles and Jesuits on the False Dmitrii (1605-6).<sup>5</sup>

In Russian historiography and literature, figures such as the False Dmitrii, associated with Catholicism and the West, were also connected with the Antichrist or the Devil.<sup>6</sup> Peter I (1682-1725) – who became a focal figure in debates about Russia's position between East and West – was also seen in this way (as were many Western-oriented rulers, according to Kevin Platt).<sup>7</sup> The reign of Peter I is often seen as a leap forward in Russia's national history, and attitudes towards Western Europe commonly derive from interpretations of this period. As John Meyendorff explains, 'In principle and in law, the reforms of Peter the Great attempted to integrate the religious functions

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<sup>4</sup> See I. Kyrukin (ed.), *Ivan Groznyi i Iezuity. Missiia Antonio Possevino v Moskve*, Moscow: Agraf, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See C. Dunning, *A Short History of Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty*, University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004 and C. Dunning, 'Who was Tsar Dmitrii?', *Slavic Review* 60/4 Winter 2001, pp. 705-29. See also, M. Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchy in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars and the Time of Troubles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Dunning, 'Who was Tsar Dmitrii?', p. 729.

<sup>7</sup> K. Platt, 'AntiChrist Enthroned: Demonic Visions of Russian Rulers,' in *Russian Literature and its Demons*, ed. by Pamela Davidson, New York: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 85-124.

of Russian society with the centralized imperial administration.’<sup>8</sup> This laid the foundations for a system which had serious implications for the autonomy of the Orthodox Church and which had the potential to enshrine anti-Catholic attitudes in law. However, this research has found little to suggest that Peter’s attitude to Catholicism, which was mainly pragmatic rather than programmatic, had a marked long-term effect on the image of Catholicism in the nineteenth century.

At the end of the eighteenth century, during the reign of Catherine II (1762-1796), the number of Catholics in the Russian Empire increased as a result of the expansion into historically Catholic areas, after the Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795).<sup>9</sup> The Empress recognized the value of Catholic education, so when Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus in 1773 (a response to its growing influence in Catholic Europe), she took advantage of this by allowing the Jesuits to continue as teachers within her realm. She declined to publish the Papal Bull suppressing the Society, and incidentally therefore promoted the continuation of the Order.<sup>10</sup> For example, the Jesuit school in St Petersburg was the main school for the aristocracy prior to the establishment of the Imperial Lycée at Tsarskoe Selo in 1811.<sup>11</sup> These Jesuit schools promoted a Western-style education without overtly promoting Catholicism. (For more on the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1820, see the beginning of Part I.)

The short reign of Paul I (1796-1801) did not have as much influence on Russia’s history as Catherine’s, but his ambivalent attitude towards Catholicism had impact. Paul I, regarded as eccentric, had pro-Catholic leanings and a penchant for medieval chivalry. He saw Catholicism as a bulwark against revolution, supporting conservative forces within Europe. As Dunn explains, Paul ‘assumed Grandmastership of the Catholic Knights of Malta, offered asylum to Pope Pius VII during the Napoleonic wars, which the Pope did not accept, convinced Pius VII to re-establish the Jesuits in Russia and worked enthusiastically with the Catholic Church against revolution and irreligious contagion.’<sup>12</sup> In reality Paul as Grand Master opened up the order of the Knights of Malta to the Orthodox, thereby underlining his patriotic intent

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<sup>8</sup> J. Meyendorff, ‘Russian bishops and Church Reform in 1905,’ in *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime*, ed. by Robert Nichols and Theofanis George Stavrou, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978, p. 170.

<sup>9</sup> D. Dunn, *The Catholic Church and Russia: Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars*, Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39. Modern Jesuits retain a fond memory of Catherine II. This period in the Society’s history is commemorated by the cooking (and consumption!) of a pudding called ‘Menshikov’. See ‘The Secret Pudding Revealed,’ *Jesuits and Friends*, 54, Easter 2003, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> One of their pupils was P. Viazemskii, a friend of Pushkin’s. See W. Mills Todd III, *The Familiar Letter as a Literary Genre of the Age of Pushkin*, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1976 (1999), p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> Dunn, *The Catholic Church*, p. 41.

and unwillingness to mimic the Western European model.<sup>13</sup> McGrew writes that the Tsar ‘defined himself in Western cultural terms. He saw nothing anomalous in leading a Latin crusading order, he ignored the Schism institutionalized in Russian Orthodoxy, and he offered the Knights of Malta as a model for the Russian nobility.’<sup>14</sup> Memories of this Tsar with his pro-Catholic sympathies remained alive in the era of Pushkin and Chaadaev and contributed to the idea that Catholics were mad or eccentric, alien or Westernizing, and potentially a threat to Russia’s stability.

This study aims to place the literary image of Catholicism within its historical context. To this end, each of the four main parts opens with a brief overview providing relevant historical contextualisation highlighting changes in the Tsarist regime, aspects of cultural history, and the influence of the Catholic Church’s activities.

It is worth briefly outlining aspects of the Russian Orthodox and Catholic Church which underpin the image of Catholicism. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church can be likened to branches of a single tree. The central aspects of religion are identical, like the trunk of the tree, but subsidiary matters developed along different lines. Timothy (Kallistos) Ware and Aidan Nichols have both written helpful accounts of the development of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Schism.<sup>15</sup> The biggest stumbling blocks for the unity of the Church are questions of differing tradition. The Orthodox Churches only accept and teach the Tradition outlined in the Scriptures and agreed at the first seven Ecumenical Councils. The Catholic Church’s teaching includes that of several other ‘Ecumenical’ Councils, not recognized by the Orthodox Church as ‘ecumenical’. Therefore, questions of doctrine agreed *after* the first seven councils are not necessarily subjects of disagreement, but can be open to dispute.

Of these questions the one that dominates is that of the papal primacy, which states that the Pope as successor to St Peter is the *primus inter pares* leader of the Universal Church. Consequently, particularly in the later nineteenth century, the doctrine of papal infallibility became an important consideration. A second contentious question is the insertion of the ‘filioque’ clause by the Catholic Church, which relates to the theology of the Trinity. Although an important matter in theological disputes, in the literary sphere and even in polemical discussions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is only mentioned in passing. It is generally used as an example of the

<sup>13</sup> R. McGrew, *Paul I of Russia 1754-1801*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 275.

<sup>14</sup> R. McGrew, ‘Paul I and the Knights of Malta,’ in *Paul I: A Reassessment of His Life and Reign*, ed. by H. Ragsdale, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1979, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, London: Penguin, 1997 and A. Nichols (OP), *Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009.

Catholic Church ‘adding’ to doctrine without the consensus of the Orthodox Churches. A third doctrinal difference concerns Purgatory, regarded by the Orthodox or an unnecessary addition, or as an example of Catholicism’s tendency to over-define. As Ware summarizes, in history some Orthodox theologians came close to agreeing with Purgatory, some choose not to comment on it, but the majority do not entertain such a concept at all.<sup>16</sup> Later scholars such as Iurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii have considered the impact of the absence of this concept on Russian culture, concluding that it led to a tendency towards binary or extremes.<sup>17</sup> During the nineteenth century the declaration of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary became a divisive issue for some Orthodox. However, above all these other differences, it is the papal primacy which has been the major stumbling block for any ecumenical project.

Nichols rightly argues that in practice, cultural differences, although not necessarily codified, can often cause rifts to widen.<sup>18</sup> Although of subsidiary importance, the most obvious places in which the Churches diverge are in the forms of liturgy and ritual, the decoration of churches, and language. Language has affected debate on religious matters and, although this is not the focus of this thesis, it does form a part of later polemics, which contained a debate on the translation of the Greek word *katholikos*. The different ways art (visual and verbal) relates to religion in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions are also touched upon.

Angelo Tamborra’s book gives some background on Russian-Catholic relations, and also provides insight into the Catholic perspective, which is not discussed in this thesis.<sup>19</sup> A considerable body of scholarship illuminates the lives of converts to Catholicism.<sup>20</sup> Beshoner’s book about the Russian Jesuit, Ivan Gagarin, is an excellent study, which was useful for this research.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, research on the history of the

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<sup>16</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 255. For more detail on the theological differences and potential for compromise, see, Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, pp. 293-98.

<sup>17</sup> Iu. Lotman and B. Uspenskii, ‘Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (to the End of the Eighteenth Century)’, in *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History*, ed. by A. Nakhimovskii and A. Nakhimovskii, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, pp. 143-70.

<sup>19</sup> See Dunn, *The Catholic Church; A. Tamborra, Katolicheskaia tserkov’ i russkoe pravoslavie: Dva veka protivostoianiiia i dialoga*, Moscow: Bibleisko-bogoslovskii institut Sv. apostola Andreia, 2008; W. Van Den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe: East and West in the Religious Ideology of Russia*, trans. by J. Bowden, London: SCM Press, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> E. Tsimbaeva, *Russkii katolitsizm: Ideia vseevropeiskogo edinstva v Rossii XIX veka*, LKI, 2008. V. Pecherin, *The First Political Emigre: Notes from Beyond the Grave, or Apologia pro vita mea*, trans. by M. Katz introduced by N. Pervukhina-Kamyshnikova, Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2008, N. Pervukhina-Kamyshnikova, *V.S. Pecherin: emigrant na vse vremena*, Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul’tury, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> J. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin: The Search for Orthodox and Catholic Union*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002. See also, I. Gagarin (SJ), *Dnevnik, zapiski o moei zhizni, perepiska*, ed. by R. Tempest, Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul’tury, 1996; A. Walicki, ‘The Religious Westernism of Ivan Gagarin’, in *The*

Russian Jesuits is useful, but needs to be supplemented by a cultural perspective.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, historical research into Catholics in Russia requires development, not least because this would help provide a broader, more integrated picture of Orthodox-Catholic relations in this period.

The relations between the churches took shape against the background of how the churches operated in their different, but overlapping, spheres of influence. The Russian Church has been locked in a complex relationship with the Russian state. Over the centuries the Church has remained relatively estranged from the endeavours of artists and the intellectual classes. Despite the fact that many Russian writers and thinkers remained faithful to the Orthodox faith, their relationship with the Church hierarchy has always been complex.<sup>23</sup> However, by the end of the nineteenth century there was an increasingly pronounced move towards change and reform, both from within the Orthodox Church and among intellectuals.<sup>24</sup> This desire for change touched not only on theological matters but also on ecumenical questions and pastoral and social concerns.<sup>25</sup> Some of this movement towards reform or renewal, as Simon Dixon has shown, was partly in response to the perceived threat or competition from other religions encroaching on traditionally Russian Orthodox territory.<sup>26</sup> Such reforms were curtailed by Nicholas II and abandoned after the Russian Revolution.<sup>27</sup> The nineteenth and early twentieth century is permeated by a sense of frustration at the condition of the state, its church and its people, alternating with hope for change; and this fluid atmosphere opened up a space which writers populated with their works.

During the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church was undergoing gradual change. The Reformation, Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the rise of rationalism had left its position increasingly embattled. Some Russian thinkers would

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Cultural Gradient: The Transmission of Ideas in Europe, 1789-1991, ed. by C. Evtuhov, and S. Kotkin, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> *Rossii i iezuity*, ed. by M. Inglot, (et al.) Moscow: Nauka, 2006. See also, J. T. Flynn, 'The Role of the Jesuits in the Politics of Russian Education, 1801-1820,' *Catholic Historical Review*, 56, No. 2, July 1970, pp. 249-65.

<sup>23</sup> See P. Valliere, 'The Theology of Culture in Late Imperial Russia,' in *Sacred Stories: Religion and Spirituality in Modern Russia*, ed. by Mark D. Steinberg and Heather J. Coleman, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007, pp. 377-95.

<sup>24</sup> See P. Valliere, 'Theological Liberalism and Church Reform in Imperial Russia,' in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. by G. Hosking, Macmillan, 1991, pp. 108-130; Simon Dixon, 'Archimandrite Mikhail (Semenov) and Russian Christian Socialism,' *Historical Journal*, 51, 3, 2008, pp. 689-718; Meyendorff, 'Russian bishops and Church Reform in 1905,' in *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime*, pp. 170-82, and P. Valliere, 'The Idea of a Council in Russian Orthodoxy in 1905,' in *ibid.*, pp. 183-201.

<sup>25</sup> See J. Basil, 'Alexander Kireev and Theological Controversy in the Russian Orthodox Church, 1890-1910,' in *Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine*, pp. 131-48; S. Dixon, 'The Church's Social Role in St Petersburg, 1880-1914,' in *ibid.*, pp. 167-92.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 171, 175.

<sup>27</sup> R. Coates, 'The Religious Renaissance in the Silver Age,' in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. by W. Leatherbarrow and D. Offord, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 171.

blame the Catholic Church for rationalism and socialism, despite its stance against the rising tide of liberalism and other aspects of ‘Modernity.’ Over time, the Catholic Church’s temporal powers were significantly diminished, but the Papacy had considerable influence on worldly affairs by commanding the respect of millions of faithful.<sup>28</sup> Despite changes in society, Catholics looked to the clergy and the papacy for guidance on moral and social issues. The Church’s teachings were now transmitted via papal encyclicals, the number of which increased during the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Ultramontanism in the same period fed into the image of the Catholic Church in Russian culture, as did what was seen as attempts by the Pope to meddle in worldly affairs.

Against this background of doctrinal and cultural differences, what areas of exchange and dialogue existed? Cultural influence came from many diverse sources over the centuries. Even in the reign of Ivan III the Tsar invited artists and architects from Renaissance Italy to help build the Kremlin. Similarly, the Italian Rastrelli was one of the principal architects for Anne (1730–1740) and Elizabeth (1741-1762), creating the face of some of Imperial Russia’s most famous buildings. Under Catherine II and Alexander I (1801-1825), Jesuits were teaching in Russian schools, until Alexander I expelled them in 1820. Figures such as Joseph de Maistre, ultramontanist Catholic and ambassador to the court of Alexander I, who was prominent in Petersburg in the beginning of the nineteenth century, affected how Catholicism was viewed at this time.<sup>30</sup> Most writers read widely in at least one or two languages other than Russian. Chaadaev was influenced by Lamennais. Pushkin was reading Dante in the 1820s, as was Gogol’ in the 1830s. The Slavophiles were heavily influenced by German philosophy. Many Russians travelled abroad to study, for pleasure or for professional reasons. Painters such as Aleksandr Ivanov (1806-1858) studied Italian art and visited Italy for extensive periods (as did Gogol’). Tiutchev lived in Italy and Germany because he worked as a diplomat. It is difficult to chart influence precisely, because there are many ways in which Russians came into contact with Catholicism and Catholic culture. The focus of this thesis is not therefore on the question of how influence came about,

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<sup>28</sup> For an overview of the history of the Papacy, see O. Chadwick, *A History of the Popes, 1830-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. See also the concise E. Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 261-355.

<sup>29</sup> See ‘The Long Nineteenth Century,’ in J. Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2008, pp. 55-57.

<sup>30</sup> V. Miltchyna, ‘Joseph de Maistre in Russia: A Look at the Reception of his Work,’ in R. Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre’s Life, Thought, and Influence*, London, Montreal and Kingston: McGill University Press, 2001, pp. 241-70.

nor does this study intend to document all points of contact; it does, however, examine how these influences affected the developing image of Catholicism.

The field of Catholicism's intellectual and cultural influence in Russia has been little explored in scholarship, with some notable exceptions. Isaiah Berlin acknowledged Tolstoy's debt to de Maistre, but did not emphasize Catholicism in his analysis of the Russian writer's work.<sup>31</sup> However, the histories of Russian thought by Andrzej Walicki and Frederick Copleston, despite their authors' interest in Catholicism, only refer briefly to the influence of this religion.<sup>32</sup> The main contribution to analysing the influence of Catholicism on Russian thought is represented in other works by Walicki.<sup>33</sup> However, although he draws on literature in some cases as examples, Walicki concentrates for the most part on essays. Only one volume by Dirscherl relates to Catholicism and Russian literature.<sup>34</sup> This is surprising despite the widely acknowledged understanding that much Russian thought emerged from its dialogue with literature.<sup>35</sup> (This latter principle is one which informs the structure of this thesis.)

In more recent years, some work on specific writers' attitudes to Catholicism has been done, but even here there is surprisingly little. The prominent exception to this is Viacheslav Ivanov, the fact of his conversion being well-known, overtly marked in much of his verse, and therefore an important key to understanding his oeuvre. However, some other studies have tangentially helped illuminate the image of Catholicism in Russian literature, for example Judith Kalb's recent monograph on representations of Rome in the Silver Age.<sup>36</sup> Other examples of author specific criticism have been drawn on throughout this work.

Russian images of Catholicism are integrally connected to the idea of Russian nationality. There exists a wealth of scholarship in many disciplines on aspects of Russian nationality and nationalism, including, for example, useful contributions by

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<sup>31</sup> See I. Berlin, 'The Hedgehog and the Fox,' in *Russian Thinkers*, ed. by A. Kelly and H. Hardy, London: Penguin, 1979, republished 1994, pp. 22-24.

<sup>32</sup> F. C. Copleston (SJ), *Philosophy in Russia : from Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev*, Tunbridge Wells: Search Press, 1986; A. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*, trans. by H. Andrews-Rusieska, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.

<sup>33</sup> A. Walicki, 'Catholicism and the Eastern Church in Russian Religious and Philosophical Thought,' in M. Ciesla-Korytowska, *The Slavs in the Eyes of the Occident, the Occident in the Eyes of the Slavs*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. 51-64. A. Walicki, *Rosja, katolicyzm i sprawa polska*, Warsaw: Proszynski i S-ka, 2002.

<sup>34</sup> D. Dirscherl (SJ), *Dostoevsky and the Catholic Church*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986.

<sup>35</sup> D. Offord and W. Leatherbarrow, 'Introduction,' in *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 3. See also, E. Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> J. Kalb, *Russia's Rome: Imperial Visions, Messianic Dreams, 1890-1940*, London, Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 2008.

Peter Duncan and Vera Tolz.<sup>37</sup> Some writers such as Edyta Bojanowska have also examined how the idea of nationhood is played out in literature.<sup>38</sup> Russian religion has always been an important component of Russian nationalism.<sup>39</sup> However, the influence of Catholicism on the Russian national idea has frequently been overlooked in scholarship or referred to only in passing.

Russian national identity in Russian thought has been examined by writers such as Robin Aizlewood, whose presentation of the development of the Russian idea was a helpful starting point for this research.<sup>40</sup> In his article he points out that in Chaadaev's thought 'both particularist (neither East nor West) and universalist (both East and West) versions of Russia's identity are present.'<sup>41</sup> Chaadaev and later writers such as Dostoevskii in his Pushkin Speech (1880) argued that true Russian nationality consisted in its universal quality.<sup>42</sup>

Most groups and societies share a concept of a unifying identity, which in some cases is understood as the principle of universality. Christianity proclaimed itself to be a universal faith, where believers should be united by the figure of Christ. How did Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism relate to this ideal of universality, and how did they deal with any conflicting ideas of national identity? Could, for example, a Russian be a Muslim, a Jew, or a Catholic? As this thesis explores in more detail, this contradiction was made apparent by the challenge represented by Catholicism. The Catholic Church offered (in principle) an alternative, supranational version of Christianity, and therefore an identity that went beyond the borders of the Russian Empire. Sometimes it was argued that Catholicism was universal and hence not foreign to Russia, leading some thinkers to show how it could enrich Russia. In other cases it was argued that Russian Orthodoxy was universal by its nature and contained within it all the necessary qualities to build the Kingdom of God; in some texts therefore Catholicism was portrayed as irrelevant, deplorable or threatening.

The use of the phrase 'image of Catholicism' indicates that this research examines perceptions of similarity and difference, rather than concrete issues of

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<sup>37</sup> P. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and after*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000. V. Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation*, London: Arnold, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> See E. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> M. Cherniavsky, 'Holy Russia: A Study in the History of an Idea,' *American Historical Review*, 63, No. 3, April 1958, pp. 1617-37. See also, Van Den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe*.

<sup>40</sup> R. Aizlewood, 'Revisiting Russian Identity,' pp. 20-43. For another view, see B. Groys, 'Russia and the West: The Quest for Russian National Identity,' *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 43, 3, 1992, pp. 185-98.

<sup>41</sup> Aizlewood, 'Revisiting Russian Identity,' p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30. (See Chapter 1 and 6 of this thesis, and elsewhere).



doctrine. It sets out to ascertain how Russian writers perceived the differences between Catholicism and the Russian Orthodox Church, how these differences are expressed in their texts, and therefore how definitions of Catholicism help shape their view of Russianness. Another important question was what affects the change in the image of Catholicism, and how exactly this image develops through time and in various genres. Lastly, it asks how the different genres influenced one another. It will survey the main currents in polemical writings and essays of the period, and at the same time show how these currents mutually influenced and entered into dialogue with the same discussion in more traditionally 'literary' works such as poetry and novels.

To address these questions, this thesis falls into four chronological parts. These four time periods reflect significant shifts in cultural history. Each part is prefaced by a brief historical introduction, setting the texts that follow in their cultural and historical context. The eleven chapters are organized to reflect the approach of individuals, although care has been taken to show the connections between writers.

Part I (1820-1853) deals with the era from the Napoleonic Wars to the Crimean War. It explores the idea of Catholicism in Chaadaev's work and the reactions to it, which were generally negative. It then moves on to examine the tentative appearance of Catholicism in a range of literary texts. In Pushkin's verse and drama Catholic themes make occasional but striking appearances, which have a lasting impact. In the early literary work of Khomiakov, Catholicism serves as a foil to the heroic status of the Russian nation, highlighting the strength of Russia. Following the public reaction to Chaadaev's work, the thesis explores the way the Slavophiles used Catholicism to help them define their concept of 'Russianness'. This paves the way for an examination of literary images of Catholicism in the fiction and essays of Gogol', who, while living in Rome, met with Catholicism at first hand and engaged with it in his literary works of art.

Part II (1854-1881) covers the period of the Crimean War until the death of Alexander II. It returns to the work of the Slavophiles and their polemics with the Russian Jesuits, which had a substantial impact on the way Catholicism was perceived, since both sides simplified questions and attacked each other in order to score points. Although this research will not examine all polemics in this period (a subject worthy of future research), it will demonstrate some of the main tendencies reflected in this medium. The following chapters analyse images of Catholicism in the novels and diary of Dostoevskii and the poetry of Tiutchev. The views of both these writers can be

classified as anti-Catholic, but the image of Catholicism worked in different ways for each author.

Part III (1881-1909) begins with an examination of the presentation of Catholicism in the literary work and essays of Vladimir Solov'ev, one of Russia's most prominent 'pro-Catholic' thinkers, whose innovative approach shifted the parameters of the discussion and had a lasting impact on writers of the next generation. The following chapter explores the essays and travel impressions of Rozanov, whose radical style and interests breathed fresh air into the image of Catholicism in literary culture. This is followed by an analysis of the essays, novels and poetry of Merezhkovskii, whose interest in the Renaissance sparked off a deeper exploration of the Catholic Church's influence on the individual, culture and society.

Part IV (1910-1949) focuses on the Russian Symbolist poets and considers the publication of several poetic collections and essays about Catholicism. It compares images of Catholicism in the work of two minor poets, Lev Kobylnskii-Ellis and Elizaveta Dmitrieva, who are quite different but whose work nevertheless shares central themes. Then the last chapter analyses how one of the most important poets of his generation, Viacheslav Ivanov, took the image of Catholicism in his artistic work to a deeper level and integrated it more fully into his work and Russian literary tradition.

This thesis will not explore the thought of such thinkers of the Russian religious renaissance of the early twentieth century such as Sergii Bulgakov, Pavel Florenskii and Nikolai Berdiaev. However, the work of these writers should not be examined without considering the fact that in the previous century, Russian thinkers and writers had chosen to define the Russian idea in relation to Catholicism.

The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and seventy years of Communism (leading to the creation of a new Russian literature of the diaspora) entailed a change in the cultural climate in which religion, for obvious reasons, took a backseat, or went underground. The representation of the image of Catholicism in Soviet and post Soviet literature was influenced by a range of factors beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this thesis has focused on the work of writers who pursued their interest in Catholicism in emigration.

By investigating the image of Catholicism through a mixture of genres this thesis will reveal how the polemical and essay genre interacted with the more creative and literary genres, and in turn how literature helped to shape essay writing. The contribution of poetry and literary genres opened up new spaces for dialogue on religious matters are explored. Each of these writers, despite the influence of their

predecessors, took a different approach to the image of Catholicism. An overarching issue only touched on by other scholars, which was the challenge that Catholicism represented to formulations of the Russian idea by Russian writers will be addressed in some detail. Over time, basing Russian national identity on religion had opened up a contradiction that Catholicism laid bare. Establishing this fact, however, encouraged a renaissance in Russian thought and literature which would continue well into the twentieth century.

## Part I: 1820-1853

‘...un seul et unique intérêt animait tout ce monde; une seule pensée l’inspirait.’  
(Petr Chaadaev)<sup>1</sup>

### Catholicism and Russian History, 1820-1853

Alexander I’s reign (1801-1825) was characterized by religious eccentricity. As Geoffrey Hosking notes, ‘the religion that inspired him [Alexander I] was not really Orthodox Christianity. He intended to inculcate a kind of “inner” or “universal” Christianity.’<sup>2</sup> His policies were a strange mixture of utopianism and pragmatism. In his early reign he was tolerant to the Catholics in the Empire, allowing the Jesuits to continue their educational work. Like Paul, Alexander could see the merits of the Catholic Church as a bulwark against the events that followed the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> Napoleon had an uneasy relationship with the Papacy, but France was still largely Catholic.<sup>4</sup> In 1812 Russia was again invaded by a Catholic nation, which provoked memories of the thirteenth century and the Time of Troubles. 1812 was a pivotal moment for Russian identity, as several scholars have noted.<sup>5</sup> This period heralded closer cooperation of the major European powers and, concurrently, greater respect for Russia’s capabilities, now seen as a major player in Europe.

In the later period of Alexander’s reign attitudes, therefore, shifted. Although the Jesuits had not used the school system to engage in overt proselytizing (especially since their position in Russia was so precarious and their thinking so politically pragmatic) their influence was feared. The number of conversions in fact dropped after 1815.<sup>6</sup> However, the opinion that the Jesuits were involved in intrigue gained currency, and they were eventually expelled from the Russian Empire in 1820. Flynn argues that the removal of the Jesuits was motivated by fear of conversions, their opposition to the Bible Society, and the fact that they were back under the control of the Pope, making them seem like Papal spies.<sup>7</sup> In the early nineteenth century, a number of high-profile Russian nobles converted under the influence of the Jesuits or figures such as the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Lettre première,’ in P. Chaadaev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis'ma*, Moscow: ‘Nauka’, 1991, p. 167-68.

<sup>2</sup> G. Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, London: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 253.

<sup>3</sup> Dunn, *The Catholic Church*, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> See Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, pp. 262-73.

<sup>5</sup> See for example M. Wesling, *Napoleon in Russian Cultural Mythology*, New York, Washington D.C.: Peter Lange, 2001, p. 68, B. Groys, ‘Russia and the West: The Quest for Russian National Identity,’ *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 43, 3, 1992, p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> Flynn, ‘The Role of the Jesuits,’ p. 261.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

Sardinian diplomat de Maistre (and doubtless influenced by time spent abroad).<sup>8</sup> These included the Russian Decembrist Mikhail Lunin (1787-1845, converted in childhood), the salon hostess and later émigré Princess Zinaida Volkonskaia (1792-1862, converted between 1829 and 1833,) and the eccentric and crypto-Catholic Petr Kozlovskii (1783-1840, converted 1803).<sup>9</sup> Pushkin wrote poems and made references to all three of them in his works.<sup>10</sup>

Hosking argues that the conditions created by the war with Napoleon had fed into a desire for reform and increased patriotism.<sup>11</sup> This led to the Decembrist Uprising in 1825, which had ongoing political repercussions, and to Nicholas I's policies, inspired by a desire for greater stability. Hosking noted that 'Nicholas was the first Russian ruler since Ivan IV to sponsor the formulation of an explicit and positive state ideology, intended both to distinguish Russia from the countries of Western Europe and to define the symbols which were intended to appeal to the population.'<sup>12</sup> In his reign the tripartite policy of *Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie i narodnost'* (*Ofitsial'naia natsional'nost'*) was formulated. Russification policies in the Empire were strengthened and in 1830-1831 there was an uprising in Warsaw, which was suppressed. Anti-Catholic policies were also strengthened. In the 1830s, new laws were introduced to discourage Catholic converts, including 'separation from any under-age children and a mandatory spell in a monastery for a period of penitence and, presumably, counter-indoctrination.'<sup>13</sup> Censorship, increased during the earlier part of Nicholas' reign, was tested when Chaadaev's 'Lettre première' was published in 1836, after which his work was suppressed. Despite censorship, writers were nevertheless able to publicize their works in the semi-public salons or *kruzhki* through public readings, the exchange of manuscript copies, and private correspondence. As Mills Todd puts it, 'in a familiar circle writer and reader exchanged roles in a continuing critical dialogue throughout the production of the work.'<sup>14</sup> As the century progressed, the importance of journals increased, although at this stage the 'public' was still a limited readership, and literary

<sup>8</sup> Tsimbaeva, *Russkii katolitsizm*, p. 69. For list of converts, see pp. 186-88. O. Litsenberger, *Rimsko-katolicheskaia tserkov' v Rossii: Istorii i pravovoe polozenie*, Saratov, 2001, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Tsimbaeva, *Russkii katolitsizm*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> M. Fairweather, *Pilgrim Princess: A Life of Princess Zinaida Volkonsky*, London: Robinson, 1999, p. 238 and Tsimbaeva, *Russkii katolitsizm*, p. 186.

<sup>10</sup> *Evgenii Onegin*, in A. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (19 vols), Moscow: Voskresen'e, 1949: 1994, VI: 524, 'Kn. Kozlovskomu,' in *ibid.*, III: 430, 'Kniagine Z. A. Volkonskoi,' in *ibid.*, 354.

<sup>11</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 260.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>13</sup> Fairweather, *Pilgrim Princess*, p. 254, see also Litsenberger, *Rimsko-katolicheskaia tserkov'*, p. 89-91.

<sup>14</sup> W. Mills Todd III, 'Periodicals in literary life of the early nineteenth century,' in D. Martinsen, *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 52.

criticism was needed to provide the same sense of an attentive and critical readership that *kruzhki* provided.<sup>15</sup>

The late 1830s and early 1840s was a peaceful period in Russian and European history, but as the 1840s drew to a close the fragile peace was threatened. The status of the Papacy was shaken once again, especially in the Papal States. In 1848, Europe was rocked by revolutionary events, and Russia was preparing to go to war with the French, Ottomans, Sardinians and British over Crimea. It was a time of building tensions and increasing polarization, which was to worsen as the century progressed.

The visit of the Marquis de Custine to Russia and the subsequent publication of his book *La Russie en 1839* in 1843 further influenced the discussion on Russian nationality. Among Custine's comments were his criticisms of Russia for imitating the West and constant sense of pretence, criticisms that doubtless jarred all the more since they echoed Chaadaev's views.<sup>16</sup> Like the 'Lettre première,' this work was seen as an attack on Russian identity from an outsider, and provoked a vociferous defence of Russia from Khomiakov and Tiutchev among others.<sup>17</sup> Key intellectual figures who had emerged in the 1830s continued their debate on Russian nationality in the salons of the 1840s. By 1845 they had formed into two opposing camps: the so-called 'Slavophiles' and the 'Westernizers.'<sup>18</sup> Other writers abstained from belonging to one side or the other, but shared ideas with these groups.

Suspicion about Catholicism's influence was swelled by the conversion to Catholicism of several members of the Russian intellectual class in the early 1840s.<sup>19</sup> Zinaida Volkonskaia (1792-1862) had become a Catholic by the early 1830s; despite her distance from Russia she was well known in Russian circles, especially in the Russian community in Rome. One of Volkonskaia's most famous acquaintances of this period, Nikolai Gogol' (1809-1852), was accused of being influenced by Catholicism,

<sup>15</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 269-71.

<sup>16</sup> G. Kennan, *The Marquis de Custine and His Russia in 1839*, Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1971, pp. 79-80.

<sup>17</sup> For Khomiakov's responses, see 'Mnenie inostrantsev ob Rossii' (1845) and 'Mnenie russkikh ob inostrantsakh' (1846), in A. Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Moscow: 1878, I: 3-28 and *ibid.*, pp. 31-69. 'Lettre à M. Le Docteur Gustave Kolb' or 'Russia and Germany' published in 1844, in F. Tiutchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pis'ma* (6 vols.), Moscow: Klassika, 2003, III: 11-12. For more responses, see Kennan, *The Marquis de Custine*, pp. 95-117.

<sup>18</sup> For more on salons and periodicals, see P. Christoff, *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism: A Study in Ideas* (4 vols.), The Hague: Mouton, 1961-1991, I: 60, W. Mills Todd III, 'Periodicals', p. 38, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Tsimbaeva, *Russkii katolitsizm*, pp. 186-88. Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 47-57.

but never converted.<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Pecherin (1807-1885), who converted in the 1840s (and later became a Redemptorist priest), was one of the only Russian Catholics to write memoirs. Pecherin, when explaining his choice to convert, conflates this choice with his political views and decision to emigrate, partly from fear of Nicholas' regime. However, further examination of his memoirs suggests non-political reasons too, such as the aesthetic appeal of Catholicism and a sense of spiritual striving.<sup>21</sup>

Recent scholarship has analysed the influence of Ivan Gagarin (1814-1882), whose work will be discussed in Chapter 4.<sup>22</sup> Gagarin was, similarly to Chaadaev, a patriotic religious Westernizer. Before his conversion, his diary of 1840 refers to a debate on the Western and Eastern Churches held at the home of the Slavophile Ivan Kireevskii (1806-1856).<sup>23</sup> This underlines how central a role Catholicism played in the culture of this period. The Russian intellectual classes were closely connected by ties of family, friendship and association. Gagarin was a cousin of Iurii Samarin (1819-1876) and a friend and a professional colleague of Tiutchev. He began to have Catholic sympathies in the late 1830s, but this did not become public until he converted to Catholicism and entered the Society of Jesus in 1843.<sup>24</sup> He set a trend – several other men were to follow him in becoming Jesuits in the next decades.<sup>25</sup> The effect of a friend converting and as a result accepting permanent émigré status must have affected many close to Gagarin, and was a contributing factor in the polemics of the 1860s.<sup>26</sup> Tiutchev's essays, which target the Jesuits, anticipated these polemics; through his poems and essays he joined the Slavophiles in condemning the influence of Catholicism in Europe.

The negative reaction to Chaadaev's 'gadfly' ideas partly resulted from the fact he was perceived as being pro-Catholic.<sup>27</sup> Fixation on the threat of Catholicism had been

<sup>20</sup> Fairweather, *Pilgrim Princess*. For an interesting study of Volkonskaia's ideas on Russianness and European culture, see R. Blakesley, 'Art, Nationhood and Display: Zinaida Volkonskaia and Russia's Quest for a National Museum,' *Slavic Review*, 67, 4, 2008, pp. 912-33.

<sup>21</sup> V.S. Pecherin, 'Apologia pro vita mea. Zamogil'nye zapiski,' in *Russkoe obshchestvo 30-kh godov XIX v. Liudi i idei. Memuary sovremennikov*, ed. by I Fedosov, Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1989, p. 260. Pervukhina points out the tongue-in-cheek way that he refers to his conversion, see N. Pervukhina, 'Vladimir Pecherin's *Apologia pro vita mea* (*Memoires d'outré tombe*): A Strategy of Defence,' *Partial Answers*, 2,1, 2004, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup> For an informative biography of Gagarin's life and works, see Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*. See also, Walicki, 'The Religious Westernism of Ivan Gagarin,' p. 33; Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 283-360. For Gagarin's diaries and autobiographical notes, see Gagarin, *Dnevnik* and for some selected correspondence, see P. Pierling, *Le Prince Gagarine et ses amis, 1814-1882*, Paris: Beauchesne, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Gagarin, 'Dnevnik' in *Dnevnik*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>24</sup> See Gagarin, 'Zapiska o moei zhizni', in Gagarin, *Dnevnik*, pp. 264-66.

<sup>25</sup> Ivan Martynov, Stepan Dzhunkovskii, Iulii Astromov, Evgenii Balabin and Paul Pierling also became Jesuits in the 1840s and 1850s. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> Converts automatically forfeited rights to property and inheritance. They were allowed to return to Russia, but (in the case of the Russian Jesuits) to do so meant banishment to Siberia and other punishments. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> Christoff, *An Introduction*, II: 256.

exacerbated by the activities of the Jesuits and Joseph de Maistre, and especially by conversions, which seemed to show that Catholicism produced an infectious way of thinking that led to 'un-Russian' (deviant) behaviour. The issues raised by Chaadaev, and prompted by the conversions, called into question the essence of 'Russianness' as founded on Orthodoxy being formulated in political and literary writings.



## **Chapter 1: Catholicism in Russian Literary Culture, 1820-1836**

The Napoleonic Wars and the era immediately after 1815 formed an important turning-point in cultural identity, when the idea of Russianness took on a new prominence in Russia. It is appropriate, therefore, that one of the most important discussants of the question of Russian nationality was Petr Chaadaev (1794-1856), who fought in the campaign against Napoleon. This chapter looks at the role the image of Catholicism played in Chaadaev's formulations, which were to have an impact far beyond the period when he wrote them, and goes on to examine how the image of Catholicism began to develop in Russian literature. In this period, references to Catholicism are rarely overt, but Catholicism was already playing an important part in how the meaning of being Russian developed in literary culture.

### **Chaadaev's 'Lettres Philosophiques'**

Chaadaev's most significant works are his 'Lettres philosophiques' (written in 1828-1831, the first of which was published in 1836), and 'Apologie d'un fou' (1836). The 'Lettres' cover a range of topics, including Russia's role in history, metaphysics, personal spirituality, the role of religion, and God's divine plan. Of the 'Lettres philosophiques', the 'Lettre première' is the one most frequently cited, often outside the context of Chaadaev's thought as a whole. The 'Lettre première' moves between discussing Russia, unity, and the role of religion in European history. It was written in the style of a personal letter addressed to a female friend, supposedly to reassure her on her religious views. It was not uncommon in this period to address political and social issues in private correspondence with the intention that such letters would circulate more widely.

Binyon describes Chaadaev's argument in the 'Lettre première' as 'almost entirely abstract'.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, the text could have more practical implications, and was treated as incendiary. The other 'Lettres philosophiques' remained unpublished until Gagarin's edition in 1862, which made them less politically significant at this period. However, parts of the 'Lettres' circulated in the salons and among Chaadaev's acquaintances before 1836; Pushkin had already seen extracts, according to McNally,

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<sup>1</sup> T. Binyon, *Pushkin: A Biography*, London: Harper Collins, 2003, p. 550.

Chaadaev tried to have parts of the sixth and seventh letters published in 1832.<sup>2</sup> The complex ideas explored in these letters have been passed down through Russian culture, often whittled down and simplified in the process, so that what stood out was Chaadaev's criticisms of nineteenth-century Russia and his apparent call for Russia to be at one with Western Europe and become Catholic.

### ***Unity, Authority and Freedom***

One of Chaadaev's arguments about the difference between Western Europe and Russia related to his view that Catholicism united medieval Christendom.

Pour ce qui regarde les choses extérieures, qu'il vous suffise de savoir aujourd'hui que la doctrine qui se fonde sur le principe suprême de l'unité, et *de la transmission directe de la vérité dans une succession non interrompue de ses ministres*, ne peut être que la plus conforme au véritable esprit de la religion, car il est tout entier dans l'idée de la fusion de tout ce qu'il y a au monde de forces morales en une seule pensée, en un seul sentiment, et dans l'établissement progressif d'un système social, ou Église, qui doit faire régner la vérité parmi les hommes.<sup>3</sup>

Unity can be considered to be political, social and cultural, but it is centred on a single faith, and this faith's work is to create a Kingdom of God. This text implies that true faith and the unity that came with it had been preserved by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, specifically, the Papacy. For the Russian Orthodox Church, Papal claims to primacy had always been one of the main stumbling blocks to ending the Schism. Moreover, the Russian Church and state, headed by the Tsar, both claimed to provide an alternative superior source of unity for Russian believers and subjects.

The 'Lettre première' ends with another eulogy to religious unity, which, when put together with the criticisms of Russia's past, appears to lead to ideas of ecumenism and theocracy hitherto unheard of in early nineteenth-century Russia.<sup>4</sup> In his other letters, Chaadaev reiterated the idea of theocracy and set out a vision for the union of the Churches.<sup>5</sup> He therefore presents unity (identified with the Papacy) as the most important ideal of Catholicism, thereby challenging a traditional pivot of Russian identity.

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<sup>2</sup> R. T. McNally, *Chaadayeve and his Friends: an Intellectual History of Peter Chaadayeve and his Russian Contemporaries*, Tallahassee, Fla: Diplomatic Press, 1971, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Chaadaev, *PSS*, I: 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 103.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 180.

The extract above demonstrates that Chaadaev believed in the role of the Pope. This has tied his name to Catholicism ever since. His apparent advocacy of the Papacy is supported by his letter to Aleksandr Turgenev in April 1833:

Но папа, папа! [...] Взгляните на этого старца, несомого в своем паланкине под балдахином, в своей тройной короне, теперь так же, как тысячу лет назад, точно ничего в мире не изменилось: поистине, где здесь человек? Не всемогущий ли это символ времени – не того, которое идет, а того, которое само стоит не возмутимо и в котором и посредством которого все совершается? Скажите, неужели вам совсем не нужно, чтобы на земле существовал какой-нибудь непреходящий духовный памятник?<sup>6</sup>

The Pope is described as a symbol standing outside history, untouched by the world and by time. He is seen as more than a human figure, and, Chaadaev argues, a necessary symbol. Chaadaev's view of the Catholic Church's role in Europe is crucial to his understanding of what is lacking in Russia.

### *The Church in History*

In order to present the idea that Russia's separation from Catholicism has cast it adrift from Christendom and the benefits of a unified modern Europe, Chaadaev had to ignore or overlook those moments in Western history where unity was lacking. As we shall see in Chapter 2, this would leave his views open to attack by the Slavophiles, who suggested that Catholicism had not provided unity, and that any unity it had provided was achieved through enforced submission to authority.

Chaadaev's work therefore implied that Russian history was impoverished as a result of its separation from Catholic Europe.

Toutes les nations de l'Europe se tenaient par la main en avançant dans les siècles [...] rappelez-vous que, pendant quinze siècles, ils n'ont eu qu'un seul idiome pour parler à Dieu, qu'une seule autorité morale, qu'une seule conviction.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of Russia being caught in a state of uncertainty between East and West, outlined by Chaadaev, has continued to be a pivotal concept in discussions of Russian nationhood.<sup>8</sup> Examining the history of other nations, Chaadaev finds an absence in

<sup>6</sup> Chaadaev to A. Turgenev, April 1833, in *ibid.*, II: 80 [my italics].

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 100.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 89.

Russia of elements he finds in Europe, and, as such, the 'Lettre première' proceeds with a series of negatives.<sup>9</sup>

Chaadaev's view of Catholicism is heavily reliant on his rose-tinted perception of medieval history. In the sixth letter he evokes (Catholic, pre-Reformation) Christendom as a utopia of sorts:

Longtemps il n'y eut parmi eux d'autre droit public que celui de l'Église; les guerres qui se faisaient alors étaient regardées comme des guerres intestines; *un seul et unique intérêt animait tout ce monde; une seule pensée l'inspirait.* [...] L'Europe est encore la Chrétienté, quoi qu'elle fasse.<sup>10</sup>

Chaadaev's negative attitude to the Reformation in 'Lettre sixième' can be seen as pro-Catholic.<sup>11</sup> Chaadaev posits a concept of a dynamic Catholic church which, he argues, has propelled the nations under it through history. By implication, the Russian Orthodox Church has been passive, hence the stagnation and lack of movement in Russian history.

In a letter to Aleksandr Turgenev of 1835, Chaadaev reveals a more positive view of Russia, alongside a rather cryptic *profession de foi*. He refers to the ability of Russia to carry out a mission in the world, for everything great came from the wilderness.<sup>12</sup> He then turns to religion:

*Начало католичества есть начало деятельное, начало социальное, прежде всего* [...] Оно восприняло Царство Божие не только как идею, но еще и как факт [...] Как видите, моя религия не совсем совпадает с религией богословов, и вы можете мне сказать, пожалуй, что это та религия, которая скрыта в умах, а не та, которая у всех на языке, что это религия вещей, а не религия форм; что это религия какая она есть, а не какова нам кажется [...] *Вы, между прочим, были неправы, когда вы определили меня как истинного католика.* Я, конечно, не стану отречься от своих верований...<sup>13</sup>

Chaadaev's view of Catholicism as socially active is critical to his understanding of this faith. It leads to the implication that Orthodoxy is, by comparison, passive, contemplative. The 'dynamic' nature of Catholicism led to its influence on societies and nations, and involvement in historical iniquities (according to other thinkers).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 167-68 [my italics].

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., I: 178-79.

<sup>12</sup> Chaadaev to A. Turgenev, Oct/Nov 1835, in *ibid.*, II: 99.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 100 [my italics]. The original French is not provided in the [PSS](#).

This letter also suggests that Chaadaev was a Christian who adhered to no particular dogmas, but liked to follow his own inclinations. As McNally observed, opinion has tended to overemphasize Chaadaev's Catholicism.<sup>14</sup> In this letter he refuted the idea that he was a true Catholic, but we can never know for certain what Chaadaev's private views were, only those he wished to advertise. In fact, all the written texts we have left of Chaadaev's are considerably more open-ended than traditional scholarship has led us to believe. However, his view of Catholicism laid down the foundations for how the image of Catholicism was perceived by later thinkers. Chaadaev partially cast himself in the role of *sage* and *penseur*, and meant the questions he had asked to reach a wider audience. He was, in many ways, playing Devil's advocate. It is not so much what he thought that is of interest, as how his ideas were subsequently perceived.

### **'Apologie d'un fou': Responses to the 'Lettres philosophiques'**

The views expressed here, as Walicki has suggested, could have practical application if they were adopted (as was the case with Ivan Gagarin).<sup>15</sup> Chaadaev's suggestion that Russia should imitate Western religion was highly provocative. Sharing in a religious community would certainly increase links with Western Europe, but not all Russians wanted this, and many regarded conversion as an empty imitative act, as they saw it, and as too high a price to pay for unity.

The 'Lettre première' clashed with a rising sense of Russian nationalism, concerns about political unrest and aspirations for reform, a fear of the potential encroachment of Catholic states and the Papacy. In the early nineteenth century the tendency for leading Russians to become interested in non-Orthodox religions, as well as Joseph de Maistre's attempts to convert prominent Russians (and his ultramontanist), led Chaadaev's views to be seen as a real danger.<sup>16</sup>

Objections were raised to the language used.<sup>17</sup> Chaadaev was perceived as an outsider (like De Custine), partly because he wrote in French. Another reason for viewing him with hostility was, as Tempest argued, that 'the letter was linked to "the newest forms of Catholicism" championed by Lamennais in France.'<sup>18</sup> In other words, Catholicism was considered from a social and political angle, rather than as a matter of

<sup>14</sup> R. McNally, 'Significant Revelations in Chaadaev's Letters to A. I. Turgenev,' *Studies in Soviet Thought*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Nov., 1986), p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> Walicki, 'The Religious Westernism of Ivan Gagarin,' p. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Tamborra, *Katolicheskaia tserkov'*, p. 17-21. This is the view of the period reflected in Tolstoy's *Voyna i mir*.

<sup>17</sup> N. M. Zagoskin, 'Stat'ia bez zaglaviia, napravlennaia protiv F.P.,' in Chaadaev, *PSS*, II: 545.

<sup>18</sup> R. Tempest, 'Madman or Criminal: Government attitudes to Petr Chaadaev in 1836,' *Slavic Review*, 43, 2, Summer 1984, p. 286.

personal conscience. The censorship committee offered the following criticism, ‘Все сии мысли противные истинным понятиям о православии, чистоте и превосходстве церкви Восточной.’<sup>19</sup> Other correspondence relating to the matter emphasized this line. Golubinskii wrote to Elagina, for example: ‘Но те места, где сочинитель приписывает первенство Церкви Западной, где говорит, что папство существенно происходило из истинного духа христианства [...] здешний Цензурный Комитет не мог одобрить.’<sup>20</sup> In some quarters at least, Chaadaev was seen as pro-Papacy. When Sergei Uvarov (1786-1855) wrote to Nicholas I to apologize for the publication, he underlined the reasons why it was unacceptable, including religion.<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, Uvarov, reflecting on the publication in a letter to Stroganov, believed that Russia would never accept such criticisms of her religion, continuing ‘общее порицание будет сопровождать это произведение больного и зараженного ума.’<sup>22</sup> The fact that Chaadaev was treated as an ill, or mad man for holding these views reveals the extent to which Russian political culture was intolerant towards freedom of conscience and freedom of speech.

‘Neskol’ko slov o Filosoficheckom pis’me’ in *Teleskop* No 15 is a reply to the ‘Lettre première’. The form of a personal letter is used, echoing Chaadaev. Scholars such as Tempest have argued that the author of the reply was Aleksei Khomiakov, but this has been disputed by other critics, such as Medovyi.<sup>23</sup> The article certainly does use similar language (both polemical and poetic at the same time) to Khomiakov’s later work, and the ideas are similar. The author takes objection to the Letter’s suggestion that Russia is a ‘blank slate’, and unsurprisingly, to its pro-Catholic elements:

Если б мы не жили мощными впечатлениями времен прошедших, мы не гордились бы своим именем, мы бы не смели свергнуть с себя иго монголов, поклонялись бы давно власти какого-нибудь *Сикста V* или Наполеона, признали бы между адом и раем *чистилище* и, наконец, давно бы обратились уже в известных ханжей [*иезуитов*], следующих правилу «несть зла в прегрешении тайном». Кому не нужна такая *индугенция*.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> ‘Postanovlenie tsenzurnogo komiteta o nedopushchenii k pečati dvukh statei Chaadaeva,’ in Chaadaev, *PSS*, II: p. 531.

<sup>20</sup> F. Golubinskii to A. Elagin, 1836, in *ibid.*, p. 527.

<sup>21</sup> S. Uvarov to Nicholas I, 20 Oct, 1836, in *ibid.*, p. 529.

<sup>22</sup> S. Uvarov to S. Stroganov, 1836, in *ibid.*, p. 531.

<sup>23</sup> M. Medovyi, ‘A.S. Khomiakov? A.F. Vel’tman – avtor stat’i *Neskol’ko slov o Filosoficheckom pis’me*,’ in *Khomiakovskii sbornik*, ed. by N. Serebrennikov, Tomsk: Vodolei, 1998, pp. 20-33. He cites R. Tempest, ‘Neizdannaiia stat’ia A. S. Khomiakov’, *Simvol*, 1986, No 16, pp. 121-24.

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, ‘Neskol’ko slov o *Filosoficheckom pis’me*’ (*Teleskop* No. 15, *Pis’mo k G-zhe N.*) in Serebrennikov, *Khomiakovskii sbornik*, p. 27 [Addition of note in square brackets is the editors, my italics].

This extract encapsulates the main ways in which Russians tended to regard Catholicism: it relied on submission to the Pope (and to Napoleon – another Antichrist) and was linked with the scheming of the Jesuits. The author refers to the dogma of purgatory, which is absent in Orthodox theology. The reference to indulgences is linked to the perception of the Catholic Church as mired in historical iniquities. All of these points would later be developed in essays by the Slavophiles and other writers of an anti-Catholic persuasion, such as Tiutchev and Dostoevskii.

The article laments the society that has apparently given birth to Chaadaev; in other words, it takes the opinions of the ‘Lettre première’ and directs them against its author. The author thinks that Chaadaev has been unfair, not awarding sufficient merit to the fruitful combination of the spiritual and the material principle in the Orthodox Church.<sup>25</sup> There is again a reference to language ‘родной наш язык презрен’, and the author resents the need to look to Europe and to mimic it, which he believes Chaadaev had suggested.<sup>26</sup>

Смотрите только на Запад, вы ничего не увидите на востоке, смотрите беспрестанно на небо, вы ничего не заметите на земле [...] Всемирное вешенствование, преобладание *надшего Рима* началось снова в Ватикане, мимо преобразаясь в формы духовного преобладания; но это было новое насилие человечеству. Это преобладание было не евангельское, не преобладание слова, а преобладание *меча* – только скрытого.<sup>27</sup>

Roman Catholicism is portrayed as spiritually impoverished and linked with the fall of Imperial Rome. The image of the sword, later repeated by writers such as Tiutchev and Dostoevskii symbolizes Rome’s power, rather than its spiritual heart, a distortion of the Gospel.

Chaadaev’s *Lettres Philosophiques* therefore succeed in one important task: that of provoking debate. The image of Catholicism is integral to this task. As a result, they exacerbated anti-Catholic feelings and strengthened Russian nationalism with Orthodoxy as its basis. Chaadaev wrote a response to criticism, *Apologie d’un fou*, in 1836. He tried to reiterate that he considered himself a patriot, for ‘Il y a différentes manières d’aimer son pays.’<sup>28</sup> He rebalanced his earlier work by emphasising that which was positive in the ‘East’. However, he did not reject his earlier ideas about looking to the West. He criticizes those who wish to look only to the East (the Slavophiles),

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 28-29.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 30 [my italics].

<sup>28</sup> Chaadaev, *PSS*, I: 289.

reminds readers that Russia is not the East either, and laments the fact that Russia has not considered its history from a philosophical point of view. Chaadaev stands by the requirement for patriotic criticism: writing ‘je n’ai point appris à aimer mon pays les yeux fermés; le front courbé; la bouche close.’<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, the *Apologie* is less critical of Russia.<sup>30</sup>

At the end of the *Apologie* Chaadaev touches on the issue of religion.<sup>31</sup> He does not revoke his positive views on Catholicism, but instead counters their implied criticism of Orthodoxy. Three explanations for the *Apologie* are possible: that Chaadaev had completely changed his views towards Catholicism (which is not corroborated by his private correspondence); he now placed less emphasis on Catholicism (which is probably the case); publicly he did not wish to remind his readers of the very issue that had caused problems earlier (this too is likely).

In the same year as he wrote his *Apologie* Chaadaev wrote a letter to Stroganov, referring to the idea that Chaadaev was under some sort of mental duress, or *sentiment douloureuse*, as he calls it in his letter:

Я далек от того, чтобы отречься от всех мыслей, изложенных в означенном сочинении; в нем есть такие, которые я готов подписать кровью. [...] Но верно также и то, что в нем много таких вещей, которых бы я, конечно не сказал бы теперь. Так, например, я дал слишком большую долю католицизму, и думаю ныне, что он не всегда был верен своей миссии...<sup>32</sup>

These words underline the need (as Chaadaev saw it) to be moderate, but they do not revoke the contents of his ‘Lettre’ any more than the *Apologie* does. He apparently acknowledged the flaws in his utopian approach to Catholicism, but did not argue that Catholicism itself is inferior to Orthodoxy; this is because he saw both denominations as forming two parts of the Universal Church.

The initial responses to the ‘Lettre première’ reflect the high degree of intolerance towards Catholic leanings in this period. Chaadaev’s own responses remind us that he was prepared to some extent to stand his ground; they are, as Aizlewood writes, ‘humble pie’, but simultaneously represent an attempt to show a more balanced

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>32</sup> Chaadaev, *PSS*, II: 113.



picture of his views.<sup>33</sup> The official declaration of Chaadaev as mad underlined the idea that any person who absorbed Catholic ideas was not only a traitor, but insane. Most importantly, Chaadaev's writings set the tone, and many of the main questions, of the debate about the image of Catholicism that would dominate Russian literary culture for the next fifty years.<sup>34</sup> He introduced the idea that Catholicism could influence Russian society, and this idea, in its positive and negative manifestations, prevailed.

### **The Literary Sphere, 1820-1836**

By 1831, the poet Aleksandr Pushkin (1799-1837) had read part of the *Lettres philosophiques* when he wrote to his friend Chaadaev: 'Vous voyez l'unité Chretienne dans le Catholicisme, c'est à dire dans le Pape. N'est elle pas dans l'idée du Christ, qui se retrouve aussi dans le protestantisme?'<sup>35</sup> Pushkin refocuses the unity of Christianity on Christ, he is, paradoxically, being (arguably) more ecumenical than Chaadaev. Pushkin, however, was not in favour of the Papacy.

When the 'Lettre première' was finally published in 1836, Pushkin made more detailed remarks, in a letter that was never sent. Eidel'man suggests that Chaadaev might have read this reply, and raises the possibility that Chaadaev might in turn have been influenced by Pushkin's comments.<sup>36</sup> In this letter, Pushkin agrees with some points about Chaadaev's idea of history, but disagrees with others:

Il n'y a pas de doute que le schisme nous a séparé du reste de l'Europe et que nous n'avons pas participé à aucun des grands événements qui l'ont remuée; mais nous avons eu notre mission à nous [...] Nous avons pris des Grecs l'évangile et les traditions, et non l'esprit de puérité et de controverse. Les moeurs de Byzance n'ont jamais été celles de Kiev. Le clerge Russe, jusqu'à a Théophane, a été respectable, il ne s'est jamais soulié des *infamies du papisme* et certes n'aurait jamais provoqué la réformation, au moment ou l'humanité avait le plus besoin d'unité.[...] je vous jure sur mon honneur, que pour rien au monde je n'aurais voulu changer de patrie, ni avoir d'autre histoire que celle de nos ancêtres, telle que Dieu nous l'a donnée.<sup>37</sup>

Pushkin again expresses criticism of his friend's idealization of the role of the Papacy.

We can compare this with another balanced expression on the same theme in an essay

'O nichtozhestve literaturny russkoi' (1834):

<sup>33</sup> Aizlewood, 'Revisiting Russian Identity', p. 42.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Pushkin to Chaadaev, 6 July 1831, in Pushkin, *PSS*, XIV: 187.

<sup>36</sup> N. Eidel'man, 'Pushkin i Chaadaev (Poslednee pis'mo)' in N. Eidel'man, *Stat'i o Pushkine*, Moskva: NLO, 2000, p. 351.

<sup>37</sup> Pushkin to Chaadaev, 19 October 1836, in Pushkin, *PSS*, XVI: 171 [my italics].

Долго Россия оставалась чуждою от Европы. Приняв свет христианства от Византии, она не участвовала ни в политических переворотах, ни в умственной деятельности римско-католического мира, великая эпоха возрождения не имела на нее никакого влияния [...] России определено было высокое предназначение.<sup>38</sup>

This essay emphasizes the importance of the Catholic influence in Europe in cultural and intellectual terms. However, it counterbalances this view with the positive aspects of Russia's role in history, protecting Europe from the Mongol hordes, and the riches of Byzantine learning. Elements of an orientation towards Russia's potential can be found later in Chaadaev, suggesting the mutual influence of the two writers. The question remains, how did Pushkin's ideas about Catholicism find reflection in his literary work? He toyed with writing a drama about Pope Joan, but it never went beyond a sketch, which retells a legend (of the only female pope) that emphasizes a negative aspect of the Papacy.<sup>39</sup>

### *A Poor Catholic Knight*

Although he read Catholic writers such as Dante, Catholicism does not play a prominent role in Pushkin's lyric poetry. However, traces of the image of Catholicism can be found. Vaiskopf has pointed to religious eroticism in Pushkin's work, inspired in part by Pushkin's reading of works of Catholic mysticism, specifically, *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis.<sup>40</sup> We can observe this phenomenon in the narrative poem *Gavriiliada* (1821) as well as in lyric poems such as 'Madona' (1830), and, in particular, 'Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...' (1829).<sup>41</sup>

Жил на свете рыцарь бедный  
Молчаливый и простой,  
С виду сумрачный и бледный,  
Духом смелый и прямой.

5 Он имел одно виденье,  
Непостижное уму,  
И глубоко впечатленье

<sup>38</sup> 'O nichtozhestve literatury russkoi' (1834), in Pushkin, *PSS*, XI: 268. See S. Frank, 'Pushkin ob otnosheniiakh mezhdru Rossiei i Evropoi,' in *Pushkin v russkoi filosofskoi kritike*, ed. by R. Haltsevaia, Moscow: Kniga, 1999, p. 453.

<sup>39</sup> See 'Papessa Ioanna', in Pushkin, *PSS*, VII: 256, and A. Bukalov, *Pushkinskaia Italiia*, St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2004, pp. 199-201, 204-5.

<sup>40</sup> M. Vaiskopf, '“Vot evkharistiia drugaia”: Religioznaia erotika v tvorchestve Pushkina,' *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 37, 3, 1999, pp. 129-43.

<sup>41</sup> 'Madona' (1830), in Pushkin, *PSS*, III: 224.

В сердце врезалось ему.

10 Путешествуя в Женеву,  
На дороге у креста  
Видел он Марию деву,  
Матерь господа Христа.

15 С той поры, сгорев душою,  
Он на женщин не смотрел,  
И до гроба ни с одною  
Молвить слова не хотел.

20 С той поры стальной решетки  
Он с лица не подымал  
И себе на шею четки  
Вместо шарфа привязал.

Несть мольбы Отцу, ни Сыну,  
Ни святому Духу век  
Не случилось паладину,  
Странный был он человек.

25 Проводил он целы ночи  
Перед ликом пресвятой  
Устремив к ней скорбны очи,  
Тихо слезы лья рекой.

30 Полон верой и любовью,  
Верен набожной мечте,  
Ave, Mater Dei кровью  
Написал он на щите.

35 Между тем как паладины  
Встречу трепетным врагам  
По равнинам Палестины  
Мчались, именуя дам,

40 Lumen coelum, sancta Rosa!  
Восклицал в восторге он,  
И гнала его угроза  
Мусульман со всех сторон.

Возвратясь в свой замок дальный,  
Жил он строго заключен,  
Всё безмолвнй, всё печальный,  
Без причастья умер он.

45 Между тем как он кончался,  
Дух лукавый подоспел,  
Душу рыцаря собирался  
Бес тащить уж в свой предел:

50 Он-де Богу не молился,  
Он не ведал-де поста,  
Не путем-де волочился  
Он за матушкой Христа.

Но пречистая, конечно,  
Заступилась за него  
И вступила в царство вечно  
Паладина своего.<sup>42</sup>

The plot of this poem is a parody of a hagiography or ballad with the Knight as the hero. The link to Catholicism is underlined by the Knight wearing a rosary, and by the fragments of Latin quoted. The first appears to be two citations from the ‘Hail Mary’ [‘Ave Maria ... Mater dei ...’]. ‘*Sancta rosa*’ evokes the rose as symbol of the Virgin Mary. The appearance of these Latin phrases helps give the text a Catholic hue without apparently adding anything much to the poem. In summary, the Knight’s encounter with a mystical vision of the Virgin is seen to change his life. Two chief questions arise from this poem. Who is the Knight? Who or what, if anything, does his mystical vision represent?

Slivkin has argued that the poem may arise from Pushkin’s interest in Freemasonry and the Knights Templar (a Catholic order). He notes that the Knight of the poem was based on the story of Jehan de Luze.<sup>43</sup> The Knight may be identified as a knight of the Crusading Era, thanks to the references to the Holy Land and Moors; this would fit well with the setting of Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1819), which was popular at this period.

The poem may partially parody the life of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order. It is likely that Pushkin would have known about Loyola’s story, even if he had not read his *Autobiography*. The Jesuits had been teaching in Russia in the earlier years of the poet’s life, up to 1820. Pushkin had a friend who was an alumnus of a Jesuit school, and, as already noted, makes several references to the Jesuits in his work.<sup>44</sup> Loyola, a knight (from a rich family), saw a vision of the Virgin Mary and dedicated his life to Christ, laying his sword at the altar of Our Lady and living a life of extreme asceticism. He later travelled to the Holy Land, in order to convert the Muslims

<sup>42</sup> Pushkin, *PSS*, III: 161-2.

<sup>43</sup> Y. Slivkin, ‘Was the Covetous Knight Poor and was the Poor Knight Covetous?’, *Russian Literature* LV/4 (May 2004), pp. 552-56.

<sup>44</sup> *Boris Godunov* (Noch’, sad. Fontan’), in Pushkin, *PSS*, VII: 65; ‘Table Talk’, in Pushkin, *PSS*, XII: 156; A. Pushkin to P. A. Viazemskii, 24 June 1824, in *PSS*, XIII: 99. P. Viazemskii went to a Jesuit school. Mills Todd III, *The Familiar Letter*, p. 201.

there, and curiously decided not to kill a Moor who had impugned the virginity of the Virgin Mary.<sup>45</sup> The Symbolist poet Elizaveta Dmitrieva (Cherubina de Gabriac) made a comparison between the Knight of ‘Zhil na svete...’ and St Ignatius.<sup>46</sup> However, the poem is not solely aimed at criticising or parodying Loyola – if this were the case, Pushkin would have probably made this explicit. Rather, he may have used this story as a loose model for his poem.

The image of the knights as eccentric was strengthened by fictional characters like Cervantes’ Don Quixote.<sup>47</sup> In the early nineteenth century Catholic converts and those with pro-Catholic sympathies, such as Prince Petr Kozlovskii (1783-1840), Mikhail Lunin, Paul I (who became head of the Knights of Malta), or Chaadaev, were all considered eccentrics or madmen. Around the time the poem was written, Chaadaev, like the Knight, began to live a strange life, ceased for periods of his life to communicate with fellow human beings, to engage in romantic relationships with women, to follow Orthodox religious practice. Pushkin’s friendship with Chaadaev, Kozlovskii and Lunin, surely informs the exploration in the poem of a conversion or similar life-changing experiences which seem to others to be irrational or mad.<sup>48</sup> They may be blinkered by their faith, and sense of righteousness. The poem’s *topos*, the road, and the idea of a journey is very significant, because this is frequently seen as the space where encounters and changing experiences occur, including religious conversions.<sup>49</sup> Pushkin therefore uses this outline to explore the motif of mystical experience and conversion.

‘What’ the Knight meets is a mystical vision of the Virgin Mary, and he appears to develop an inappropriate affection for her. Vaiskopf has pointed out that Pushkin not infrequently identifies earthly love with love for the Virgin Mary.<sup>50</sup> Pushkin’s relationship with Natalia Goncharova and his mother are thought to have

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<sup>45</sup> The Autobiography of St Ignatius Loyola, with Related Documents, ed. by J. Olin, trans. J. O’Callaghan, London: Harper and Row, 1974, pp. 21, 22-25, 30-32, 45-51 passim.

<sup>46</sup> N. Mednis, ‘Immenye ili personal’nye teksty. Pushkinskii tekst russkoi literatury,’ in Sverkhteksty v russkoi literature: Uchebnoe posobie, Novosibirsk: IGPU, 2003, pp. 51-52. The poem referred to is ‘Sv. Ignatiiu’ (1909), in Sub rosa: Adelaida Gertsyk, Sofiiia Parnok, Poliksena Solov’eva, Cherubina de Gabriak, Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1999, p. 476. (See Chapter 10).

<sup>47</sup> For more on Cervantes, see L. B. Turkevitch, Cervantes in Russia, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949.

<sup>48</sup> As noted above, Pushkin addressed poems to three Catholic converts. His relationship with Chaadaev in his formative years was unquestionably significant. See D. Budgen, ‘Pushkin and Chaadaev: The History of a Friendship,’ in Ideology in Russian Literature, ed. by R. Freeborn and J. Grayson, London: SSEES/Macmillan, 1990, pp. 1-46. Davidson notes Chaadaev’s influence in the unfinished poem ‘V nachale zhizni shkolu pomniu ia...’ (1830) (see Pushkin PSS, III: 254). See Pamela Davidson, ‘Divine Service or Idol Worship? Russian views of art as demonic,’ in Davidson, Russian Literature and its Demons, pp. 149-52.

<sup>49</sup> M. Bakhtin, ‘Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane,’ in M. Bakhtin, Epos i roman, Saint Petersburg: Azbuka, 2000, pp. 23, 176.

<sup>50</sup> Vaiskopf, ‘Vot evkharistiia drugaia,’ p. 141.

influenced his depiction of women in his work.<sup>51</sup> Pushkin applied the epithet '*stabat mater dolorosa*' to Goncharova.<sup>52</sup> These words are taken from a Catholic hymn, which coincidentally, has the same meter as the poem (trochaic tetrameter). One of the potential models for the Virgin in the poem may therefore be Natalia Goncharova, Pushkin's wife. In finding a connection between earthly women and the Virgin Mary, Pushkin used Catholic (i.e. Western European) representations of Mary rather than icons. The purpose of Catholicism here may then be in helping his image of Mary to seem less 'profane' in contemporary Russian culture. Criticisms or references to Catholicism are therefore obfuscatory, helping the poet to distance his satirical comment from subjects that are protected by censorship or social convention in his own culture and time.

If the Virgin figure represents Goncharova, then it is possible that the poem casts Pushkin himself as the Knight. This lends it a new, more sympathetic feeling and an added irony: if Pushkin is the Knight, then the poet would himself go into battle with a desire to defend the honour of his own 'Madonna' and die as a result. At the same time, the use of medieval colour in the story gently distances us from such strict contemporary or purely biographical readings. The poem can be read to fit any person's life, not excluding the poet's. This may explain why the poem has intrigued scholars so much and been of such interest to other writers, including Dostoevskii, Ivanov and Dmitrieva. On the biographical aspect, Ivanov read the poem as a reflection on the poet's regrets that he was unable to be moved by such visions.<sup>53</sup>

In the first thirteen stanzas, because of the way the Knight behaves, the poem appears to discard the usefulness of such an experience for any person. Only in the last stanza does the vision appear to be justified by the fact that the Knight is allowed into heaven, through the intercession of the Virgin.

Catholicism and the 'foreignness' of the mysticism in the poem are very useful tools for the poet. The references to non-Russian religion and culture, such as (crusading) knights or the Latin phrases, apparently allow the poet to distance his ideas

<sup>51</sup> S. Berezkina, 'Motivy materi i materinstva v tvorchestva A. S. Pushkina,' *Russkaia literatura*, 1, 2001, pp. 167-86; M. Stroganov, 'Pushkin i Madona,' in *A.S. Pushkin: Problemy tvorchestva*, ed. by S. Fomichev, Kalinin, 1987, pp. 15-35. For other examples of the pursuit of the feminine ideal, see 'K \*\*' ('Ty bogomater', net somnen'ia...' 1826), in Pushkin, *PSS*, III: 45; 'Kto znaet krai, gde nebo bleshchet...' (1828), in *ibid.*, 96-98, and others. On the use of Raphael's Madonna, see also, I. Pearson, 'Raphael as seen by Russian writers from Zhukovsky to Turgenev,' *Slavonic and East European Review*, LIX/3, (1981), pp. 346-69, (pp. 350-52 on Pushkin.).

<sup>52</sup> *Al'bom Elizavety Ushakovoi*, ed. by T. Krasnoborod'ko, St Petersburg: IRLI/ Logos: 1999, p. 208 (This shows a sketch by Pushkin – the signature is on the sleeve in the lace, forming the pattern of the lace) and commentary, p. 283. Cited in Berezkina, 'Motivy materi,' p. 186.

<sup>53</sup> V. Ivanov, 'Dva maiaka,' in *Pushkin v russkoi filosofskoi kritike*, ed. by R. Khaltsevaia, Moscow: Kniga, 1999, p. 250.

from Russia. This ironic distance helps the poet to explore issues that were in fact very relevant to Russian culture and perhaps his own life and friendships at the time when he was writing. Pushkin's use of Catholic motifs therefore not only has personal elements but is open-ended, playful and slightly provocative, a far cry from some of the later one-sided polemical uses of Catholic imagery.

### ***A Tale of Two Tsars: Boris Godunov and Dmitrii Samozvanets***

Pushkin's historical drama *Boris Godunov* (1831) is set in the seventeenth century, a period when Catholics were encroaching on Russian soil. According to legend, Dmitrii was the product of a Polish plot; influenced and advised by the Jesuits, he wanted to convert Russia to Catholicism.<sup>54</sup> Contemporary rumours had Dmitrii involved in sins as diverse as raping nuns, profaning icons, communicating with Satan, and, as Dunning writes, 'his most fiendish plot, it was claimed, was a plan to kill all the boyars and clergy in order to convert Russia to Catholicism. In short, Tsar Dmitrii was seen as the Antichrist...'<sup>55</sup> This was the view of Dmitrii that prevailed throughout most of Russian history, and was certainly current in Pushkin's time. This would have potentially been a sound basis for a jingoistic, anti-Catholic work of literature.

However, although *Boris Godunov* may be considered part of Russia's national literary canon, it is not a piece of 'nationalist literature'.<sup>56</sup> Whatever his intentions may have been, Pushkin succeeded in writing something far less nationalist than his compatriots.<sup>57</sup> The choice of era, as Emerson has commented, is significant because of the investigation of the East-West divide in the play.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the sense of history it provides is not clear-cut, but subtle and ambiguous. It is apparent that Pushkin declined to highlight the national theme in favour of personal drama. It would be possible to depict the Russian *narod* as under attack by the Poles and subject to pan-Catholic conspiracies, but this plot is not developed, especially by comparison with two other

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<sup>54</sup> Dunning has argued that Dmitrii was not the product of a Polish plot, his involvement with the Jesuits or Catholics on reaching Moscow was kept to a minimum, and his conversion was 'probably insincere,' indicating that he was superficially 'mimicking' Catholicism. C. Dunning, 'Who was Tsar Dmitrii?,' pp. 705-29, p. 710 and C. Dunning, *A Short History of Russia's First Civil War*, p. 84, p. 88.

<sup>55</sup> Dunning, *A Short History*, p.138. My reading of this drama substantially differs from Dirscherl's, who writes that 'Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* best preserves the diabolical overtones of the Romish-Jesuitical plot.' Dirscherl, *Dostoevsky*, p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> D. Bethea, 'Pushkin as Historical Thinker,' in *The Pushkin Handbook*, ed. by D. Bethea, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, pp. 271-72. See also, S. Evdokimova, *Pushkin's Historical Imagination*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998, p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> See Emerson, *Boris Godunov*, and C. Emerson, 'Pretenders to History: Four Plays for Undoing Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*', *Slavic Review* 44, 2 Summer 1985, pp. 257-79.

<sup>58</sup> Emerson, 'Pretenders to History', p. 257. The Jesuit Paul Pierling, would choose to examine this era as an historian.

works on the *Smutnoe vremia*, Aleksei Khomiakov's *Dmitrii Samozvanets* (1833) (see below), and Mussorgskii's opera *Boris Godunov* (1868-1873).

The anti-Catholic element is present in *Boris Godunov* only in embryonic form, with the appearance of a certain *Pater* in the scene 'Krakov. Dom Vishnevskogo'.<sup>59</sup> Pushkin injects characteristic irreverent humour. He visualized the Jesuits as Machiavellian schemers, as we can see from a reference to Machiavelli's influence on Possevino (who had attempted to negotiate with Ivan IV the conversion of Rus') in his *Table Talk*.<sup>60</sup> Yet when the opportunity arises in writing *Boris Godunov* to make use of this image of the Jesuits, the idea of their scheming is disrupted and counter-balanced by the character of Machiavellian Marina:

**Самозванец:**

Нет – легче мне сражаться с Годуновым,  
Или хитрить с придворным езуитом,  
Чем с женщиной – чорт с ними: мочи нет.<sup>61</sup>

The writer of *Boris Godunov* does not use this potentially dramatic conceptualisation of Dmitrii as a traitor to the Russian nation, and convert to Catholicism, as other writers, such as Bulgarin, did; instead he portrayed Dmitrii as successful.<sup>62</sup> Douglas Clayton points out the ability of Dmitrii to switch identities but argues that this is his downfall.<sup>63</sup> Yet we do not see that downfall in the play. Dunning suggests that Pushkin had difficulties writing the drama partly because the Tsar did not like the idea of the Pretender as a tool of the Poles.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, in the drama, the impression that Russia was under threat from Poland is drowned out by the internal conflicts within Russia.

Dmitrii's connection with Catholicism firstly shows that a character can successfully employ the proactiveness so often associated with Roman Catholicism in the works of Russian thinkers, traditionally opposed to the 'contemplative' or 'passive' East. Secondly, by not finishing Dmitrii's story, and therefore not showing its tragic end, Pushkin declines to argue that the influence of Catholicism will lead to the destruction of the individual or the nation. Despite the temptation of dramatic effect,

<sup>59</sup> Pushkin, PSS, VII: 50.

<sup>60</sup> 'Table Talk,' in Pushkin, PSS, XII: 156.

<sup>61</sup> 'Noch'. Sad. Fontan,' in Pushkin, PSS, VII: 65.

<sup>62</sup> For more on Bulgarin's 'take' on this era of history, see C. Dunning, 'Rethinking the Canonical Text of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*,' *Russian Review* 60/4, October 2001, p. 584. Emerson, *Boris Godunov*, p. 100.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>64</sup> C. Dunning, 'The Tragic Fate of Pushkin's Comedy,' in *The Uncensored Boris Godunov: The Case for Pushkin's Original Comedy*, ed. by C. Dunning, Madison, Wis: Wisconsin University Press, 2006, p. 114.



Pushkin chose not to make his re-telling of the Boris and Dmitrii story particularly anti-Catholic, or even anti-Polish.

Khomiakov's reply to Pushkin, *Dmitrii Samozvanets* (1833), picks up the story of Dmitrii and 'corrects' Pushkin's omissions. The anti-Catholic (and anti-Polish) thematic is obvious in comparison to Pushkin's work, perhaps because of the topicality of the subject at the time (just after the Polish Uprising), as well as Khomiakov's increasingly nationalist position. Dmitrii is reminded of his links to the Poles, although Khomiakov is careful to try to show that Dmitrii stands up to the Poles and those manipulative representatives of Catholicism, the Jesuits, Rangoni and Pater 'Kvitskii':

... Рангони  
И Квицкий явятся ко мне. Внимай,  
Как будут сладки их слова, как хитры,  
Как будет твёрд Димитрия ответ!  
Опасны этих ксендзов речи: льются,  
Как мёд, а цепью вьются вокруг души.  
Но цепь расторгну и свободной грудью  
В объятия России брошусь я.<sup>65</sup>

The idea that Jesuits are cunning was already hinted at by Pushkin, and recurs later both in polemical essays and in Russian literature, especially in the works of Dostoevskii and in Tolstoi's *Voina i mir*. This image of the Jesuits may be partially connected with the prominence of rationalist or scholastic arguments in Catholicism as opposed to Orthodox tradition, and with the exploits of Antonio Possevino SJ. It seems likely that Khomiakov was alluding to the fear of prominent contemporary Russians converting to Catholicism. Dmitrii refers repeatedly to the idea that Jesuits are seen as conspirators and troublemakers:

... Я знаю иезуитов.  
Их хитрый ум наклонен к мятежам,  
Их радуют кровавые волнения,  
Им мирная противна тишина,  
Как сонный ветер в пустынях океана  
Томителен для смелого пловца.  
И оттого им снятся заговоры,  
Как воину все снятся стук мечей,  
И крепости, и враг зверообразный,  
И сладкий звон гуляющих ковшей.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Dmitrii Samozvanets. Tragediia v piati deistviiakh*, in A.S. Khomiakov, *Stikhotvoreniia i dramy*, Moscow and Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1969, p. 292.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 394.

The implication of violence is clear. The Jesuit asks for Dmitrii to fulfill the promise of the conversion of his realm to Catholicism and Dmitrii stands up to them.<sup>67</sup> Dmitrii's speech reminds the audience that Russians are to be defined by their adherence to Orthodoxy.<sup>68</sup> He underlines his own Russian credentials, in standing up to interference:

Мой хитрый ксендз, твою я понял душу!  
 О! (будьте яко змии) - глубоко  
 Начертано в уставе иезуитов,  
 И твердо, Квицкий, помнишь ты его.  
 Но ты ошибся, ксендз! [...]  
 И что бы я рукою иноземцев  
 Его, как зверя дикого, сковал,  
 Грозой цепей, грозой мечей наёмных  
 Его главу пред Римом преклонял!  
 Тому не быть.<sup>69</sup>

Dmitrii attempts to defend Russia; the temptation provided by Catholicism gives him an opportunity to prove how Russian he feels himself to be.<sup>70</sup> Even though this puts him in a difficult position, he continues to struggle. However, he has, in the best traditions of tragedy, already committed his fatal act, and entered into a pact with the Devil. His flaw is to think he can outwit the Devil and sell the soul of Russia too.

[Dmitrii to Pater Kvitskii.]  
 О иезуит! И ты не призрак ада?  
 Не сатана?<sup>71</sup>

Khomiakov therefore not only uses the spectre of Catholicism in his work, but repeatedly portrays Catholicism, and specifically the Jesuits, as villains. In *Dmitrii Samozvanets*, these villains are obvious, their characters painted simply and their links to the Devil made clear. The implications for our understanding of Russian history and present-day affairs are clear: never trust a Jesuit, enter into pacts with Catholic Poles, or try to compromise Russian Orthodoxy as the only true faith of the Russian people. Khomiakov's drama unfortunately lacks the artistic merit of Pushkin's, and did not become part of the literary canon. Lacking in thematic subtlety, it recycles historical legends without giving the characters depth. Instead the author adds drama by using prejudicial stereotypes. Emerson accurately describes Khomiakov's work as 'Slavophile

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 295 [my italics].

<sup>70</sup> Emerson, 'Pretenders to History,' p. 266.

<sup>71</sup> Khomiakov, *Dmitrii Samozvanets*, p. 403.

chauvinism, a victory for Orthodoxy.’<sup>72</sup> The language of national stereotypes and xenophobic anti-Catholicism would dominate in the next few decades. The points developed by Khomiakov in his historical drama would be further expanded in his essays, and filtered back into Russian literature later in the century.

### **Conclusion**

The image of Catholicism is a construct in Chaadaev’s thought, used to link unity and action, which according to him are lacking in the Orthodox Church. He argues that this construct has exercised a powerful influence on European society, and it is overwhelmingly this historical, social aspect of Catholicism that is important in his works. However, Catholicism is not treated in Chaadaev’s works as a faith; this theological and personal aspect of religion tends to be underdeveloped in his better known writings. Chaadaev the philosopher was interested in culture, as his friendship with Pushkin reinforces, but he does not directly address the question of Catholicism’s influence on culture. For Chaadaev, Catholicism, heavily identified with unity in Europe, serves as a means to pose questions of Russia, which thinkers would continue to try to answer these questions for the next hundred years.

In the literary work of Pushkin, Catholicism begins to be treated as part of the culture of Western Europe, and not just as a social force. Although it can still be seen in political terms, it may be viewed as a faith, which, like any belief system, has a strong influence on the individual, not always easily understood. The image of Catholicism in Pushkin’s poetry is more subtle, and more ambivalent, and a creative influence. By contrast, Khomiakov’s portrays Catholicism in his literary work as something foreign, malevolent, interfering and scheming, his drama needs this enemy and this paves the way for a one-sided, polarised image of Catholicism in his polemical essays. Both Pushkin and Khomiakov set a pattern of treatments of Catholicism, one more open-ended, the latter more polemical, which informed the dynamism of the Russian literary tradition of the image of Catholicism.

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<sup>72</sup> Emerson, ‘Pretenders to History,’ p. 266. Interestingly, Mussorgskii’s opera *Boris Godunov* (1874) also has a ‘melodramatic villain’ in the character of the Jesuit Rangoni. Emerson, *Boris Godunov*, p. 172.

## Chapter 2: The Writing of the Slavophiles and Tiutchev

### **The Slavophiles**

This section analyses the image of Catholicism in the works of Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii, which set out the founding ideas of the Slavophiles. Walicki has suggested that Slavophilism was a ‘conservative utopianism,’ that had some contradictions inherent in it, for ‘dreams of a lost harmonious world always conceal some sense of alienation or deprivation. As the educated offspring of old aristocratic families, the Slavophiles were too closely bound up with old Russian patriarchal traditions, and at the same time too much influenced by Western culture to feel happy in the outwardly Westernized authoritarian bureaucracy of Nicholas I.’<sup>1</sup> The Slavophiles attempted to juggle in their work on the one hand ideas derived from Western Europe and, on the other, native Russian ideas. They struggled to counterbalance healthy criticisms of the Russian system with defence of Russia from attack, and this created tensions that were never fully resolved. Rabow-Edling has convincingly explained why, according to national identity theories, the Slavophile formulations of Russian national identity consistently used the West as a negative antithesis.<sup>2</sup> Christoff provocatively writes that ‘since Russia was unable to measure up to the great Western cultural achievements, the Slavophiles challenged the West in the field of religion and philosophy.’<sup>3</sup> While the first part of this view implies Western cultural superiority, the second part is valid.

The Slavophiles’ writing attempted to provide Russia with a positive definition her national identity. Kireevskii wrote, ‘... я думаю, что особенность России заключалась в самой полноте и чистоте того выражения, которое христианское учение получило в ней.’<sup>4</sup> This precept was the foundation stone of Slavophile thought, which sought to emphasise the perceived problems of European society and culture and link them back to Western religion. Walicki has argued that the Slavophiles’ arguments

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<sup>1</sup> Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> S. Rabow-Edling, *Slavophile Thought and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Christoff, *An Introduction*, IV: 43. See also, F. Copleston (SJ), *Russian Religious Philosophy: Selected Aspects*, Tunbridge Wells: Search Press, 1988, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> ‘O kharaktere prosveshcheniia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosveshcheniiu Rossii,’ (1852), in I. Kireevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (2 vols.), ed. by M. Gershenzon, Hampshire: Gregg International, 1970, I: 219 [Facsimile reprint of 1911 collected works].

used apophatic definitions of Russianness. To put it simply, defining Catholicism reveals what is Orthodox without having to actually define Orthodoxy in any detail.<sup>5</sup>

The Slavophile image of Catholicism had three other main features that will be explored below. Firstly, they made negative generalisations about Western Europe, blaming its culture and politics on Catholic roots. Secondly, like Chaadaev, they prized the concept of unity. However, in describing unity and how it should be created, the Slavophiles contrasted true unity with distorted Catholic versions of unity. Thirdly, the Slavophile view of Western Europe and its religion was historical, whereas their view of Orthodox Russia, even historical Rus', tended to be idealized; this allowed the Slavophiles to treat the Russian Orthodox Church as a faultless and ideal entity, and by corollary the Western Churches as faulty and secular. All of this tended to mean that the image of Catholicism was used as a depository for negative attributes.

### *Catholicism's Influence on Europe*

Many Russian thinkers generalized about Europe, used stereotypes, and treated Europe synechdocally.<sup>6</sup> They tended to see Europe as one homogeneous entity, which had been influenced by its religion. Although Chaadaev was not the originator of the view that the Catholic Church had shaped Christendom, he was one of the most famous exponents of it in early nineteenth-century Russia. The Slavophiles responded to this idea of the Catholic Church's influence, not by disagreeing with it, but by ascribing negative effects to its influence. In discussing Russia they chose to emphasize the positive impact of Catholicism's absence.

Kireevskii attempted to characterize the differences between Europe and Russian culture in a programmatic way, drawing on a schematic version of European history. In his early essay 'Deviatnadsatyi vek' (1832) – generally thought to be more inspired by Westernism than his later works – he refers to three principles that affected the development of Europe: Christian religion, the invasion of the barbarians who destroyed the Roman Empire, and the remains of the ancient world. Russia only lacked the last of these.<sup>7</sup> Western Europe had fallen under the influence of the Roman Empire, and therefore of the Roman Church. Since Rome had been a conquering power, it had held sway by imposing its rule on Europe, latterly via the rule of the Church. The traces of this could be found in the rule of various types of logical system (Roman law being

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<sup>5</sup> Apophatic theology is not unique to Orthodoxy. See Walicki, 'Catholicism and the Eastern Church,' pp. 51, 58.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin, 2003, pp. 246, 255, 300-2.

<sup>7</sup> 'Deviatnadsatyi vek' (1832), in Kireevskii, *PSS*, I: 98.

one example, which is still the basis of canon law). The Slavophiles extended this principle to regard Chaadaev's 'syllogisme de l'Occident' as a pervasive system, foreign to Russia, whose effects threatened the spirit of all human communities.<sup>8</sup>

In another early essay, 'V otvet A. S. Khomiakovu' (1838), Kireevskii described the root cause of Europe's problems:

Вся совокупность веры опиралась на *силлогическую схоластику*; инквизиция, иезуитизм, одним словом, все особенности католицизма развились силою того же формального процесса разума, так что и самый протестантизм, который католики так упрекают в рациональности, произошёл прямо из рациональности католицизма.<sup>9</sup>

According to Kireevskii, the Catholic Church had inherited from the Roman Empire the prioritization of logic, and the need to maintain a hierarchy. Kireevskii equates medieval scholasticism with rationalism, and therefore Rationalism with Catholicism. This tendency to privilege reason had led Western Christianity significantly astray from true Christianity:

Ибо только в противоречии протестантизму поставляет Латинство церковное предание выше человеческого разума; но, в отношении к Церкви вселенской, Рим в делах веры дает преимущество *отвлеченному силлогизму* перед святым преданием... Она отпала от неё, только потому что хотела ввести в веру новые догматы, неизвестные церковному преданию и порожденные случайным выводом логики Западных народов.<sup>10</sup>

'New dogmas' included the dogma of purgatory and the *filioque*. Kireevskii contrasts the Holy Tradition of the Church with dogmas he associates with scholasticism and rationalism (the Slavophiles overwhelmingly preferred mystic or non-rational traditions to 'rational' ones, tending to ignore Western European examples of mysticism, unlike later Russian writers). Kireevskii continued to state that modern philosophy had become divorced from faith as a result of scholasticism.<sup>11</sup> According to him, besides logic, another feature was inherited from the Roman Empire: the hierarchy (both within the Church and in medieval feudalism), headed by the Roman Emperor, who was seen as a precursor to the Pope.<sup>12</sup> Kireevskii and Khomiakov both use the words 'Rim' and 'Latinstvo', 'rimliane' and 'latiniane' as a synecdoche for Catholicism

<sup>8</sup> 'Lettre première,' in Chaadaev, *PSS*, I: 93.

<sup>9</sup> 'V otvet A.S. Khomiakovu' (1838), in Kireevskii, *PSS*, I:112 [my italics].

<sup>10</sup> Kireevskii, 'O neobkhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novykh nachal dlia filosofii' (1856), in *ibid.*, I: 226 [my italics].

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Kireevskii, 'O kharaktere,' in *ibid.*, I: 188-90.

and Catholics, which serves to emphasize the connection between Catholicism and the Roman Empire.<sup>13</sup>

Khomiakov's work, like Kireevskii's, put great emphasis on the pervasive influence of Catholicism. He wrote a response to Kireevskii's essay of 1852, in which he pointed to many problems in Europe arising (in his view) from Catholicism, including scholasticism and the politics of Machiavelli.<sup>14</sup> When Khomiakov discusses the Byzantine heritage of Russia, he blames the negative aspects of Byzantium on 'Roman' influence on Byzantium.<sup>15</sup> In Europe (as with Kireevskii), rationalism gives rise to Protestantism and to atheism.<sup>16</sup> While the Slavophiles occasionally mentioned Protestantism, for the most part they discussed Catholicism, and on the rare occasions when they addressed Protestantism, they held Catholicism culpable for Protestantism's wrongdoings. As Khomiakov succinctly expressed it in his letter of 1846 to William Palmer:

All the Western doctrine is born out of Romanism. [...] In short, if it was to be expressed in the concise language of algebra, all the West knows but one datum, A; whether it be preceded by the positive sign +, as with the Romanists, or with the negative, – as with the Protestants, the A remains the same.<sup>17</sup>

In essence, Catholicism was visualized as a dominating system, which pervaded all of Western European life. If any aspect of European culture or history was seen to be negative, the Slavophiles connected it back to Catholicism. The emphasis on the pervasive influence of Catholicism, their critique of its foundation on syllogism and its hierarchical nature helped support the Slavophiles' vision of Russian identity as founded on a sense of community among a people united by faith. However, this led to a negative and oversimplified image of Catholicism which continued for many decades.

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<sup>13</sup> For more on the image of Rome in Russian literature, see Kalb, Russia's Rome.

<sup>14</sup> 'Po povodu stat'í I. V. Kireevskogo 'O kharaktere prosveshcheniia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosveshcheniiu Rossii' (1852), in Khomiakov, PSS, II: 209.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, II: 216-18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Khomiakov made it a personal mission to attempt to convert the Reverend William Palmer, a member of the Church of England, during a ten-year correspondence. Although their epistolary debate was supposedly between Palmer's Anglicanism and Khomiakov's Russian Orthodoxy, the fact that Palmer eventually converted to Catholicism, and the complexity of the apologetics, means that the letters frequently refer to Catholicism. The correspondence was conducted in English, so it is quoted from this published edition, although it was later published in the PSS, in Russian translation. A. Khomiakov, Letter to W. Palmer 3) 1846, in W. Birkbeck (ed.), Russia and the English Church. Containing a correspondence between Mr. William Palmer, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Mr. Khomiakoff in the years 1844-1854, London: SPCK, 1917, p. 67. See also, A. Khomiakov, 'Po povodu stat'í I. V. Kireevskogo', in PSS, I: 209. See Palmer to Khomiakov, reply to Letter 7, 1852, *ibid.*, p. 120 for the ending of the correspondence, with Palmer's conversion. Interestingly, Beshoner suggests that Palmer was an important influence on some of Gagarin's ideas on ecumenism/union. See Beshoner, Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin, 2002, p. 65.

### *Unity and sobornost'*

Like Chaadaev, the Slavophiles sought unity, but unlike Chaadaev, they believed that Catholicism was estranged from true unity, which for them lay in a sense of conciliarity defined by the word *sobornost'*. In Kireevskii's view, for example, the people of Europe were subservient to the authority of the Catholic Church, which denied them freedom:

Народ не должен был *мыслить*, не должен был *понимать* Богослужения, не должен был даже читать Божественного Писания. Он мог только слушать, не понимая, и *слушаться*, не *рассуждая*; он почитался *бессознательной массой*, на которой стояло здание Церкви, и которая должна была оставаться бессознательною, чтобы Церковь стояла.<sup>18</sup>

This statement – which borrows from the way the Reformation saw language as a mechanism of control – responds to Chaadaev's writing which claimed that Europe (or European Christendom) shared the same voice and thought.<sup>19</sup> It had shared a common bond, but not by free choice, nor with any real understanding. Kireevskii put forward a negative view of unity in opposition to the way that Chaadaev had extolled it. He argued that Catholic unity had only been achieved by submission to the authority of the Church hierarchy, particularly the Papacy.<sup>20</sup>

Khomiakov wrote that 'Romanism is an unnatural tyranny: Protestantism is an unprincipled revolt. Neither of them can be accepted. But where is unity without tyranny? Where is freedom without revolt to be found? They are both to be found in the ancient, continuous and unadulterated Tradition of the Church'<sup>21</sup>. After the Reformation, the tyranny of Catholicism had resulted in the revolt of Protestantism, which allegedly prioritized the individual's free will over the needs of the wider community. Individualism had finally led to secularism and atheism. Khomiakov re-iterated the importance of unity when he wrote to William Palmer:

The Church [i.e. Orthodox Church] has in itself nothing of a state, and can admit of nothing like a conditional Union. It is quite a different case with the Church of Rome. She is a state. She admits easily of the possibility of an alliance even

<sup>18</sup> 'O neobkhodimosti' (1856), p. 229 [my italics].

<sup>19</sup> 'Lettre première,' in Chaadaev, *PSS*, I: 100.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. 'Lettre troisième', in *ibid.*, 128.

<sup>21</sup> Khomiakov to Palmer 6) 1851, in Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church*, p. 102.



with a deep discordance of doctrine [...] Union is possible with Rome. Unity alone is possible with Orthodoxy.<sup>22</sup>

Khomiakov plays with the meanings of words in an attempt to convey his ecclesiological concepts. He asserts that ‘union’ is a quasi-legal term, used between states, persons and so on, implying rules or a written contract, as in a diplomatic alliance, whereas ‘unity’ is a philosophical-theological abstract term, something God-given and mystical, beyond human rules. In Slavophile thought Unity is then opposed to Authority. A balance needed to be found between Freedom and Unity, and for the Slavophiles (and later, Dostoevskii) this balance could only to be found in Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>23</sup>

### ***The Ideal versus the Historical Church in Slavophile Thought***

Khomiakov’s most famous statement about the Orthodox faith, is a lengthy *profession de foi*, ‘Opyt katekhizicheskogo izlozheniia ucheniia o tserkvii’ (1840s), known as ‘Tserkov’ odna’. It deals mostly in the realm of absolute and ideal, paying little attention to the historical churches. It represents the Universal Church at this higher ideal level, at which the different Christian denominations are more similar than they are at the historical and particular level. Khomiakov occasionally utilizes the Catholic Church’s doctrines as antitheses to define and explain Orthodox teaching, for example on Transubstantiation and Purgatory.<sup>24</sup> However, the way that he refers to Catholicism lacks the polemical tone of his other works – though it does not follow that the ideas in it are meant to show any sympathy with Catholicism.<sup>25</sup> ‘Tserkov’ odna’ remains one of his most popular works.<sup>26</sup>

Generally, however, Khomiakov described the Orthodox and Catholic Churches as distinct from each other. There is always a tension between the historical and the ideal churches in his work.<sup>27</sup> For Khomiakov, Catholicism was an institution with a

<sup>22</sup> Khomiakov to Palmer 1) 1844, in *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>24</sup> Eg. ‘Tserkov’ odna,’ in Khomiakov, *PSS*, II: 11, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Also noted by Tempest: see R. Tempest, ‘Gagarin and Khomiakov: Two Lives, Two Doctrines,’ in A. S. Khomiakov: *Poet, Philosopher, Theologian*, ed. by V. Tsurikov, New York: Holy Trinity Seminary Press, 2004, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> Kallistos (Timothy) Ware notes the influence of ‘Tserkov’ odna’ on his faith journey. K. Ware, ‘Strange yet Familiar: My Journey to the Orthodox Church,’ in *The Inner Kingdom. (The Collected Works)*, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001, I: 6. Later Ware read the Palmer correspondence, see *ibid.*, pp. 15-16. Ware refers to Khomiakov more than any other Slavophile in his introduction to the Orthodox Church. See Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 1-2, 43, 51, 123-4, 239, 243-5, 241-3, 308.

<sup>27</sup> This point has also been made by Christoff and Walicki. Christoff, *An Introduction*, I: 147-48. See also, Christoff, *An Introduction*, IV: 254. Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 70. For example, see ‘Po povodu stat’i I V Kireevskogo,’ in Khomiakov, *PSS*, I: 257.

history of misdemeanours, whereas Orthodoxy is a faith, an ideal. This division of the historical church from the ideal church is a common approach adopted by religious thinkers. Among pro-Catholic thinkers the same inconsistency is evident. They would concentrate on the beauty of ideal Catholicism, and criticize historical Orthodoxy – as Chaadaev had done, and as Gagarin did in the next decade.

In the Palmer correspondence, Khomiakov's arguments imply that Palmer should only attach historical problems to nations. In response to his correspondent's accusation that the Orthodox Church 'seems dead,' Khomiakov writes 'I see no reason for accusing the Orthodox Church in herself of a defect or weakness which may, and in my opinion evidently does, belong to the nations that compose her communities.'<sup>28</sup> Here then, he has carefully separated nation and religion, where elsewhere in the Slavophile output the two are closely entwined.

The difference between that which can be defined by rules and written down (the concrete, historical), and that which can only mystically intuited or believed in, is emphasized in another letter, where Khomiakov points the finger of blame at the Western church (i.e. Catholicism) for its pride:

...the greatest obstacles to Unity are not in the formal difference of doctrine (as the theologians are apt to suppose), but in the spirit which pervaded the Western communities, in their customs, prejudices and passions, but, more than all, in a feeling of pride which hinders a confession of past errors, and a feeling of disdain which would not admit that divine truth has been preserved and guarded for many ages by the long despised and darkened East.<sup>29</sup>

As well as emphasising Russia's victim status among nations, Khomiakov conveys the contrast between theological doctrines (which can be documented and rationally or scholastically discussed) and emotional (i.e. non-rational) values, such as sin, prejudice and pride, arguing that the latter are more important. It is evident that Khomiakov simply does not place Orthodoxy on the same spectrum as Protestantism or Catholicism, but treats it as a separate entity, evaluated according to different criteria.

Valliere has characterized Slavophilism as 'a missionary project [...] a vehicle for carrying the Orthodox Gospel into the world. And Slavophilism was an ethical project, an attempt to ground society [...] on the principles of the Gospel.' He adds that Khomiakov 'was also convinced that without a social and historical mission, the Church

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<sup>28</sup> Khomiakov to Palmer 3) 1846, in *ibid.*, pp. 57-58, p. 64. See also, Khomiakov to Palmer 8) 1852, in *ibid.*, pp. 126, 128.

<sup>29</sup> Khomiakov to Palmer 2) 1845, in *ibid.*, p. 28.

falls short of being what it is called to be.<sup>30</sup> Yet, in contrast to the way that Khomiakov described Catholicism, his writings tend to make Orthodoxy appear abstract. A social or ethical programme is implied by Khomiakov's theology; it is not drawn out in any detail.

The Slavophiles considered Catholicism to have an all-pervasive influence; Catholic Europe was ruled by rationalism, upheld via an authoritarian hierarchy subject to the Pope. While they agreed that Catholicism did provide a form of unity, they felt that this unity came at too high a price, and that it was the wrong kind of unity – artificial (not organic) and superimposed by force. The Catholic Church moved in history – it was an institution, an earthly power, a state that provided its followers with a particular mindset and way of thinking. Orthodoxy was the realm of ideal Christianity, Catholicism the sphere of historical, flawed Christianity. To turn away from the flaws of European civilisation meant to turn towards Orthodoxy, and to do the opposite, to turn towards Catholicism, was unthinkable. This was why they saw conversion to Catholicism as such a troubling phenomenon, especially when it 'happened' to someone whom the Slavophiles knew. These ideas, which grew as a response to Chaadaev's, fully developed for the first time in the Slavophiles' writing, would gradually gain currency in Russian culture, and inform some of its greatest literary works.

### **Catholicism in Tiutchev's Essays**

Fedor Tiutchev (1803-1873) has generally been studied as a lyric poet who wrote on themes such as love and nature; the national and political poems form a significant part of his oeuvre but are generally ignored.<sup>31</sup> He wrote a series of influential essays on Catholicism and four anti-Papal poems.<sup>32</sup> This chapter examines these essays, seeking to understand how they shaped the image of Catholicism. As a diplomat Tiutchev's early career was spent in Europe (Turin and Munich). His contact with the politics of current European Catholicism was therefore much greater than that of many of his contemporaries, and this may have encouraged him to see Catholicism from a political

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<sup>30</sup> P. Valliere, 'The Modernity of Khomiakov,' in *A. S. Khomiakov: Poet, Philosopher, Theologian*, pp. 139-40, see also, pp. 137, 142.

<sup>31</sup> Gregg writes that one fifth of Tiutchev's poems were on political themes. R. Gregg, *Fedor Tiutchev: The Evolution of a Poet*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965, p. 108. Kohn quotes the figure 'nearly a third'. H. Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (2nd ed.), New York: Vintage, 1960, p. 150. For more on the Catholic poems, see Chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>32</sup> The exception to this is Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 81-99. However, Walicki's analysis does not include the poetry, which represents an important continuation of the theme, and an influential contribution to the image of Catholicism at the time.

rather than cultural perspective. It is also significant that one of Tiutchev's wives was a Catholic.<sup>33</sup>

Tiutchev's first collection of poems was published in 1836 with the help of his friend, Ivan Gagarin. The two diplomats corresponded for several years, but the friendship ended in 1838 when the ideological divisions between them became apparent. Gagarin moved towards (Catholic) Westernism, while Tiutchev gradually gravitated towards conservative Russian nationalism.<sup>34</sup> Gagarin, reflecting in 1874 on the choices made earlier in their lives, seemed surprised:

Si l'on m'avait dit à Munich qu'un jour Tioutchev remplirait dans les salons de Pétersbourg le rôle d'un comte de Maistre orthodoxe, qu'il serait un champion de l'Église orientale, un slavophile et un partisan de la russification, on m'aurait prodigieusement étonné. Il est vrai que si l'on m'avait dit en même temps que je serais, un jour, catholique, prêtre et jésuite, je n'aurais pas été moins surpris.<sup>35</sup>

There seems to be some irony in calling Tiutchev an Orthodox 'de Maistre'; the latter was famous for his ultramontane opinions, whereas Tiutchev chose to direct special ire at the Papacy.<sup>36</sup> A pivotal period in Tiutchev's career, when he made greater efforts to present anti-Western and anti-Catholic views in his writing, occurred in the mid-1840s, which coincides approximately with the split between the Slavophiles and Westernizers, the publication of Custine's memoirs and Gagarin's conversion. All of these factors, as well as personal factors such as upbringing, may have influenced Tiutchev. In 1844, Tiutchev decided on a change in his career path, and wrote the first in a series of political memoranda, later published as essays.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from the first political essay, 'Lettre à M. Le Docteur Gustave Kolb rédacteur de la 'Gazette Universelle' (1844), which did not discuss Catholicism, all the other essays (likewise written in French), 'Note' (a memorandum to the Tsar, written in 1845, unpublished, untitled), 'La Russie et la Révolution (1849), and 'La question romaine' (1850) referred to Catholicism.<sup>38</sup> They mixed commentary on contemporary

<sup>33</sup> A. Polonskii, 'Mistika v zhizni i mistitsizm v tvorchestve Fedora Tiutcheva,' *Russian Literature*, LIV 2003, p. 516.

<sup>34</sup> For their correspondence, see Pierling, *Le Prince Gagarine*, pp. 53-74. For a Russian translation, see G. Chagin (ed.), *F. I. Tiutchev v dokumentakh, stat'iakh i vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, Moscow: Kniga i biznes, 1999, pp. 56-74. See also, Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, pp. 10-11. Walicki also notes this connection, although he does not discuss it in any detail, Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> I. Gagarin to A. Bakhmetov, 4<sup>th</sup> November 1874, quoted in Pierling, *Le Prince Gagarine*, p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> One scholar has explained that 'Tiutchev proclaims the same values as Maistre and uses similar argumentation, changing only the name of the force incarnating these views.' V. Miltchyna, 'Joseph de Maistre in Russia,' p. 259.

<sup>37</sup> Tiutchev intended to edit these essays to form a book, called *Rossiiia i Zapad*, but the project was never finished.

<sup>38</sup> The titles of the essays in Russian are 'Rossiiia i Germaniia,' 'Zapiska,' 'Rossiiia i revolutsiia,' 'Rimskii vopros.' They are all reprinted in Russian and French with commentaries and publication history in F. Tiutchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenie i pis'ma* (6 vols.), Moscow: Klassika, 2003. All the essays were originally written in French, and are quoted here in the original. Most have been translated into English in F. Tiutchev, *Poems and Political Letters of*

events with general analysis of Catholicism's influence, past and present. Tiutchev tended to draw on current events to make larger, more abstract and ideological points.

The departure point for the first essay (entitled 'Lettre') was Custine's book. Tiutchev began by explaining that he was not apologising for Russia, since the best apologist for Russia was history itself.<sup>39</sup> He wished to comment on current events, without immersing himself in philosophy or Church history. He did not consider himself an apologist, he considered himself an advisor – he thought that he could help Russia's future. On his return to Russia he hoped that the newfound favour of the Tsar that he had won by writing the 'Lettre' would result in him being granted another diplomatic post.<sup>40</sup> The motivation for the essay writing can therefore be seen as personal expediency, as well as arguably representing the beginning of nationalist messianic work for Tiutchev. Although the return of 1844 was probably never intended to be permanent, in practice, however, it was and so although Tiutchev took holidays abroad in later years, he never returned to Europe for longer periods. 1844 marked the point at which his professional (diplomatic) was replaced by his literary career; after this, the content of his poetry would be increasingly national and political.

### ***Rome and Roman Catholic influence on Europe***

Tiutchev argued in several of his essays that the Western world was defined by Ancient Rome, noting in 'La Question Romaine' that 'Rome [...] est [...] la racine du monde occidentale'<sup>41</sup>. He drew a line between Ancient Rome and Roman Catholicism.<sup>42</sup> He reminded his readers that Catholicism was a schismatic branch from the Christian Church, 'Ce jour-là Rome en se faisant une destinée à part a décidé pour des siècles de celle de l'Occident.'<sup>43</sup> This is underlined further when he noted that 'Nous connaissons le fétichisme des Occidentaux pour tout ce qui est forme, formule et mécanisme politique. Ce fétichisme est devenu comme une dernière religion de l'Occident.'<sup>44</sup> The word fetishism here underlines that, like the Slavophiles, Tiutchev argued that Catholicism was a system (or empire). The way this empire was ruled exerted an unhealthy influence on its subjects. The Catholic Church was referred to and described

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F. I Tiutchev, ed. and trans. by J. Zeldin, Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1973, apart from 'Note.'

<sup>39</sup> This essay has been referred to by its topic, 'Russia and Germany.' See Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 11-12.

<sup>40</sup> J. Dewey, *Mirror of the Soul: A Life of the Poet Fyodor Tyutchev*, Shaftesbury: Brimstone Press, 2010, p. 289.

<sup>41</sup> 'La question romaine' (1849), in F. Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 55.

<sup>42</sup> G. Knabe, 'Rimskaia tema v russkoi kul'ture i v tvorchestve Tiutcheva,' in *Tiutchevskii sbornik*, ed. by Iu. Lotman, Tallinn: Eesti raamat, 1990, pp. 252-85.

<sup>43</sup> 'La question romaine,' in Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 58.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

as a State, with its own language, leader, army and set of laws, reminiscent of the Roman Empire. Subjects of that state were required to submit to being part of this system:

Pendant des siècles, l’Eglise d’Occident, sous les auspices de Rome, avait presque entièrement perdu le caractère que la loi de son origine lui assignait. Elle avait cessé d’être au milieu de la grande société humaine une société de fidèles librement réunie en esprit et en vérité sous la loi du Christ. *Elle était devenue une institution, une puissance politique — un Etat dans l’Etat.* A vrai dire, pendant la durée du moyen-âge, l’Eglise en Occident n’était autre chose qu’une colonie romaine établie dans *un pays conquis*.<sup>45</sup>

Tiutchev subscribes to a negative view of submission and authority where Catholicism is concerned, although he showed admiration for the authority embodied in the Tsar. His views differed from that of the Slavophiles in his emphasis on the importance of who governed, rather than on the role of the people.

### ***Unity and Authority***

Tiutchev responded to the eulogies of the unity provided by Catholicism by emphasising the negative roots and consequences of unity in the Western world.<sup>46</sup> The Roman Catholic Church had taken on earthly power and had sacrificed the freedom of its peoples to the unity of the ‘Catholic empire.’

Qu’a fait Rome? Comment a-t-elle acquis le pouvoir qu’elle s’est arrogé? Par une usurpation flagrante des droits, des attributions de l’Eglise universelle.

Comment a-t-elle cherché à justifier cette usurpation? Par la nécessité de maintenir l’unité de la foi. Et pour arriver à ce résultat, elle ne s’est refusé aucun moyen, ni la violence, ni la ruse, ni les bûchers, ni les Jésuites. Pour maintenir l’unité de la foi elle n’a pas craint de dénaturer le Christianisme.<sup>47</sup>

Tiutchev and the Slavophiles shared the idea later developed by Dostoevskii that Catholicism achieved and maintained unity at the price of freedom.

In his first essay, ‘Note’, Tiutchev had put the solution very simply:

Il y a parmi les Chrétiens de l’Orient un dicton populaire qui exprime naïvement ce fait; ils ont l’habitude de dire, que tout dans la création de Dieu est bien fait, bien ordonné, deux choses exceptées, et ces deux choses sont: le Pape et le Turc.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-60 [my italics].

<sup>46</sup> Gagarin had begun to see the Catholic Church as a force in Europe struggling against disunity in Europe in the 1830s. See *Zapiski o moei zhizni*, in I. Gagarin, *Dnevnik*, pp. 264-66.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Zapiska,’ in Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 30.

— Mais Dieu, — ont-ils soin d'ajouter, — a voulu dans sa sagesse infinie rectifier ces deux erreurs et c'est pour cela qu'il crée le Czar moscovite.

Nul traité, nulle combinaison politique ne prévaudra jamais contre ce simple dicton populaire. C'est le résumé de tout le passé et la révélation de tout un avenir.<sup>48</sup>

This quotation emphasizes an important difference between Tiutchev and the Slavophiles. Khomiakov and Kireevskii had little positive to say about the role of the Tsar, preferring to discuss the inner life of the Orthodox Church and the Russian people. Whereas the Slavophiles' essays used Catholicism to bolster their Orthodox apologetics, Tiutchev uses his anti-Catholic arguments to serve the overarching aims of Russia's imperialism.<sup>49</sup> His essays present Russia, the 'Eastern' Empire, headed by the Tsar, as a solution to the problem of the Catholic Church's power. Thus he provides his own alternative source of unity in Orthodoxy. However, he placed far less emphasis on the role of the Orthodox Church. He does not explain how unity works within Orthodoxy. Instead, he provides his own figurehead and alternative source of secular and religious authority, the Tsar, destined to replace the Pope.

Tiutchev's thought tends to replace like with like. He argues that an Orthodox (Pan-Slav) Empire should replace the Empire of Catholicism. He advocates a type of Caesaropapism, a model of government that had (arguably) influenced the Byzantine Empire and Muscovy.<sup>50</sup> In caesaropapism the Church is important in society, but is ultimately subservient to the commands of the monarch or emperor. The Slavophiles did not share Tiutchev's admiration for caesaropapism as a model for how the relationship between Church and State should function – the Church, which is to say, its Christian people, was supposed to be the true heart of the nation.<sup>51</sup> Despite this,

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 33. Tiutchev quotes the same saying in his letter to Aksakov, see Tiutchev to I. Aksakov, 29 September 1868, in Tiutchev, *PSS*, VI: 354.

<sup>49</sup> See also, Christoff, *An Introduction*, IV: 213.

<sup>50</sup> Some have accused the Byzantine Empire of Caesaropapism, although Ware argues that the power structure of Byzantium was not Caesaropapist. See Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 41. Nichols agrees that Byzantium had this tendency, although he does not define in hard terms as Caesaropapist. See Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, pp. 188-89. Ivan IV's reign also had a tendency towards the dominance of secular authority over the Church. J. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretative History of Russian Culture*, New York: Vintage, 1970, p. 67. See also, N. Zernov, *Moscow Third Rome*, London: SPCK/Macmillan, 1941, pp. 49-50. The same tendency can also be seen in Peter the Great's reign and other periods in Russian history.

<sup>51</sup> Florovskii has argued that Tiutchev's ideas prefigured Solov'ev's 'dream of a universal reconciliation and a regeneration of the world through the reunion of the churches, visualised as a union between the oecumenic Pontiff of Rome and the universal Tsar of Russia.' (G. Florovskii, 'The Historical Premonitions of Tyutchev,' *The Slavonic Review*, 3, 8, December 1924, pp. 337-49). However, if the word union here connotes that the Pope should be allied to the Tsar, then Florovskii misunderstood Tiutchev. If he understood 'union' to mean that the Tsar would become the equivalent of the Pope, then this makes more sense. Solov'ev extensively criticised Caesaropapism in his own work on Church Unity, *La Russie et l'Église Universelle* (1889). See V. Solovyev, *Russia and the Universal Church*, trans. Herbert Rees, London: Geoffrey Bles/The Centenary Press, 1948, pp. 75-77. Tiutchev's thought on Catholicism was closer to Dostoevskii's in the emphasis placed on Catholicism and the Roman Empire and their

Tiutchev's ideas are religious, since he thought (as the quotation above from 'Note' shows) that the Tsar was God's rightful ruler on earth, but the Church itself becomes a means to an end in his scheme. As Dewey puts it, Tiutchev can be criticized for 'the same denial of Christ's "my kingdom is not of this world" of which he accused the West.'<sup>52</sup> This remained unresolved in Tiutchev's thought.

### ***The Ideal versus the Historical Church***

Tiutchev's essays make little reference to the historical Orthodox Church. However, he contrasts the historical Catholic Church's problems and influence with a casaeropapist utopian vision of a new Orthodox world order, presented as an ideal Church. This indicates that he rejected discussing the Orthodox Church in Russia in its past and contemporary historical state, while he did discuss the historical and contemporary Catholic Church. At the same time, he believed that the Universal Church (the ideal Church, the Orthodox Church) should move within history, in order to accomplish its mission of building the Kingdom of God on earth. In other words, he apparently believed that the events of history were leading in the direction of great, even apocalyptic, changes for Europe, to the fall of the 'Catholic' Empire and the beginning of a new, final empire.<sup>53</sup> The closing paragraph of 'La Russie et la Révolution' (1848) emphasizes this belief:

Et quand donc cette mission a-t-elle été plus claire et plus évidente? On peut dire que Dieu l'écrit en traits de feu sur ce Ciel tout noir de tempêtes. L'Occident s'en va, tout croule, tout s'abîme dans une conflagration générale, l'Europe de Charlemagne aussi bien que l'Europe des traités de 1815; la papauté de Rome et toutes les royautés de l'Occident; le Catholicisme et le Protestantisme; la foi depuis longtemps perdue et la raison réduite à l'absurde; l'ordre désormais impossible, la liberté désormais impossible, et sur toutes ces ruines amoncelées par elle, la civilisation se suicidant de ses propres mains...<sup>54</sup>

### ***The Jesuits***

Whereas Khomiakov and Kireevskii only mention the Jesuits in passing, Tiutchev devotes a large section of 'La question romaine' to them. He uses the example of the Jesuits to illustrate the general problem of Catholicism. Anti-Jesuitism had deep roots in Russian history, although Tiutchev's attack on the Society of Jesus was probably fuelled by foreign sources. He must have been aware of anti-Jesuitism in France and

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negative influence. See G. Florovskii, 'Tiutchev i Vladimir Solov'ev,' in G. Florovskii, *Iz proshlogo russkoi mysli*, Moscow: Agraf, 1998, pp. 352-53.

<sup>52</sup> Dewey, *Mirror of the Soul*, pp. 311-12.

<sup>53</sup> Kohn, *Pan-Slavism*, p. 150.

<sup>54</sup> 'La Russie et la Revolution,' in Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 54.



elsewhere in Europe, since he was a diplomat and kept in touch with European affairs.<sup>55</sup> The reference to Pascal in ‘La question romaine’ reveals his broader knowledge of the Society’s historical reputation. Walicki argues that Tiutchev’s anti-Jesuitism was influenced by the writing of Vincenzo Gioberti, whose book, *Il Gesuita moderno*, was published in 1846.<sup>56</sup> It is certainly interesting that Tiutchev’s anti-Jesuitism was itself partially derived from Western sources, but this in no way undermines the Russian basis for his anti-Jesuit views. With the conversion of Gagarin and others, Jesuits were once again seen as a direct threat to Russian national and religious integrity.<sup>57</sup>

Like many Russian writers, Tiutchev sees the Jesuits as the negative epitome of Catholicism. He makes the acute observation that even other Catholics dislike Jesuits. This he sees as paradoxical, for a ‘l’intime solidarité qui lie cet ordre, ses tendances, ses doctrines, ses destinées, aux tendances, aux doctrines, aux destinées de l’Eglise romaine et l’impossibilité absolue de les séparer l’un de l’autre, sans qu’il en résulte une lésion organique et une mutilation évidente.’

Later he continues:

Qu’est-ce que les jésuites? voici, nous pensons, la réponse que l’on se fera: les jésuites sont des hommes pleins d’un zèle ardent, infatigable, souvent héroïque, pour la cause chrétienne et qui pourtant se sont rendus coupables d’un bien grand crime vis-à-vis du christianisme; — c’est que, dominés par le moi humain, non pas comme individus mais comme ordre, ils ont cru la cause chrétienne tellement liée à la leur propre — ils ont dans l’ardeur de la poursuite et dans l’émotion du combat si complètement oublié cette parole du Maître: «Que Ta volonté soit faite et non pas la miennel» — qu’ils ont fini par rechercher la victoire de Dieu à tout prix, sauf celui de leur satisfaction personnelle.<sup>58</sup>

Tiutchev uses the Society of Jesus as an illustration of the Catholic Church’s alleged usurpation of earthly powers for its own ends. The motto of the order, *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (probably known to Tiutchev) adds irony to this point. Tiutchev argues that the Catholic Church’s desire for power leads to unwanted interference in worldly affairs. Yet the alternative model of unity and authority he provides – that of the Tsar, could lead to exactly the same problems. In the above quotation, Tiutchev attributes positive traits to the Jesuits – ardent zeal and heroism. This is an interesting

<sup>55</sup> On French nineteenth-century anti-Jesuitism, see G. Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth Century France*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

<sup>56</sup> Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 90.

<sup>57</sup> As noted above Gagarin was the first of a string of converts who joined the Society. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> ‘La question romaine,’ in Tiutchev, *PSS*, III: 66-67 [my italics].

feature of Russian writing targeting the Society of Jesus. It is often the Jesuits' use of these positive traits that is to be feared. Tiutchev's formulation, listing positive traits, marks an inherent ambivalence towards power and authority, religious or secular.

### **Conclusion**

Like the Slavophiles, Tiutchev argued that Roman Catholicism governed European civilisation. Like the Slavophiles, he admired unity, but his view of how unity should occur was different from that of Khomiakov or Kireevskii. His anti-Catholicism combined the need for authority and unity that Chaadaev had advocated (inspired perhaps by de Maistre) with an apparent desire for freedom of speech and a Slavophile-inspired love of Russian Orthodoxy and the Russian people. Lastly, he saw the Catholic Church emphatically in historical terms, while Orthodoxy is hardly referred to – this differentiates his writing from that of the Slavophiles, who used criticism of Catholicism to inform their Orthodox and Russian national 'apologetics'. His anti-Catholic essays combine worldly, political and modern-day discussion and analysis with conclusions and solutions which anticipate an end-time which, to him, seemed imminent. Tiutchev predicted an alternative, Pan-Slav, Orthodox Empire, led by the Tsar, which would provide the balance of unity and freedom that Catholicism had not provided over the centuries. Florovskii has argued that Tiutchev 'had not the courage to implicitly assert that the Empire is being born.'<sup>59</sup> Although his essays written in the period before the Crimean War show some confidence in the future prospects of Europe, his descriptions remain vague, like many prophecies. Underneath this layer of confidence, lies an unresolved ambivalence about how earthly authority could provide unity.

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<sup>59</sup> Florovskii, 'Tiutchev i Vladimir Solov'ev,' p. 345.

### **Chapter 3: Nikolai Gogol'**

Having examined the image of Catholicism in the essay genre, the thesis returns to the literary sphere to examine Catholicism in the works of one of Russia's most important prose writers. Nikolai Gogol' became increasingly noted in the 1830s, partly as a result of positive appraisals of him by Vissarion Belinskii (1811-1848).<sup>1</sup> Gogol' was a contemporary of the Slavophiles, and a potential heir to Pushkin. This chapter examines how, as an independent writer standing apart from the main groups of Slavophiles and Westernizers, he re-fashioned the image of Catholicism in his works.

Gogol's background provided him with an enhanced awareness of the proximity of Russia's Catholic neighbours such as Poland, reflected in his historical novella, *Taras Bul'ba* (1835, revised 1842) and other works. As his biographers point out, Gogol's family had links with Poland (his original name was Gogol'-Ianovskii), and this was a connection he was not proud of.<sup>2</sup> In his Ukrainian tales there are already some references to Catholicism, although since they are buried in the characters' dialogue and *skaz*-type narrative, they should not be too closely identified with Gogol's views, or even with those of the implied author. In *Večer nakanune Ivana Kupala* (1831), for example, the narrator informs us that 'Отец Афанасий объявил только, что всякого, кто спознается с Басаврюком, станет считать за католика, врага Христовой Церкви и всего человеческого рода.'<sup>3</sup>

#### **Gogol' in Rome: Confronting Catholicism**

Gogol' spent a significant amount of his working life abroad, where he stayed for about twelve years. He settled in Rome, where he made many acquaintances, including priests, artists, the Catholic convert Zinaida Volkonskaia, and even a cardinal.<sup>4</sup> Rome's Catholicism seemed to attract, amuse and interest Gogol'. His encounter with another culture, delighted him from an aesthetic point of view. He speaks of a sense of spiritual homecoming in Rome as we will see below.

Gogol's letters refer to churches, the making of cardinals, the clergy, the Pope. In 1838 he described his impressions of various members of the clergy:

<sup>1</sup> V. Terras, 'Belinsky the Journalist and Russian literature,' in Martinsen, *Literary Journals*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, D. Magarshack, *Gogol: A Life*, London: Faber and Faber, 1957, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 'Večer nakanune Ivana Kupala' (1831), from *Večera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki*, in N. Gogol', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (14 vols.), Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1937-1952, III, I: 140.

<sup>4</sup> Iu. Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni, 1809-1845*, Moscow: Aspekt Press, 2004, pp. 499-500.

Сколько в Петербурге попадается на улице офицеров военных, столько в Риме аббатов, попов и монахов. Видели вы, как одевается католическое духовенство? Священники и аббаты в треугольных шляпах, во фраках, в черных чулках и башмаках. Или монахи? Но монахов здесь множество разных орденов. Одни доминиканцы, совершенно одеваются, как женщины, особливо старушки: в темных и черных капотах, из-под которых видно исподнее белое платье, тоже женское. Иные носят совершенные ваши пелеринки. Сам папа очень похож на старуху. Если вы увидите его лицо на портрете, то подумаете, что это портрет женщины.<sup>5</sup>

This passage deconstructs the typical image of the Pope in Russian culture; the image of the Papacy had more often been defined as despotic and awesome, not as a figure of amusement. There is no indication of the Pope as despot in these letters. Gogol' describes the Pope in an emasculating way, and the same is true of the clergy. (He elsewhere mentions that the Pope resembles a Pulcinella).<sup>6</sup> This distances the Roman clergy from being figures of authority and makes them seem more human and fallible.

Gogol' linked Catholicism to the Roman landscape. The writer went to St Peter's Basilica almost as soon as he got to the capital in 1837.<sup>7</sup> In a letter to Balabina of 1838, Gogol' describes 'тот же вечный купол, так величественно круглящийся в воздухе.'<sup>8</sup> The dome of St Peter's can be identified as a symbol of the Papacy, conveying the importance of the religious figurehead in the city. Evidence elsewhere from his correspondence suggests that he appreciated Catholic churches aesthetically:

Я не знаю, писал ли я вам про церкви в Риме. Они очень *богаты*. Таких у нас нет совсем церквей. Внутри всё мрамор разных цветов; целые колонны из порфира, из <голубо>го, из желтого камня. Живопись, архитектура — всё это удивительно.<sup>9</sup>

While the comment on the richness of the churches implicitly chastises Catholicism for its lack of asceticism, Gogol' was clearly in love with Rome's climate, traditions, architecture, art and the beauty of its churches.<sup>10</sup> The writer's experience of churches was twofold. He admired them for aesthetic reasons, but he also understood

<sup>5</sup> N. Gogol' to E. and A. Gogol', 15 October 1838, in Gogol', *PSS*, XI: 177.

<sup>6</sup> N. Gogol' to M. Balabina, April 1838, in *ibid.*, p. 143. There is a reference elsewhere to the cardinal's scarlet stockings, *ibid.*, p.142.

<sup>7</sup> N. Gogol' to M. I. Gogol', 28 March 1837, in *ibid.*, pp. 89-90 and N. Gogol' to A. Danilevskii, April 15, 1837, in *ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>8</sup> N. Gogol' to M. P. Balabina, April 1838, in *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>9</sup> N. Gogol' to E. and A. Gogol', 15 October 1838, in *ibid.*, p. 177 [my italics].

<sup>10</sup> Numerous references, including, N. Gogol' to M. I. Gogol', March 28 1837, in *ibid.*, pp. 89-90, N. Gogol' to N. Prokopovich, March 30 1837, in *ibid.*, p. 93, N. V. Gogol' to E. and A. Gogol', 28 April 1838, in *ibid.*, pp. 137-39.

them in spiritual terms. For example, in April 1838 he noted that he had prayed for Balabina in Rome's churches: 'Я решился там помолиться за вас (ибо в одном только Риме молятся, в других местах показывают только вид, что молятся).'<sup>11</sup> Catholic churches are not just seen as symbols or architectural monuments, but as places of Christian worship, houses of God – not heretical temples. In 1837 he wrote to Pletnev 'Нет лучшей участи, как умереть в Риме; целой верстой здесь человек ближе к божеству.'<sup>12</sup> Gogol' described a sense of spiritual belonging in a foreign country; he felt that he was in a holy land. This sense of wonder would lead him to try to recreate something of what he had seen in Rome in his literary work.

The fact that Gogol' lived in Rome, was acquainted with Poles, Catholic priests and Catholic converts such as Volkonskaia, and enjoyed visiting Italian churches, could have led to a conversion to Catholicism. Some people accused the writer of converting during his life, but, as far as scholars can ascertain, this was not the case.<sup>13</sup> Contemporary and subsequent responses to conversion frequently compare of Catholicism to an infectious illness that might be caught upon contact with other Russian Catholics. In an attempt to rehabilitate Gogol's Orthodox reputation, some have suggested that he only pretended to converse with Catholic priests in order to please Volkonskaia. Gogol's correspondence, however, shows that he had made friends with several Italian members of the clergy and makes no mention that this was under any kind of duress.<sup>14</sup> His visits to churches imply that that he was open to Catholicism on a spiritual level, which he may have reached through aesthetic appreciation. He certainly saw no harm in conversing with members of the 'heretic' religion and remaining open to its influences.<sup>15</sup>

In 1839, however, Gogol' confronted mortality at close quarters when his close friend Viel'gorskii died at a young age. This was a contributing factor to Gogol's personal crisis. Catholicism is pertinent to this crisis, since Volkonskaia tried to convert the young Viel'gorskii, on his deathbed. This negatively affected Gogol's attitude to Catholicism.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> N. Gogol' to M. P. Balabina, April 1838, in *ibid.*, p. 140. Unfortunately, Gogol does not say which church it is.

<sup>12</sup> N. Gogol' to P. Pletnev, November 2, 1837, in *ibid.*, 114-15.

<sup>13</sup> See the helpful Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, pp. 508-16. See also, I. A. Vinogradov, 'Taras Bul'ba i otnoshenie Gogolia k katolitsizmu,' in *Gogol': khudozhnik myslitel': khristianskie osnovy mirozertsaniia*, Moscow: Imli Ran/Nasledie, 2000, pp. 183-84.

<sup>14</sup> N. Gogol' to M. P. Balabina, April 1838, in *Gogol' PSS*, XI: 145.

<sup>15</sup> See also, Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, p. 506.

<sup>16</sup> Fairweather, *Pilgrim Princess*, p. 251. Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, pp. 508-16.

### *Taras Bul'ba*

Giuliani argues that Gogol's time in Rome deeply inspired his writing, 'Без Рима Гоголь не стал бы Гоголем.'<sup>17</sup> The most obvious place to find evidence for such a statement would be in the story *Rim* (1842).<sup>18</sup> Yet Gogol's fictional representation of the city curiously marginalizes the difference of religion between Rome and Russia.<sup>19</sup> Religion does not play an important role in the story. In contrast, the historical novella *Taras Bul'ba* (1835, revised 1842) although set far from Rome in time and space, contains more direct references to Catholicism.

The revised version of Gogol's *Taras Bul'ba* discusses Russian nationalism in the context of Ukraine, and examines the impact of religion (including Catholicism) and nationality on this land. Kornblatt's analysis assumes that the novella presents a sharp opposition between the Cossacks and the Poles, with the Poles (and therefore the Catholics) representing artificiality, death, and disunity.<sup>20</sup> Other critics have shown that Gogol paints a more complex picture. Rosenshield has analysed the portrayal of the Jewish characters to show the internal conflict relating to nationalities.<sup>21</sup> The Polish-Catholic characters have a similar disruptive (or deconstructing) effect. This effect is enhanced by the story of Andrii, who symbolically converts to Catholicism, falling in love with a Polish girl and changing sides in the ethnic-religious conflict. Catholicism's influence is so infectious that, as the text seems to suggest, a brush with it can cause a fatal change in a person.

Andrii's encounter with Roman Catholicism, like Gogol's, is coloured by a strong aesthetic element. The description of his entry into the Polish Catholic town of Dubno contains a description of a church which scholars have long assumed to have been inspired by Gogol's experience of Rome's churches:

Окно с цветными стеклами, бывшее над алтарем, озарилось розовым румянцем утра, и упали от него на пол голубые, желтые и других цветов кружки света, осветившие внезапно темную церковь. Весь алтарь в своем

<sup>17</sup> R. Giuliani, *Rim v zhizni i v tvorchestve Nikolaia Gogolia, ili poteriannyi raj*, Moscow: NLO, 2009. See also V. Gasperovich, 'N. V. Gogol' v Rime: Novye materialy,' in R. Giuliani, *Obraz Rima v russkoi literature*, Rome, Samara: Samara and La Sapienza University Press, 2001. pp.71-87. Quotation, Giuliani, *Rim v zhizni*, p. 226.

<sup>18</sup> See Giuliani, *Rim v zhizni*; V. Khronos, 'Simvolicheskoe prostranstvo v Rime N. V. Gogolia,' and L. Pakhlina, 'Obrazy iskusstva v povesti N. V. Gogolia' in *Obraz Rima*, M. Kelly, 'Gogol's Rome: On the Threshold of Two Worlds,' *Slavonic and East European Journal*, 47, 2003, pp. 24-44; A. Schoenle, 'Gogol', the Picturesque, the Desire for the People: A Reading of Rome,' *Russian Review*, 59, 4, 2000, pp. 597-613.

<sup>19</sup> Khronos, 'Simvolicheskie prostranstvo,' p. 125.

<sup>20</sup> J. Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology*, Madison, Wisc., University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, pp. 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> G. Rosenshield, *The Ridiculous Jew: The Exploitation and Transformation of a Stereotype in Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky*, Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2008, pp. 27-98, p. 22.

далеком углублении показался вдруг в сиянии; кафельный дым остановился на воздухе радужно освещенным облаком. Андрий не без изумления глядел из своего темного угла на чудо, произведенное светом. В это время величественный рев органа наполнил вдруг всю церковь. Он становился гуще и гуще, разрастался, перешел в тяжелые ропоты грома и потом вдруг, обратившись в небесную музыку, понесся высоко под сводами своими поющими звуками, напоминавшими тонкие девичьи голоса, и потом опять обратился он в густой рев и гром и затих. И долго еще громовые ропоты носились, дрожа, под сводами, и дивился Андрий с полуоткрытым ртом величественной музыке.<sup>22</sup>

Gogol's description emphasizes an aesthetic attraction to the outer forms of Catholic worship. As noted in the introduction, the Primary Chronicle had underlined the factor of the beauty of form when recording how Vladimir's emissaries to Byzantium recommended Orthodoxy to him.<sup>23</sup> It is significant that Gogol specifically uses the word 'небесный' in relation to the music, as the writers of the Chronicle had emphasized that the Byzantine rites were heavenly. The very aestheticism of this description divides readers and critics. While Bojanowska largely sees this as showing Gogol's sympathy for Catholic architecture and art, if not as a sign of the desire to convert, Yoon reverses this reading to argue that the passage deliberately makes the juxtaposition between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, but seeks to show that Orthodoxy is superior. This opinion assumes that beauty cannot be identified with the spiritual. The examination of Gogol's letters would suggest the reverse, that for him aestheticism was not divorced from the spiritual.<sup>24</sup> In these passages from *Taras Bul'ba* Gogol dismisses rational reasons for Andrii's change of heart in favour of irrational reasons. He makes no attempt to make a broader point about Catholicism; it is left up to the reader to ask whether the aesthetic appeal of Catholic architecture is of universal spiritual significance.

The novella contrasts the phenomenon of knighthood in Western (Catholic) Christendom with Cossacks who, as Orthodox 'knights', were meant to be celibate and not care about women.<sup>25</sup> The depiction of Andrii in the text therefore forms an interesting counterpoint to Pushkin's poem 'Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...' (1829), analysed in Chapter One. While we cannot be certain that Gogol had read the poem, he

<sup>22</sup> *Taras Bul'ba*, in Gogol', *PSS*, III: 96-97. This point has also been made by in Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, 2007, p. 301.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4869> IRLI RAN, accessed 16/09/2013.

<sup>24</sup> Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, p. 301-2. Cf. S. Yoon, 'Transformation of a Ukrainian Cossack into a Russian Warrior: Gogol's 1842 *Taras Bul'ba*,' *Slavonic and East European Journal*, 49, 3, 2005, p. 435.

<sup>25</sup> On the influence of Scott's *Ivanhoe*, see *The Ridiculous Jew*, pp. 61-69, and Y. Slivkin, 'Was the Covetous Knight Poor and was the Poor Knight Covetous?,' *Russian Literature*, 55, 4, 15 May 2004, pp. 556-59.

was certainly playing with the idea of knighthood in *Taras Bul'ba* and, as Mann argues, sometimes chose to parody as well as emulate Pushkin.<sup>26</sup> Andrii, who is referred to as a *rytsar'* on numerous occasions, like the Poor Knight meets a 'lady' in this case an earthly one. Yet in the text, Andrii encounters a 'vision' of the Madonna:

Они достигли небольшой площадки, где, казалось, была часовня; по крайней мере, к стене был приставлен узенький столик в виде алтарного престола, и над ним виден был почти совершенно изгладившийся, полинявший образ *католической Мадонны*. Небольшая серебряная лампадка, пред ним висевшая, чуть-чуть озаряла его.<sup>27</sup>

The narration foregrounds Catholicism here. Andrii, like the Knight, is described as silent; in a number of points in the text he is unable to say anything.<sup>28</sup> Unlike Pushkin's knight, he carries a real scarf as a memento of his lady (not a rosary – 'И себе на шею четки / Вместо шарфа привязал').<sup>29</sup> Andrii, too, is a convert inspired by a non-rational vision, whose conversion leads to him betraying a 'normal' Orthodox lifestyle; in defence of his Lady he kills not Muslims but his own Orthodox kindred, which leads to his death. One wonders whether the manner of his death may mean that, like the Poor Knight, eternal salvation is his reward. The text leaves this unclear.

The story of Andrii reveals the tension between the importance of religious unity, its historical price, and ethnic, personal, family ties in *Taras Bul'ba*. At first sight, it appears to convey a jingoistic Cossack-Orthodox nationalism, but this picture fragments when we examine its details. Bojanowska gives other examples to show that the portrayal of Andrii is sympathetic, and although Taras is apparently presented as a hero, on further examination his actions are far from heroic.<sup>30</sup> One small example of the tension in this text occurs when Andrii is leaving the Cossack camp at night, by rights an act of treachery, and the narrator draws the reader's attention to the fact that there is no cock crow: 'Но нигде не слышно было отдаленного петушьего крика: ни в городе, ни в разоренных окрестностях не оставалось давно ни одного петуха.'<sup>31</sup> Not only does this remind us that the townspeople are starving, but it could also be a hint to tell us that Andrii's 'denial' of his father and his roots should not be seen in the

<sup>26</sup> Other scholars comment on the idea of knights without developing this, e.g. Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, p. 514, Vinogradov, 'Taras Bul'ba i otnoshenie Gogolia k katolitsizmu,' p. 184. For Mann on Pushkin and Gogol, see Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, pp. 472-73.

<sup>27</sup> *Taras Bul'ba*, in Gogol', *PSS*, III: 144, see also pp. 95, 102 [my italics].

<sup>28</sup> 'Андрий был безответен,' in *ibid.*, p. 144; see also p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> *Taras Bul'ba*, pp. 142-43.

<sup>30</sup> Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, pp. 271-79.

<sup>31</sup> *Taras Bul'ba*, p. 94.



same way as Peter's denial of Christ – Andrii does not leave the Cossack camp out of any sense of cowardice.<sup>32</sup> Andrii is meek and saint-like in the face of death; given the similarity with Boris and Gleb, does Andrii represent the true spirit of Christianity?<sup>33</sup> This undermines the usual reading of the novella as a paean to (Russian) Orthodox Cossack nationalism.

In fact, Andrii's encounter with the Catholic clergy shows awareness of the hostility between Catholics and Orthodox:

Наконец дверь отперлась; их встретил монах, стоявший на узенькой лестнице, с ключами и свечой в руках. Андрий невольно остановился при виде католического монаха, возбуждавшего такое ненавистное презрение в козаках, поступавших с ними бесчеловечней, чем с жидами. Монах тоже несколько отступил назад, увидев запорожского козака, но слово, невнятно произнесенное татаркою, его успокоило.<sup>34</sup>

By revealing the feelings of both characters, Gogol's narrator allows the reader to see that peace and unity may be obtained through encounter, mutual recognition and familiarization – there is the potential for dialogue. This dialogue does not occur because of the political situation in which Andrii finds himself, of which the reader is made aware. This passage offers a literary portrayal of the process of encounter with other cultures which Gogol had gone through many times in his life, especially in Rome. The Roman experience had allowed Gogol to see Catholicism for himself and evaluate it, rather than judging it from afar.

There is a marked sense of contradiction between the ideal of Christian unity and the bloodshed described in the story. Although some readers might see a celebration of jingoism in the descriptions of the Cossack bloodbath, it is difficult not to draw the conclusion that the story remains open to other readings.

Не уважили козаки чернобровых панянок, белорудых, светлоликих девиц; у самых алтарей не могли спастись они: зажегал их Тарас вместе с алтарями. Не одни белоснежные руки подымались из огнистого пламени к небесам, сопровождаемые жалкими криками, от которых подвинулась бы самая сырая земля, и степовая трава поникла бы от жалости долу. Но не внимали ничему жестокие козаки и, поднимая копыями с улиц младенцев

<sup>32</sup> Matthew 26: 74-75, Mark 14: 72, Luke 22: 60-62.

<sup>33</sup> Wojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, p. 302. *Taras Bul'ba*, p. 144.

<sup>34</sup> *Taras Bul'ba*, p. 96.

их, кидали к ним же в пламя. “Это вам, вражьи ляхи, поминки по Остапе!” приговаривал только Тарас.<sup>35</sup>

The author alliterates ‘zh’ sounds which link the contrasting adjectives ‘zhestokii’ and ‘zhalkii’. Additionally, the description repeats the word ‘altar’: Poles are burnt like sacrifices at the altar. The type of cruelty that Taras’s men are capable of is enhanced by the fact it is perpetrated against a religious backdrop and for the motive of personal vengeance.

Reading *Taras Bul'ba*, our sympathies are drawn to the Poles *and* to the Cossacks, to Andrii for his brave death, to Ostap for his, and to Taras for his heroism, although not necessarily for his reasons for fighting. Juxtaposing Catholicism and Orthodoxy throughout the text reveals the common human bonds between both sides and the futility of violence and war.<sup>36</sup> The interest of *Taras Bul'ba* for the reader surely lies in the tension between the nationalist, jingoistic, chauvinist themes in the text and the opposing values of aestheticism, religious unity, friendship and romance.<sup>37</sup>

*Taras Bul'ba* makes a crucial contribution of the discussion on Russian nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century. Firstly, Gogol’ places a bold question mark over the assumptions of Slavophilism or Official Nationality about what defines Catholicism and Orthodoxy. While Catholicism is still understood as a potentially poisonous influence, this influence (explored through the theme of conversion) is not considered to be that of an Empire, state, authority, earthly power, syllogism or rational system of thought. Instead the narrator considers other elements to the Catholic faith. Catholicism is not just an institution, but the people that make up that institution. A person may be drawn to its external forms, music, to the aesthetic appeal of its churches. Gogol’ understood this from experience and observation. It disrupts the foundations of the ways the Slavophile thinkers and Tiutchev had defined Catholicism’s influence. The portrayal of Andrii opens up a path to access the ideal and positive aspects of Catholicism via the sense of subjective experience. Secondly, the novella in a simple fashion questions the pursuit of unity by demonstrating the price of religious unity within ‘Orthodox’ lands (not just Catholic Europe). Thirdly, by writing about religious conflict in a historical context, Gogol’ throws the current Orthodox Church into sharp relief. Many writers had written about historical Catholicism, but *Taras*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 169 [my italics].

<sup>36</sup> For a similar view, see, Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, pp. 302-303.

<sup>37</sup> For a similar view, see, Rosenshield, *The Ridiculous Jew*, p. 95.

*Bul'ba* (perhaps unwittingly) gives a picture of the state of Orthodoxy in history too, and this picture is hardly sympathetic.

### *Mertvye dushi*

*Mertvye dushi* (1842) was being written in the same period as *Rim* and *Taras Bul'ba*. During this time Gogol' was in Rome, apparently reading *The Iliad* and Pushkin poetry. He was even reading Dante in Italian by the late 1830s.<sup>38</sup> Although there are not many sources describing what the writer thought of the Italian poet, Gogol' later noted Dante's influence on Pushkin's 'V nachale zhizni shkolu pomniu ia...' (1830) in *Vybrannye mesta*; he surely must have noticed this influence because he was reading these two poets concurrently.<sup>39</sup> Both the Pushkin poem and Dante's *La Divina Commedia* contain the trope of 'wandering.' In the Pushkin poem, a sense of uncertainty is retained (partly because the poem is unfinished), whereas in Dante the wandering takes the form of a structured 'journey.'

Gogol's most famous work was planned as an attempt to create a Russian version of *La Divina Commedia*. Many critics have made the connection between Dante and *Mertvye dushi*. Although there is a lack of documentary evidence to suggest that this link was made straight after its original publication (notably, for example, Belinskii rejected Dante's influence on the novel), before long the intertextual reading had become widely accepted among critics.<sup>40</sup> Despite the fact that the satirical aims of *Mertvye dushi* were partially met, the project was one that he failed to complete. While other Russian writers (including Pushkin), had previously used Western European intertexts in their literary works, the assimilation of such an important 'Catholic' text, which had been written to reflect a medieval religious worldview, was a bold innovation in Russian literature, and one which to this day does not find many parallels. This is especially true because Gogol' chose a prose epic as his medium and intended his work to reach a wide readership.

<sup>38</sup> Iu. Mann, "Pamiat' smertnaia" Dante v tvorcheskome soznanii Gogolia,' in Iu. Mann, *Poetika Gogolia, Variatsii k teme*, Moscow: Coda, 1996, p. 433.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 441.

<sup>40</sup> In this case, Belinskii did not have his finger on the pulse, as he wrote in 1842 that he could see no sign of Dante's influence on *Mertvye dushi*. See 'Literaturnye i zhurnalnye zametki' quoted in V. Danchenko, *Dante Alig'eri: Bibliograficheskii ukazatel' russkikh perevodov i kriticheskoi literatury na russkom iazyke, 1762-1972*, Moscow: Kniga, 1973, p. 70. The first published reference to Dante appears to be P. Viazemskii in 1866 (*ibid.*, 95.) From then on, critical literature continued along the same lines, although there are more mentions of this in the Silver Age period, presumably because interest in Dante peaked at this time. For some more recent evaluations, see Mann, "Pamiat' smertnaia" Dante, Shapiro, 'Gogol and Dante,' and N. Perlina, 'Srednovekovye videniia i 'Bozhestvennaia komediia' kak esteticheskaia paradigma "Mertvykh dush"', in *Gogol' kak iavlenie mirovoi literatury*, ed. by Iu. Mann, Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2003.

Both Shapiro and Mann point out that Gogol's work shares with Dante's the theme of judgement and punishment, or as Shapiro puts it, 'most of all the will to redemption.'<sup>41</sup> This theme reflects Christian dogma and practices. Regarding judgement in the Christian afterlife, Catholicism arrived at the concept purgatory, which is absent in Orthodox doctrine. The point of purgatory is to permit well intentioned but fallible Christians to 'purify' their souls after death (doctrine is unspecific on the precise nature of the purificatory process). Lotman and Uspenskii argued that Russian culture tended to extremes, i.e. only the divine and the diabolical, whereas Catholicism's Purgatory provides a developed zone of transformation.<sup>42</sup> The function of purgatory finds parallels in earthly life, where a Christian (Orthodox or Catholic) can confess sins and do penance. In Catholic tradition, however, this principle also applies to Purgatory. In addition, a sinner can undertake certain actions on earth in order to exculpate their sin in advance (pilgrimage being a common practice). This is known as obtaining Indulgences, that is, less time spent in Purgatory.

The diabolical aspect of *Mertvye dushi* has been extensively discussed, only a small part of the Purgatory section survives, and since heaven section of the novel was never written, it is somewhat harder to discuss its redemptive and divine dimensions.<sup>43</sup> Various reasons have been posited as to why Gogol' never finished his work. Some have argued that the reception of the first part of *Mertvye dushi* discouraged the sensitive Gogol' from further work on it or publication.<sup>44</sup> It has been suggested that Gogol' lacked the artistic accomplishment to depict Purgatory and Heaven as he might have envisioned them; Mann, for example, avers, that it is difficult to imagine Gogol's heaven.<sup>45</sup> One could argue that Hell is easier to depict in prose than Heaven, because this medium demands action, plot and characters. However, such a contention is somewhat difficult to prove, and does not explain why Purgatory was never completed for publication. Critics such as Vasilii Rozanov (1856-1919) used the failure to finish Purgatory to make a broader point about Gogol's writing:

<sup>41</sup> Shapiro, 'Gogol and Dante,' p. 38. Mann, "'Pamiat' smertnaia" Dante,' p. 434. Since he was living in Rome, Gogol' had many other sources of information about the Catholic ideas of purgatory, indulgences, Heaven and Hell, including artistic depictions.

<sup>42</sup> Lotman and Uspenskii, 'Binary Models,' pp. 31-32. For some examples of the hell/heaven phenomenon, see Platt, 'AntiChrist Enthroned,' pp. 85-124, and see also, Davidson, 'Divine Service or Idol Worship?', pp. 125-64.

<sup>43</sup> Weiner's chapter on *Mertvye dushi* does some justice to the demonic idea, although many other critics have long discussed the diabolical influence on Gogol'. A. Weiner, *By Authors Possessed: The Demonic Novel in Russia*, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998, pp. 57-92.

<sup>44</sup> See A. Lounsbury, ' "Russia! What do you want of me?": The Russian Reading Public in Dead Souls,' *Slavic Review*, 60, 2, 2001, pp. 367-89, especially pp. 377, 382.

<sup>45</sup> Mann, "'Pamiat' smertnaia" Dante,' p. 440.

Лиризм Гоголя всегда есть только жалость [...] Это великая жалость к человеку, так изображенному, скорбь художника о законе своего творчества, плач его над изумительною картиною, которую он не умеет нарисовать иначе (вспомним попытки создать 2-й т. Мертвых душ) и, нарисовав так, хоть ею и любуется, но ее презирает, ненавидит.<sup>46</sup>

Rozanov here emphasizes the gap between the aspiration towards divine or perfect creativity and the reality of human fallibility which means that the vision cannot be realised. The problem that Rozanov underlines is not unique to Gogol', and in fact underlies much human activity. It is particularly discernible in Gogol''s artistic creation, partly because of his messianic zeal.

Gogol' was struggling with the idea of redemption (personal or authorial), which included the concept that, in Purgatory, the sinner could be purified in order to obtain eternal reward. This struggle was linked to the inability to visualize or describe the redemptive process through to completion. Several factors influenced this struggle. The conflict between conceptualizations of redemption and judgement in Catholicism and Orthodoxy brought this home to the writer, as had the attempted conversion of Viel'gorskii on his deathbed, which made these distinctions seem more relevant. Gogol' succeeded in depicting a very Russian hell in *Mertvye dushi*, but failed in his attempt to create a Russian version of Catholic Purgatory. He so detested this that he attempted to destroy the evidence of his explorations.<sup>47</sup> He later wrote a new *magnum opus* – *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druz'iami* (1847) – before returning once again to his original project. This work can be viewed as further attempts to gain Indulgences or do penance for his writerly 'sins'.<sup>48</sup> Gogol''s writing in its messianic fervour sought to save himself, Russia and the world.<sup>49</sup> In the ashes of *Mertvye dushi* can be found the fragmentary remains of a conflict within himself over how this could be accomplished. Yet Gogol' had achieved something in *Mertvye dushi*, he had assimilated part of a work of Catholic literature into Russian literary tradition. His use of a Catholic model for such a national purpose suggested that he found something universally significant in the Catholic tradition.

<sup>46</sup> This is quoted in Weiner, *By Authors Possessed*, p. 63, see V. Rozanov, *Mysli o literature*, Moscow: Sovremennik, 1989, p. 173. The fact that Rozanov tended to demonise Gogol' does not undermine the value of this comment. For more on Rozanov's demonization of Gogol' see, L. Dimbleby, 'Rozanov and His Literary Demons,' in *Russian Literature and its Demons*, pp. 320-325.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview of Gogol''s reasons for attempting to destroy his own work see Iu. Mann, *Gogol': Zavershenie puti, 1845-1852*, Moscow: Aspekt Press, 2009, pp. 281-89.

<sup>48</sup> Shapiro suggests that *Vybrannye mesta* is a 'Heaven.' Shapiro, 'Gogol and Dante,' p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Mann, "'Pamiat' smertnaia" Dante,' p. 438.

### **Accusations of Catholicism and *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druž'iami***

In the late 1830s, rumours circulated in Russia indicating that Gogol's enjoyment of Rome had drawn him towards the Catholic Church. The first evidence appears in Gogol's account of his religious views in a letter to his mother in 1838:

Насчет моих чувств и мыслей об этом, вы правы, что спорили с другими, что я не переменяю обрядов своей религии. Это совершенно справедливо. Потому что как религия наша, так и католическая совершенно одно и то же, и потому совершенно нет надобности переменять одну на другую. Та и другая истинна. Та и другая признают одного и того же спасителя нашего, одну и ту же божественную мудрость, посетившую некогда нашу землю, претерпевшую последнее унижение на ней, для того, чтобы возвысить выше нашу душу и устремить ее к небу. — Итак, насчет моих религиозных чувств вы никогда не должны сомневаться.<sup>50</sup>

On the surface, this passage seems to refute the idea of conversion to Catholicism, but it equally shows that Gogol' found conversion pointless because he saw Catholicism and Orthodoxy as equal branches of the same religion, in itself a remarkable ecumenical standpoint, anticipating the views of thinkers such as Solov'ev and Ivanov.

By the mid-1840s, partly because of Viel'gorskii's death, Gogol' had undergone a significant personal crisis. There is some evidence of change in Gogol's attitudes towards Catholicism. For example, he bitterly refers to the behaviour of proselytising Catholic priests in a letter of 1844 to his confidante Smirnova-Rosset:

Одним словом, не так следует поступать, как католические попы, которые доводят человека до нерешительности и бессилия ребенка и стараются только о том, чтобы показать, что они нужны, а не о том, чтобы показать истинную необходимость религии.<sup>51</sup>

Like many Russian thinkers, Gogol' suggests that proselytising is a very Catholic characteristic, and that Catholic powers of 'persuasion' are legendary. Yet in 1844 Gogol' sent copies of *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis to some of his friends, telling them to read it and explaining how to use the (Catholic!) mysticism of the book

<sup>50</sup> N. Gogol' to M. I. Gogol', 22 December, 1837, in Gogol', *PSS*, XI: 118-19 [my italics].

<sup>51</sup> N. Gogol' to A. Smirnova, 26 August, 1844, in Gogol', *PSS*, XII: 338-39.

and how it could help them.<sup>52</sup> Gogol's well-meaning attempt to help his friends by offering such a book nurtured the view that Gogol was himself becoming a proselytizing figure, which is how Catholics were often seen in Russia.

These were exactly the powers he was to try to assume in his next great work, *Vybrannye mesta*. References to Catholicism in this collection function in a similar way to the Slavophiles' references – demonstrating the strengths of Russia and Orthodoxy by antithetical comparison with Catholicism. However, the text does not refer to the Catholic Church's pervasive influence, nor to unity, as in his earlier works. Gogol's method of discussing the historical and ideal Church has changed. He now suggests (as the Slavophiles had done) that Orthodoxy *is* the ideal Church. Gogol's ideal Orthodox Church is emphatically passive, contemplative and withdrawn, distinct from the activity and preaching associated with the Catholic Church.

In 'Neskol'ko slov o nashei tserkvi i o dukhovenstve' the author refers to attacks made in the West on the Church in Russia and defends Orthodoxy against these attacks. For Gogol, this defence, must be conducted in the lives of Russians, not in a war of words:

Только и есть для нас возможна одна пропаганда — жизнь наша. [...] Пусть миссионер католичества западного бьет себя в грудь, размахивает руками и *красноречием* рыданий и *слов* исторгает скоро высыхающие слезы. Проповедник же католичества восточного должен выступить так перед народ, чтобы уже от одного его смиренного вида, потухнувших очей и тихого, потрясающего гласа, исходящего из души, в которой умерли все желания мира, всё бы подвинулось еще прежде, чем он объяснил бы самое дело, и в один голос заговорило бы к нему: Не произноси слов, слышим и без них святую правду твоей церкви!<sup>53</sup>

This quotation reflects a frequent notion that Catholicism is connected with preaching, propaganda, eloquence and rational arguments – manipulation through words. By contrast, Orthodoxy is connected to the inner world and contemplation. Paradoxically, the author himself is in fact using the word in an essay to preach and argue – this was a point for which he would be attacked.

In the next essay, 'O tom zhe,' Gogol makes more direct comparisons between Orthodox and Catholic clergy. Defending the idea that the Orthodox clergy is not

<sup>52</sup> N. Gogol to S. Aksakov, M. Pogodin and S. Shevyrev, January, 1844, in *ibid.*, p. 249-50. See also, for example, N. Gogol to M. Pogodin, 20 December 1844, in *ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>53</sup> 'Neskol'ko slov o nashei tserkvi i o dukhovenstve,' from *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druz'iami*, in Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 245 [my italics].

involved enough in the life of the people, Gogol' uses the Western model for contrast to prove that this distance from the world was positive:

Нет, это даже хорошо, что духовенство наше находится в некотором отдалении от нас. Хорошо, что даже самой одеждой своей, не подвластной никаким изменениям и прихотям наших глупых мод, они отделились от нас. Одежда их прекрасна и величественна. *Это не бессмысленное, оставшееся от осьмнадцатого века рококо и не лоскутная, ничего не объясняющая одежда римско-католических священников.* Она имеет смысл: она по образу и подобию той одежды, которую носил сам Спаситель. Нужно, чтобы и в самой одежде своей они носили себе вечное напоминание о том, чей образ они должны представлять нам, чтобы и на один миг не позабылись и не растерялись среди развлечений и ничтожных нужд света...<sup>54</sup>

Gogol's earlier observations on the Catholic clergy's clothing are transformed into an extended metaphor about the differences between the Churches of East and West – apologetics built around a critique of ecclesiastical fashion. Belinskii later criticized Gogol's attempt to thus 'paper over' criticisms and problems in the Orthodox Church, as will be discussed below.

Lastly, in an essay entitled 'Prosveshchenie,' Gogol' gives his most detailed analysis of the difference between the Church of East and West to date. He refers to the distance between the Church and the people and the contemplative nature of Orthodoxy, using a Biblical allusion:

... вижу всю мудрость Божью, повелевшую [...] одной [церкви] — подобно скромной Марии, отложивши все попеченья о земном, поместиться у ног самого Господа, затем, чтобы лучше наслушаться слов его, прежде чем применять и передавать их людям, другой же — подобно заботливой хозяйке Марфе, гостеприимно хлопотать около людей, передавая им еще не взвешенные всем разумом слова господни. Благоую часть избрала первая, что так долго прислушивалась к словам господя, вынося упреки недалновидной сестры своей, которая уже было осмелилась называть ее мертвым трупом и даже заблудшей и отступившей от господя. [...] Западная церковь была еще достаточно для прежнего несложного порядка, еще могла кое-как управлять миром и мирить его со Христом во имя одностороннего и неполного развития человечества. Теперь же, когда человечество стало достигать развития полнейшего во всех своих силах, во всех свойствах, как хороших, так и дурных, она его только отталкивает от Христа: чем больше хлопочет о примирении, тем больше вносит раздор, будучи не в силах осветить узким светом своим всякой нынешний предмет со всех его сторон. [...] Полный и всесторонний

<sup>54</sup> 'O tom zhe,' in Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 247 [my italics].



взгляд на жизнь остался на ее восточной половине, видимо сбереженной для позднейшего и полнейшего образования человека. В ней простор не только душе и сердцу человека, но и разуму, во всех его верховных силах; в ней дорога и путь, как устремить всё в человеке в один согласный гимн верховному существу.<sup>55</sup>

Like the Slavophiles, Gogol' shapes the Catholic Church's image as an antithesis to sharpen his representation of the virtues of the Orthodox Church. The last lines appear to refer to the concept of *tsel'nost'*, which he believes can only be achieved in Orthodoxy. Like many Russian thinkers, he gets around the traditional criticism that Orthodoxy is passive and uninvolved by suggesting once again that the Catholic Church's involvement in the world has led to dire consequences for its present and its future.

Mary symbolizes the mystical, contemplative and withdrawn aspect of religion, while Martha symbolizes the need for action and involvement (both are revered by the Church, and Mary and Martha can together be seen as a metaphor for the Universal Church made united and whole again). Gogol' overextends the metaphor when he suggests that Martha called her sister a corpse, which has no basis in the Bible.<sup>56</sup> He leaves the Biblical allusion to one side in order to defend the Orthodox Church from criticisms.<sup>57</sup>

This passage refers to religion, but by corollary it relates more broadly to Russia's place in the world as a nation. It can be read as a response to Chaadaev's work since it is directed towards the importance of the religious life of the nation. *Vybrannye mesta* answers the idea that Catholicism was an influential force in Christendom, not by suggesting that it was not (Gogol' had, in his earlier essays, made it clear that he understood the importance of the medieval Papacy), but by suggesting that while it had been a dynamic force, it was a malevolent one.<sup>58</sup> In comparison, the Church of the East and its adherents would be able to bring the light of Christ to the world.<sup>59</sup> Gogol' in this essay and especially in this extract turns around the meaning of the word 'prosveshchenie.' Whereas before, enlightenment, education and development had been associated with the secular West, now it can be seen that they are essential to the inner

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<sup>55</sup> 'Prosveshchenie,' in *ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>56</sup> Luke 10: 38-42. In the Biblical text Martha does reproach Mary to the Lord for not being more active, which is presumably what Gogol' had in mind.

<sup>57</sup> W. Palmer to A. Khomiakov, 1846, in Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church*, p. 51.

<sup>58</sup> See 'O srednikh vekakh,' in *Arabeski*, Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 16-18, 'Vzgliad na sostavlenie Malorossii,' in *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>59</sup> 'Prosveshchenie,' in Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 285-86.

spirit of Russian Orthodoxy. Gogol's differing depictions of Catholicism in *Taras Bul'ba* and *Vybrannye mesta* can be explained through a change of heart on the writer's part, but also a change in genre. The genre of the latter work appeared to display to full effect Gogol's didacticism in a way that his fiction did not.

### ***Responses to Vybrannye mesta***

Responding to Chaadaev's call for 'sages, penseurs', Gogol put himself forward as a leading thinker. Unfortunately, he was attacked from all sides for *Vybrannye mesta*. There is no space to review the numerous criticisms; only those that relate to Catholicism will be discussed.<sup>60</sup>

The most famous response to Gogol's work is Belinskii's letter to Gogol of 1847, in which he berates the author for preaching.<sup>61</sup> The critic's anger at Gogol's defence of Russian Orthodoxy leads him to a paradoxical defence of Catholicism:

А потому, неужели Вы, автор «Ревизора» и «Мертвых душ», неужели Вы искренно, от души, пропели гимн гнусному русскому духовенству, поставив его неизмеримо выше духовенства католического? Положим, Вы не знаете, что второе когда-то было чем-то, между тем как первое никогда ничем не было, кроме как слугою и рабом светской власти; но неужели же и в самом деле Вы не знаете, что наше духовенство находится во всеобщем презрении у русского общества и русского народа?<sup>62</sup>

Using but subverting the same method of oppositions that the anti-Catholic thinkers use, Belinskii elevates Catholicism in order to denigrate the Orthodox Church. He then continues to criticize the Orthodox Church in Russia.<sup>63</sup> Lastly, he compares the influence of religion on a European Catholic and a Russian in the following manner:

Замечу только одно: когда европейцем, особенно *католиком*, овладевает религиозный дух — он делается обличителем неправой власти, подобно еврейским пророкам, обличавшим в беззаконии сильных земли. У нас же наоборот, постигнет человека (даже порядочного) болезнь, известная у врачей-психиатров под именем *religiosa mania*, он тотчас же земному Богу подкурит больше, чем небесному, да еще так хватит через край, что тот и хотел бы наградить его за рабское усердие, да видит, что этим

<sup>60</sup> For an overview of the responses, see R. Sobel, *Gogol's Forgotten Book: Selected Passages and its Contemporary Readers*, Washington DC.: University Press of America, 1981, pp. 179 ff. See also, Mann, *Gogol: Zavershenie puti, 1845-1952*, pp. 65-79.

<sup>61</sup> V. Belinskii to N. Gogol', 15 July, 1847, in Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 501.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 503.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 504.

окомпрометировал бы себя в глазах общества. . . Бестия наш брат, русский человек! . . .<sup>64</sup>

Belinskii plays on the concept, underlined by Gogol' as well, that Catholics are socially engaged. He uses the comparison to the idea of the prophet. Many Russian writers sought to place themselves within this tradition, including Gogol' – to suggest that a religious Catholic was more prophet-like than a religious Russian was very problematic to this self-identification.<sup>65</sup> According to the Belinskii's criteria, the effect of religion on society is more positive in the West than in the East. Belinskii was so keen to attack the Orthodox Church and Gogol's defence of it, that he was prepared to praise the Roman Catholic Church. These remarks of Belinskii's were treading on dangerous ground indeed.

Other commentators, despite the anti-Catholicism prevalent in several essays from *Vybrannye mesta*, accused its author of being Catholic. Shevyrev, like Belinskii, was mostly upset by the tone of the work, although in a letter of 1847 criticized the collection on several different levels:

Судя по книге твоей, ты находишься в состоянии переходном. Разум твой убежден в истине нашей церкви и православия, но воля твоя заражена современною болезнию — болезнию личности, и ты действуешь скорее как *римский католик*, а не как православный.<sup>66</sup>

Shevyrev links Catholicism with an illness, in this case, a 'personality disorder,' not dissimilar to Chaadaev's 'illness' or monomania.<sup>67</sup> Despite Gogol's protestation of defending faith by actions or life itself, rather than by words, it was felt that Gogol' was sermonising or preaching, and although he was 'preaching' about Orthodoxy, the very fact of preaching was considered 'Catholic.' At the root of this was the prejudice that Catholics are proud whereas the Orthodox are humble. Shevyrev's division between Gogol's reason and his will suggests that reason can be linked with Orthodoxy as well as Catholicism in this case. In February 1847 Gogol' responded to Shevyrev, eager to show that he was not Catholic – this letter gives a different explanation of his faith than the earlier letter to his mother:

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 505 [my italics].

<sup>65</sup> See P. Davidson, 'The Validation of the Writer's Prophetic Status in the Russian Literary Tradition: From Pushkin and Iazykov through Gogol to Dostoevskii,' *Russian Review*, 6, 4, Oct. 2003, pp. 508-36.

<sup>66</sup> S. Shevyrev to N. Gogol', 30 January 1847, in *N.V. Gogol': Perepiska v 2 tomakh*, ed. by V. E. Vatsuro, N. Gei et al., Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1988, II: 344 [my italics].

<sup>67</sup> Several scholars refer to Chaadaev's 'monomania,' eg. W. Lednicki, *Russia, Poland and the West. Essays in Literary and Cultural History*, London: Hutchinson, 1952, p. 94; Budgen, 'Pushkin and Chaadaev,' p. 26.

Начну с того, что твое уподобление меня княгинине Волконской относительно религиозных экзальтаций, самоуслаждений и устремлений воли Божией лично к себе, равно как и открытие твое во мне признаков католичества, мне показались неверными. Что касается до княгини Волконской, то я ее давно не видал, в душу к ней не заглядывал; притом это дело такого рода, которое может знать в настоящей истине один Бог; что же касается до католичества, то скажу тебе, что я пришел ко Христу скорее протестантским, чем католическим путем. [...] Экзальтации у меня нет, скорей арифметический расчет; складываю просто, не горячась и не торопясь, цифры, и выходят сами собою суммы.<sup>68</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the tone of this letter is very defensive. In trying to prove his distance from Catholicism, Gogol' does not defend himself very well. Firstly, he misunderstands Shevyrev's comment about Catholicism and takes it rather literally, instead of examining the accusation of 'personality disorder' (Shevyrev used Catholicism as a metaphor for monomania). Secondly, in an attempt to show that he is not Catholic, Gogol' then makes an abstruse *apologia*, referring to different paths to God. He took the Protestant path, he explains, his faith being more rational than mystical. This rational view implied Gogol' had indeed been infected by some Western European style of thought, although in what remains of the letter he makes it clear that he came to his opinions on his own and not through any reading.<sup>69</sup>

### Conclusion

In Gogol's letters and fictional texts he followed in the footsteps of Pushkin by using Western European literary texts as a prism for understanding Catholicism and reflecting on it in Russian literature. Gogol' took this a step further, drawing on his own experiences. The writer's distance from Russia and his proximity to 'real' Catholicism encouraged a different approach from that of other writers. His fiction and letters frequently undermine, distort or question the overriding images of Catholicism and its influence that were upheld by the proponents of Official Nationality and Slavophilism. This may suggest that the artist could find greater freedom of expression in fiction than non-fiction. Even in private letters, however, nineteenth-century writers were always aware of a judgemental audience.

<sup>68</sup> N. Gogol' to S. Shevyrev, 11 February 1847, in Gogol', *PSS*, XIII: 214.

<sup>69</sup> P. Mikhed has examined some of Gogol's possible influences. P. Mikhed, 'Gogol' i zapadnoevropeiskaia khristianskaia mysl', *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*, No.31, Winter 2010, (NB. No page references - this journal is only published online.) <http://www.utoronto.ca/tsq/31/mikhed31.shtml>, accessed 21/03/2011.

Gogol's writing displays a repeated struggle with criticism, a struggle played out in the culture of his time and within his own texts. It was never viable for him to voice his identification with the Catholic world clearly and in public without fear of reproach, if he wanted to remain a successful writer.<sup>70</sup> He attempted to appear a patriot and yet when he did so, he was seen by most critics to have failed. He had tried to open up a different kind of space in his fiction, where some sort of dialogue with Catholicism as a faith might occur. For personal, professional reasons, and because of the reaction of society, he shied away from continuing on this path.

Responses to *Vybrannye mesta* demonstrate how little the climate in Russia had changed in the eleven years since Chaadaev's 'Lettre première' was published. One of the most famous Russian, nationalist conservative pieces of writing was censored by the government, attacked by liberal-Westernizers, Official Nationalists and conservative pro-Catholics alike, and the writer of a text which defends Russian Orthodoxy and criticizes the Catholic Church is accused of being 'Catholic.' Gogol' is so keen not to appear like a Catholic that in his *apologia* he avers that he has arrived at his religious views via a Protestant path, even though he remained loyal to Orthodoxy. Proponents of the Russian national idea apparently felt so threatened by Gogol's artistic open-ended approach to religion that they protested about the work of one of Russia's greatest writers.

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<sup>70</sup> Mann suggests that Gogol's decision not to convert was brought about by both personal (religious) and professional (writerly) inclinations. '...Гоголь был русским писателем. А таковым он хотел остаться до конца.' Mann, *Gogol': Trudy i Dni*, p. 513.

## Part II: 1854-1880

‘Мы проповедуем не латинство, а католическую веру.’  
(Ivan Martynov, SJ)<sup>1</sup>

### **Catholicism and Russian History, 1854-1880**

One of the important triggers for the Crimean War (1853-1856) was the religious division between Catholics and the Orthodox that had flared up in the Holy Places. As the war continued, leading clerics on all sides of the conflict made the link between the motivations for the war and religious differences.<sup>2</sup> Duncan has written that ‘The Crimean War was, for Pogodin, Tiutchev and Khomiakov, the time for the enactment of Russia’s world-historical mission.’<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, Pan-Slavism was a movement that gathered strength after the defeat in Crimea. As Hosking summarizes, ‘Cultivating relations with Slav and Orthodox peoples looked like a practical means to contain and perhaps roll back the power of the Habsburg monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Pan-Slavism also appealed to the suppressed messianism in the Russian cultural and religious tradition.’<sup>4</sup> The Polish question made these ideologies more complicated, because Poles were both Slavs and Catholics. A reminder of the Polish striving for independence occurred in 1863 when there was a second Polish Uprising that was brutally put down.<sup>5</sup> Another flashpoint for nationalism was the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). Lastly, Alexander II’s reign ended with his assassination in 1881. This is therefore a tempestuous era in Russian history, a mood that found expression in some extraordinary texts, including journalism, polemics, poetry, and novels, where the complex interplay between politics, religion and national identity would be explored in a variety of ways.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Catholic Europe witnessed one of the longest papacies in history. Pius IX (Pope 1846-1878) had a significant part to play in further exacerbating anti-Catholic feelings in Russia. Several events affected this. The first of these was the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, a declaration proclaimed *ex cathedra* as infallible. Catholics, in agreement with the papal primacy, had no disagreement with the dogma, but for some Orthodox the declaration reinforced

<sup>1</sup> Letter of I. Martynov to I. Aksakov, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1864, reprinted in *Den’* 1865, No. 45 and 46, in Iu. Samarin, *Iezuity i ikh otnoshenie k Rossii*, Moscow: 1868, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See Tamborra, *Katolicheskaia tserkov’*, pp. 139-43.

<sup>3</sup> Duncan, *Russian Messianism*, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 313.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on how the uprising affected the Polish question and Catholicism, see Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 100-19.

the view that the Catholic Church made unilateral declarations and held unfounded claims to authority over Christian believers. In 1864, the Pope published an encyclical ‘Quanta Cura’ together with the ‘Syllabus of Errors.’ This denounced what the Pope saw as the errors of the century. The last statement of error (‘The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization’) was ‘to be the only proposition that most of Europe noticed and at which it laughed [...]. No sentence ever did more to dig a chasm between the Pope and modern European society.’<sup>6</sup> Not all the eighty ‘Errors’ in the Syllabus met with dissent in Europe or Russia. For example, statement 4 specifically condemns the superiority of reason over other methods of obtaining knowledge. The Slavophiles and *pochvenniki* might have agreed with some other statements of error too, but importantly, as with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, their complaint was more concerned with form than content. The Syllabus served to reinforce once more the image of the Papacy as a temporal power that made authoritarian declarations.

In 1869 Pius IX called the First Vatican Council. The Council provoked further anger in Orthodox circles. This was mainly because it was perceived that the Vatican had not made enough effort to include the Orthodox in a gathering that claimed to be an ecumenical council.<sup>7</sup> In 1870 this Council officially defined for the first time the dogma of papal infallibility. Papal infallibility further underlined the concept of papal primacy, which was already such a historic point of contention between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

It was now no longer just the fact of conversion to Catholicism that was a problem, but the polemicizing activities of those who converted, especially Ivan Gagarin and his colleague Ivan Martynov (1821-1894, converted 1844). Previously, Russian Catholics remained (fairly) muted, partly because they were in emigration or exile. The late 1850s mark a turning-point because for the first time, Russian Catholics articulated their opinions in print.

There was a change in publishing culture after the Crimean War, characterized by an increased readership for journals, resulting in a larger number of journals. This era as previously was marked by a close intermingling of literary criticism, literature and journalism, which would see its fruition in Dostoevskii’s genre-hybrid *Dnevnik*

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<sup>6</sup> Chadwick, *A History of the Popes*, pp. 175-76. The text of the Syllabus is available online at <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>, accessed 06/06/2011.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.189.

*pisatelia* (1873-1881).<sup>8</sup> Whereas, for example, Kireevskii had written mainly about philosophy and literary criticism, Khomiakov's later essays and those of Samarin, Aksakov, the *pochvenniki* and Dostoevskii commented more on political affairs in Europe and in Russia, including Catholicism. The image of Catholicism as a political institution was reinforced by commentary in Russian letters on political events, generating a new image that in turn shaped literary representations of Catholicism.

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<sup>8</sup> See R. Belknap, 'Survey of Russian Journals, 1840-1880,' in Martinsen, *Literary Journals*, p. 115, W. Dowler, *Dostoevsky, Grigor'ev and Native Soil Conservatism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, especially pp. 95, 116-29.



## **Chapter 4: Catholicism in the Era of Polemics**

This chapter examines the debates in periodicals between the Slavophiles and the main representatives of Catholicism. The principal discussants were the Slavophile thinkers, Khomiakov and Samarin, and the Russian Jesuits, Gagarin and Ivan Martynov. They came from a similar class and educational background. This chapter asks what the main focal points of debates were, and how the dynamic between the two sides worked. In order to do this, the ideas are examined as one-to-one debates, because they were adversarial. The two debates explore similar themes but in different ways. The first polemic was between Gagarin and Khomiakov in the 1850s, and the second, which drew on the first but developed its points, took place between Samarin and Martynov.

### **The 1850s: Russian Jesuits versus Slavophiles – Round One**

Ivan Gagarin (SJ) formulated his ideas during the 1830s and 1840s, in discussion and correspondence with Chaadaev, the Slavophiles and Tiutchev. The Jesuit's work can be characterized as a reaction against Slavophilism, but this oversimplifies the complex interconnections between Russian thinkers.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1850s Gagarin began writing about the Catholic Church and the project of Christian unity with the intention of publishing his work. His most famous work was a brochure, written in French and published in 1856 under the provocative title *La Russie sera-t-elle catholique?* It was translated into Russian and other languages and found a wide readership, although it was officially banned from publication in Russia.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrently, Khomiakov, who had by now abandoned his attempt to convert Palmer, wrote a series of polemical essays in French, published in the French journal *L'union chrétienne* from the early 1850s until his death in 1860. As Valliere has observed, Khomiakov's theological writings were generally 'responsive in character.'<sup>3</sup> In these essays, Khomiakov reacted to criticisms of the Russian Orthodox Church voiced by French clergy and Gagarin (among others). One of the French clergy

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<sup>1</sup> See 'O knige I. S. Gagarina *O primireni russkoi tserkvi s rimskoiu*,' *Simvol*, 8, December 1982, p. 199. This issue of *Simvol* also contains the reprint of the Russian translation of Gagarin's brochure. Walicki notes the possibility of Tiutchev's influence, and Gagarin's discussion with Samarin, and Chaadaev's influence. Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 294, 296, 256. Tempest notes Chaadaev's influence and Gagarin's reaction against the anti-Catholic writing of Andrei Murav'ev, and highlights the role of Khomiakov. See R. Tempest, 'Gagarin and Khomiakov: Two Lives, Two Doctrines,' in *A. S. Khomiakov: Poet, Philosopher, Theologian*, pp. 66-97, especially p. 94. Gagarin had also studied the writings of William Palmer. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, pp. 64-65. Although it is not this thesis's primary focus to examine the sources of thinkers' ideas, which are impossible to trace accurately, it is helpful to place Gagarin within his contemporary context.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the brochure, its publication and a wider range of responses to it, see *ibid.*, pp. 80-126.

<sup>3</sup> P. Valliere, 'The Modernity of Khomiakov,' in *A. S. Khomiakov*, pp. 130-31.

responsible for provoking Khomiakov's reply was Laurentie, who himself responded to Tiutchev's 1850 essay 'La question romaine.'<sup>4</sup> Khomiakov chose to reply to the Jesuit's pamphlet in his third essay of 1858. In a later dispute of 1860, he disputed Gagarin's definition of the word *sobornost'*. Both of these polemics will be analysed in detail below.

Khomiakov's polemics discuss similar themes as his other essays and those of Kireevskii, but his criticisms of Catholicism are sharper and more central.<sup>5</sup> A quotation from his essay of 1853 responding to Laurentie encapsulates the understanding of Catholicism demonstrated throughout:

Un *état terrestre* avait remplacé l'Eglise du Christ. La loi unique et vivante d'unité en Dieu fut remplacée par des *lois partielles* empreintes d'utilitarisme et de rapport juridiques. *Le rationalisme* se développa sous la forme de décisions *d'autorité*; inventant le purgatoire pour expliquer la prière pour les morts; établissant entre l'homme et Dieu une balance de devoirs et de mérites; mesurant les péchés et les prières, les fautes et les actes d'expiation; faisant des reports d'un homme sur un autre; sanctionnant des échanges d'actes nommés méritoires; introduisant enfin dans le sanctuaire de la foi tout *le mécanisme d'une maison de banque*. Pendant ce temps, *l'Eglise-Etat* établissait une langue d'Etat: le latin; puis se mettait en campagne d'abord les milices désordonnées des croisades, plus tard les armées permanentes des ordres de chevalerie et finalement, quand *le glaive* eut été arraché de ses mains, la troupe disciplinée des *jésuites*. [...] Non: ni Dieu, ni le Christ, ni son Eglise ne sont *l'autorité*, qui est chose extérieure. Ils sont la vérité...<sup>6</sup>

This quotation can be compared with the use of rhetoric in Tiutchev's anti-Catholic essays.<sup>7</sup> However, unlike Tiutchev, Khomiakov was not trying to influence the foreign policy of the current Tsar. Since Khomiakov was engaged in polemics aimed at the Catholic clergy, he not infrequently refers to Church history (mainly to the Schism and Catholic history). The violence of language (i.e. 'the sword', a reference to the 'moral fratricide' perpetrated by Catholics) has increased compared to Khomiakov's previous essays.<sup>8</sup> Khomiakov's second essay of 1855 both makes a comment on the religious aspect of the war and refers back to the Schism, as though implying that the

<sup>4</sup> S. Khoruzhii, 'Bogoslovie sobornosti i bogoslovie lichnosti: Simfoniia dvukh putei pravoslavnogo bogomudriia,' in *A. S. Khomiakov*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Tempest makes the point that Khomiakov's essays were anti-Catholic, and refers to the language of Khomiakov's attacks on Gagarin as 'violent and venomous.' Tempest, 'Gagarin and Khomiakov,' p. 90. Some examples will be examined below.

<sup>6</sup> A. Khomiakov, 'Quelques mots par un chrétien orthodoxe sur les communions occidentales à l'occasion d'une brochure de M. Laurentie' (1853), in *L'Eglise Latine et le protestantisme au point de vue d'Eglise d'Orient*, ed. by B. Benda, Paris: Lausanne and Levey, 1872, pp. 38-39 [my italics].

<sup>7</sup> Christoff asserts that although the views of Tiutchev and the Slavophiles were not the same, 'Khomiakov and Samarin could not have completely escaped a certain encouragement and bolstering of Tiutchev's views.' Christoff, *An Introduction*, IV: 213.

<sup>8</sup> Khomiakov, 'Quelques mots,' p. 97.

recent war actually represents part of a continuous conflict which had originated in the Schism.<sup>9</sup> His argument creates a line of continuity between past and present.

Khomiakov reminds his readers of the past errors made by the Catholic Church, emphasizing its secular aspect, because ‘L’Eglise, même terrestre, est une chose du ciel; mais le romain comme le protestant juge des choses du ciel comme des choses terrestres’.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, he never mentions the misdemeanours of the Orthodox Church, which he usually refers to simply as ‘l’Eglise’. This way of writing contrasts the fallible, secular nature of the Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church, identified as the Universal Church of Christ. The Jesuits are apparently one of the key aberrations committed by the Catholic Church. Their final place in the list of the Catholic Church’s offences suggests their prominence in the mind of the writer.

One of the reasons for the increased concern about the Jesuits was their success in publishing their views. By 1856 Gagarin had published his brochure, *La Russie sera-t-elle catholique?* which (not surprisingly) exacerbated tensions further.<sup>11</sup> Gagarin explored the possibility of Russian Catholicism by examining some conditions of union, highlighting the historical errors of the Russian Orthodox Church, and proposing Catholicism as an antidote to these errors.

### **‘Russian Catholicism’**

As a proponent of Russian Catholicism (i.e. Russians becoming Catholic) Gagarin felt that in becoming Catholic he had remained Russian. His avowed intent in writing his brochure was patriotic and he even made references to the Tsar himself.<sup>12</sup> Khomiakov’s response to this show of patriotism was to dismiss it by emphasising that Gagarin had abandoned the faith of his fathers. Furthermore, Gagarin’s apostasy could only be, Khomiakov explained, a result of Gagarin’s ignorance of Orthodoxy.<sup>13</sup> This theoretically meant that ‘future defections from Orthodoxy could be prevented by better religious education.’<sup>14</sup> Gagarin based his argument on the idea that Russians connected ‘Catholicism’ and religion generally with national particularity, hence his argument that

<sup>9</sup> ‘Quelques mots par un chrétien orthodoxe sur les comunions occidentales à l’occasion d’un Mandement de Mgr. L’Archevêque de Paris’ (1855), in *L’Eglise Latine*, p. 94, (henceforth ‘Quelques mots 2’). Photius, a contentious figure associated with the rejection of the *filioque* clause, is mentioned, *ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> It was not published in Russian until 1859, but the French version was evidently read by several people after its publication, as contemporary responses reveal. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> I. Gagarin, *La Russie sera-t-elle catholique?*, Paris: Charles Dounid, 1856, p. VI.

<sup>13</sup> Khomiakov, ‘Encore quelques mots,’ p. 266.

<sup>14</sup> Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 102.

rite was of foremost importance to Russians.<sup>15</sup> If the Orthodox Church should be united with Catholicism, he projected that the Russians could retain their rites.<sup>16</sup> For him this was a solution to the difficulty presented by the universality of the Church of Christ. Khomiakov does not deal with Gagarin's underlying point; instead, he accuses his opponent of not knowing the Russians, of over-emphasising their interest in rite. He claims that Gagarin treats rite too simplistically, ignoring the fact that it is not just ceremony and can be symbolic of something more important.<sup>17</sup> The concept of Russian Catholicism as a faith simply does not exist for the Slavophiles, for whom nationality and religion were so closely bound. Their lack of willingness to engage with the concept pointed to a weakness in their thought.

### *The Russian Church*

Gagarin looked at the idea of the Church by examining the historical background to the current situation. He thought that the Russian church had 'accidentally' been cut off from the Catholic Church.<sup>18</sup> His solution of 'union' was part of a new Russian Catholic version of messianism. Russia did have an important position in the Slavic world, and this special mission should be to (re-) join the Catholic Church. This would do much both to enrich not only 'the Slavs' but the world.<sup>19</sup> Gagarin was now propounding a new hybrid – 'Catholic Slavophilism'. In the third section of the brochure, another attempt to provide a historical portrait of the Russian Orthodox Church was made. Gagarin admitted that the clergy were more educated than they had once been, but thought that they could still learn from 'Western' theology.<sup>20</sup>

Khomiakov did not discuss the historical section of Gagarin's work, but noted that Gagarin mistakenly identified the 'clergy' with the Church; therefore, in his view when the Jesuit criticized the Russian clergy, the fault he found does not attach itself to the Church as a whole. When Khomiakov visualized the Orthodox Church, he could not identify the Church with its historical or particular activities.<sup>21</sup> The Slavophiles,

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<sup>15</sup> Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> Gagarin, *La Russie*, p. 3. Gagarin's idea seems to be similar to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Churches in Ukraine and elsewhere. The existence of the Uniate Churches continues to be a thorn in the side of the Orthodox Churches.

<sup>17</sup> Khomiakov, 'Encore quelques mots,' pp. 206-7.

<sup>18</sup> Gagarin, *La Russie*, pp. 34-40. Gagarin expanded this idea in *La Russie, est-elle schismatique?*, Paris: 1859. For more on this, see Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 335.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Gagarin, *La Russie*, p. 48. Gagarin expanded on his criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church clergy in *La réforme du clergé Russe*, Paris: 1871. Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, pp. 161-71, Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 338-39.

<sup>21</sup> Khomiakov, 'Encore quelques mots,' p. 211.

however, always viewed Catholicism synecdochally. One iniquity was held up to represent the whole Catholic Church.

Gagarin's understanding of modern Russia arose from an awareness of the political situation in Europe and contemporary Russia.<sup>22</sup> He thought that Russians identified Catholicism as 'Latinism' and 'polonism' and therefore connected Catholicism with the revolutions of Europe and the Polish struggle for independence.<sup>23</sup> His answer to this tendency was to ask rhetorically whether Catholicism was not in fact the obvious *opponent* to revolution in Russia?<sup>24</sup> Gagarin found Hegelianism and the influence of German Protestant thought, Herzen, Official Nationality, Slavophilism and Pan-Slavism worrying trends in Russia.<sup>25</sup> He accused prominent thinkers of mixing politics and religion, and the promotion of 'le grand empire slave et orthodoxe.'<sup>26</sup> By this, the Jesuit meant the development of Official Nationality and Slavophilism into an extreme Pan-Slavist, nationalist programme. Gagarin did not argue strongly enough about the negative influence of nationalist, ethnocentric and secular ideas on Russian society, although this might have been his most valid point. Khomiakov chose not to dispute this section of Gagarin's brochure. He dismissed the idea of 'revolution,' particularly its connection to Slavophilism, out of hand.<sup>27</sup> Neither thinker could participate in a meaningful debate because they failed to recognize each other's premises.

### ***Authority and Union***

Gagarin's solution to what he saw as the caesaropapist tendency of the Russian Church in history was to suggest that the Catholic Church had greater independence from the state, in part because of the role of the papacy.<sup>28</sup> The Jesuit turned around the oft-repeated criticism of the Pope as a figure of authority, arguing that ecclesiastical authority was positive. He compared the idea of dogma in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, finding that the Orthodox Church lacked a modern day focal point of authority, whereas Catholics considered selected doctrines pronounced by the Pope to be infallible dogmata.<sup>29</sup> He argued that the lack of such a figure of power meant that no

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<sup>22</sup> In this sense, at least, Gagarin resembles Tiutchev. Their common background as diplomats would have helped inform this approach.

<sup>23</sup> Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 301.

<sup>24</sup> Gagarin, 'La Russie,' pp. 61, 62-64.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-74.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 72.

<sup>27</sup> Khomiakov, 'Encore quelques mots,' pp. 219-20.

<sup>28</sup> Walicki notes Gagarin's attack on *bizantynizm* [Byzantinism], Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 302-3.

<sup>29</sup> Gagarin, *La Russie*, pp. 50-52.

statements by Orthodox bishops possessed sufficient authority to declare Catholic doctrines (or Catholics themselves) to be heretical.<sup>30</sup> Khomiakov's reply does not address this aspect of Gagarin's argument, probably because he thought that *sobornost'* removed the need for authority. He does, however, castigate the Jesuit for pointing out the 'advantages' of union as though theology were some sort of business contract. He argues that Gagarin dismisses theological dispute in favour of earthly matters.<sup>31</sup>

A chief criticism of Gagarin's brochure, besides an objection to its intent, was the emphasis he placed on the political and secular aspects of religion. This fed into the Slavophile image of Catholicism as being a secular institution rather than a faith. Gagarin's brochure is strikingly political. In fact, the same can be said of Khomiakov's response. They did not deal with their opponent's arguments fully, but threw insults or slurs instead. While direct argument or counter-arguments are made at times, in order to make their points, each side relies heavily on unsubstantiated claims that cannot easily be proven either way. The end result is that even those readers who might have had a genuinely open mind on the subject to start with would end up being left with the feeling that agreement or even true dialogue would never be found.

***Universality: Catholicism's 'catholicism' and Orthodoxy's 'sobornost'***

In Russian debates about Catholicism there is an intrinsic tension over the competing claims of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches to be the Universal (catholic) Church. Both can claim that the other church is a heretical schismatic branch from the Universal Church, yet there exists an ecumenical space in which some writers chose to identify more closely with the Universal Church than with either Orthodoxy or Catholicism.

The debates of the 1850s develop the discussion on the tension between universality and nationality, possibly because one of the features that seemed to draw those such as Gagarin towards Catholicism appeared to be its supranational claims. Criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church from such thinkers therefore tended to emphasize, by contrast, the 'national' character of that Church. In the second polemic of 1855, Khomiakov notes that 'Nous nommons l'Eglise universelle; mais nous ne nous nommons pas l'Eglise catholique, ce mot implique une perfection à laquelle nous sommes loin de prétendre.' He added 'chacun de nous est de la terre, l'Eglise seule est du ciel.'<sup>32</sup> The writer makes a distinction between the word 'universal' attached to the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-55.

<sup>31</sup> Khomiakov, 'Encore quelque mots,' p. 212.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 115-16.

Church, and the word ‘catholic,’ which should not be attached to the earthly church. Khomiakov’s writing on the distinctions between Catholicism and universality perhaps confuses the point further, emphasising that humanity is fallible, but elsewhere stating that the Church is heavenly. He makes the Church distant and abstract from the reality of Christian life on earth.

In a letter of 1860 to the editor of *L’Union Chrétienne* responding to a speech by Gagarin, Khomiakov further outlined what he understood by the term ‘universal.’ The Slavophile accuses Gagarin of understanding ‘universal’ to mean ‘embracing all peoples.’ To see the Church in this way, Khomiakov argues, is to view the Church as an empire.<sup>33</sup> He attacks Gagarin’s argument by pointing out that if a religion’s ‘universality’ were to be assessed in geographical or quantitative terms, this would mean that other religions, such as Islam or Buddhism, might make rival claims. For Gagarin, he writes ‘le chiffre est tout.’<sup>34</sup> This is yet another attempt by Khomiakov to emphasize the rational, ‘contractual’ aspect of Catholicism.

Khomiakov takes the opportunity to construct his Orthodox definition of universality against this ‘straw man’ version of Catholic universality. For him, it is captured in the choice by SS. Cyril and Methodius of the word ‘sobornyi’ to translate ‘καθολικός’ [*Katholikos*, i.e. ‘catholic’]:

Le mot qu’ils ont choisi est celui de *sobornoi* [sic]. *Sobor* implique l’idée d’assemblée non pas nécessairement réunie dans un lieu quelconque mais existant virtuellement sans réunion formelle. C’est l’unité dans la pluralité [...] L’Eglise catholique c’est l’Eglise qui est selon tous, ou selon l’unité de tous, l’Eglise de l’unanimité parfaite, l’Eglise où il n’y a plus de nationalités, plus de Grecs ni de barbares, où il n’y a plus de différences de conditions, plus de maîtres ni d’esclaves, c’est l’Eglise prophétisée par l’Ancien Testament et réalisée par le Nouveau; l’Eglise telle enfin que saint Paul l’a définie.<sup>35</sup>

Firstly, Khomiakov’s argument for the advantage of the word *sobornyi* implies the superiority of the Russian language and therefore of Russian Orthodoxy. Secondly, Khomiakov again accuses Gagarin of ignorance, especially of the Greek language, and of Scripture.<sup>36</sup> This gives him an excuse to expound on Greek and Russian etymologies and church history. Pointing out Gagarin’s ignorance underscores Khomiakov’s knowledge and position of ascendancy. Thirdly, Khomiakov accuses the Catholic

<sup>33</sup> A. Khomiakov, ‘Lettre au rédacteur de l’Union chrétienne à l’occasion d’un discours du Père Gagarine, Jésuite,’ in *ibid.*, pp. 394-95.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398. As Khoruzhii points out, the word *sobornyi* was not in fact introduced by Cyril and Methodius, but much later in the fourteenth century. Khoruzhii, ‘Bogoslovie sobornosti,’ p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> Khomiakov, ‘Lettre au rédacteur,’ pp. 392, 393, 395, 399.

Church of breaking away from the unanimity (unity in universality) of the early Church. He does this partly by referring to the *filioque* clause at the beginning of his letter.<sup>37</sup> Then at the end of the letter, he again underlines that the Schism arose as a result of an error on the part of the Western Church and that therefore the Orthodox Church can claim to be the true, Universal Church. He does this by giving ‘definitions’ of the three main branches of the Church:

L’Eglise des Apôtres au 9-ème siècle n’est ni l’Eglise *kath’ekaston* (selon chacun) comme chez les protestants, ni l’Eglise *kata ton épiscopon tés Romés* (selon l’évêque de Rome) comme chez les latinants; mais c’est l’Eglise *kath’olon* (selon unité de tous) comme elle l’a été avant le schisme occidental, et comme elle l’est encore chez ceux que Dieu a préservés du schisme : car ce schisme je le répète, c’est l’hérésie contre le dogme de l’unité de l’Eglise.<sup>38</sup>

For Khomiakov the Orthodox Church rests on the supreme principle of *sobornost’*. He does not explain exactly how the Orthodox Church enacts this principle. Although Valliere argues that Khomiakov’s *sobornost’* at the centre of his broader Slavophile idea entails a social and ethical unity, not just a mystical one, Khomiakov’s attempts to prove that the Catholic Church has not enacted *sobornost’* imply that it is, embodied in Russia, but do not demonstrate how.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Meyendorff argues that ‘the notion of *sobornost’* is much too vague and insufficient to give an answer to concrete ecclesiological issues.<sup>40</sup> Confrontation with Catholicism therefore reveals a contradiction in Slavophilism between an ideal theology with its concept of *sobornost’*, and the practical implications of their political and social ideas. Contrast with the Catholic Church in practical matters could have helped inform the Slavophiles’ response to social questions, but their attack on Catholicism was superficial.

The debate on universality makes space for Khomiakov to explain the supremacy of Russian theology on the point, and does nothing to encourage both denominations to explore together the theology of the one true Universal Church and its practical implications. As Walicki has noted:

soborowość w ujęciu Chomiakowa nie była i nie miała być koncepcją sprzyjającą teologicznej otwartości i tendencjom ekumenicznym. Fakt wykorzystania jej przez filozofów i teologów, którzy utorowali drogę

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 391.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>39</sup> Valliere, ‘The Modernity of Khomiakov,’ pp. 137-42.

<sup>40</sup> Meyendorff, ‘Russian Bishops and Church Reform in 1905,’ in *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime*, p. 180.



ekumenicznym ideom II Soboru Watykańskiego, jest więc swego rodzaju paradoksem recepcji.

[*sobornost'* in Khomiakov's conceptualisation was not, and could not be, a concept conducive to theological openness or the ecumenical tendency. The fact of its development by philosophers and theologians who opened up the way to the ecumenical idea of the Second Vatican Council is therefore a sort of paradox of reception.]<sup>41</sup>

Most Russian Catholics or pro-Catholics seem to have identified the Universal Church either with the (Roman) Catholic Church or with a combination of both. The letter emphasizes that the representatives of the Catholic Church have no right to make such a claim or to criticize the Orthodox Church, hence a place for true dialogue is not found.

### ***Freedom and Authority, Truth and Falsehood***

Khomiakov uses a tripartite concept of the Church (in the above quotation and elsewhere) to identify Protestantism with individual freedom (without unity), Catholicism with authority (without freedom), and the Orthodox Church with unity. The argument that Orthodoxy found a position of balance between authority, freedom and unity through *sobornost'* can be found repeatedly in his work, and becomes the most important trope of his polemics.

In Slavophile polemics, the Catholic Church's use of authority to obtain unity is often connected with the promulgation of falsehood.<sup>42</sup> The declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 reminded contemporary Orthodox commentators of the idea that the Pope wielded the power of armies, which was not the case at this point in history. As Khomiakov mentions, Orthodox and Catholic theological opinions differed, but in this work he chooses not to focus on questions of theology but simply on the very fact that such a declaration was made.<sup>43</sup>

After the Pope, as central authority, foremost in the line of those Khomiakov attacks are his polemicist opponents, especially the Jesuits:

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<sup>41</sup> Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 79 [my translation]. Also, Vatican II placed a new importance on the Laity. Khomiakov would have approved of this. See, for example, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree On The Apostolate Of The Laity Solemnly Promulgated By His Holiness, Pope Paul VI On November 18, 1965). [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19651118\\_apostolicam-actuositatem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html), accessed 16/05/11.

<sup>42</sup> 'Quelques mots' (1853), in *ibid.*, p. 70, 'Encore quelques mots' (1858), p. 223.

<sup>43</sup> 'Quelques mots' (1855), in *ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

Et cette frivolité d'esprit et de langage, ce caractère de mensonge constant, ou plutôt ce sérieux de feuilleton et cette sincérité de jésuite ne seraient pas la plus éloquente prédication de l'incrédulité?<sup>44</sup>

One of the weaknesses of Khomiakov's writing lay in the fact that he was unable to acknowledge that the polemics he wrote might be seen in the same way.

Khomiakov chose to emphasize the idea that Catholicism was the fallible Schismatic branch of the Church, sometimes by reference to its past errors. He contrasted this fallible church with the Universal Church, which he identified with the Orthodox Church. He argued that only the Orthodox Church could bring about the correct balance between Freedom, Authority and Unity. The Catholic Church ruled by despotic authority and promulgated falsehood. His essays seek to show that he, like the Orthodox Church, is able to rise above the petty squabbles of the Jesuits and other European clergy, and remind his readers what the Universal Church of Christ should aspire to.

Khomiakov's polemics do not provide a blueprint as to how a perfect balance could be achieved, nor do they make any reference to the absence of genuine freedom or unity in the Russian Empire.<sup>45</sup> Khomiakov's polemics are low in positive theological content, and high in negation of Catholicism. Tempest writes, 'as is so often the case with religious disputes, the debate between Gagarin and Khomiakov came to centre on the definition of words as much as on matters of substance.'<sup>46</sup> The debate was about important concepts, not simply words, but ends up in a 'war of words' because of the nature of polemical exchange. The Slavophiles refused to enter into serious dialogue with those who had converted, because for them 'apostasy was treason against the church and against the people'.<sup>47</sup> For this reason they most often dismiss the arguments of the Russian Catholics.

### **The 1860s: Slavophiles versus Russian Jesuits – Round Two**

In the 1860s even more writing on Catholicism was published than in the 1850s. These works build on the polemics of the previous decade, reinforced by the Polish Uprising of 1863. The first of these publications was Dmitrii Tolstoi's *Le Catholicisme romain en Russie* (1863). Originally written in Russian it was first published in a French

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<sup>44</sup> 'Encore quelques mots,' pp. 218-19.

<sup>45</sup> This point has also been made by Tamborra, *Katolicheskaia tserkov'*, pp. 147-48.

<sup>46</sup> Tempest, 'Gagarin and Khomiakov,' p. 94.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

translation, and only later published in Russian, in 1876. In the interim it was translated and published in English in 1874.<sup>48</sup> Tolstoi's introduction to the 1876 Russian edition claimed that one reason for re-publishing his opus in Russian was to gain a wider readership, although we can safely assume that some had already read the French edition.<sup>49</sup> In relation to Beliustin's 1850s work on clerical reform, Freeze argued that publishing abroad actually helped a piece of writing gain attention, which may be relevant here.<sup>50</sup> Tolstoi's work comprised a two-volume history of Catholicism in Russia from the Schism to the reign of Alexander I. This thesis does not examine the question of history-writing or historiography and its relationship to the image of Catholicism, although the subject deserves further study, particularly in relation to Tolstoi's work, which has been barely mentioned in scholarship to date.<sup>51</sup> His work reinforced and echoed the anti-Catholicism of the polemics, and broadly reflects typical anti-Catholic attitudes explored elsewhere in this research, for example among the Slavophiles.

Sinel, Dmitrii Tolstoi's biographer, notes similarity to the Slavophiles, and writes that 'against this slanderous denunciation of Catholicism Tolstoi apposed a highly idealized description of the early Russian Orthodox Church.'<sup>52</sup> Tolstoi's concluding words bear out the anti-Catholic bias in his views:

Tout le système romain est basé sur l'égoïsme: le sauveur et la religion restent au second plan, le pape et le clergé occupent le premier. Les temps sont passés où les papes élevaient et détrônaient les rois; où, les armes à la main, ils soutenaient leur puissance, ils courbaient et faisaient trembler les peuples: l'ancienne puissance n'existe plus, c'en est fait de la haute prépondérance papale qui ne fut possible qu'au milieu de peuples en enfance; mais les désirs, les tendances, ce que nous appellerions *le système d'action*, sont restés les mêmes, car le but n'a pas changé: aujourd'hui, comme alors Rome a besoin de dominer; les moyens seuls ont varié. L'organisation hiérarchique de l'Eglise, créée par le saint-siège, est faite pour insinuer au clergé que tout dépend de Rome, que c'est elle qu'il doit servir d'abord, et la religion après.<sup>53</sup>

Dmitrii Tolstoi can be compared to Tiutchev for the fact that he had a political career (as Minister for Education and the overprocurator of the Synod), and thus some

<sup>48</sup> D. Tolstoy, *Le catholicisme romain en Russie: étude historique* (2 vols.), Paris: Dentu, 1863; D. Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia: An Historical Study* (2 vols.), trans. by Mrs M'Kibbin, London: J T Hayes, 1874; D. Tolstoi, *Rimskii katolitsizm v Rossii: Istoricheskoe issledovanie* (2 vols.), St. Petersburg: 1876.

<sup>49</sup> D. Tolstoi, *Rimskii katolitsizm*, p. v. I have been unable to discover the extent of its circulation.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory Freeze, 'Revolt from Below: A Priest's Manifesto on the Crisis of Russian Orthodoxy (1858-59), in *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime*, p. 111.

<sup>51</sup> Tolstoi's main biographer devotes less than two pages to it; see A. Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery: State Educational Reform in Russia under Count Dmitry Tolstoi*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 50-51. Tamborra and Dunn both omit mention of Tolstoi.

<sup>52</sup> Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>53</sup> Tolstoy, *Le catholicisme romain en Russie*, pp. 417-18 [my italics].

chance for his ideas to have direct social or political impact, for example in his campaign against the Uniate (Greek Catholic) Churches in Ukraine.<sup>54</sup> Although this thesis focuses on ideas articulated in journals, brochures and literature, the image of Catholicism in such texts could have an impact on political policies in nineteenth-century Russia.

Equally, issues of policy could influence the discussion of Catholicism in literary culture. In 1864 the polemicist Ivan Aksakov (1823-1886) wrote an editorial for the Slavophile journal *Den'*, in which he argued that the Jesuits should not be allowed back into the Russian Empire. He did so in order to respond to rumours suggesting that the Russian state would form an alliance with the Society of Jesus to prevent Jesuit agitation for Polish independence.

Aksakov's editorial piece presents a number of sharp criticisms of the Society and made the Jesuits the focus of debate about Catholicism. He brings the forum of discussion back onto Russian soil and back into the Russian language.<sup>55</sup> As in the case of Tolstoy's work being translated and published in Russian, there is a new sense that the (educated) Russian public must be made aware of the alleged dangers Catholicism may bring. Aksakov emphasized, as Khomiakov had done, the converts' ignorance of Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>56</sup> He gave a pithy description of the Jesuits, calling them 'шайка шулеров, воров и тому подобных художников'. In explaining what was so detestable about the Jesuits, he wrote, '*признавая всяческие средства для своей цели, иезуит не столько совершает сам, сколько внушает преступления, [...] но редко может быть юридически уличен в явном деле*'.<sup>57</sup> Jesuits, he explained, could not easily be caught because they were accustomed to falsehood and secrecy.

The Jesuit Martynov was called to defend his Order against this attack from Aksakov and was motivated by a desire to promulgate a programme of Catholic apologetics/polemics. In order to undermine Aksakov's position, Martynov argued that the Slavophile was motivated by political considerations, especially fear of the Ukrainian independence movement (as well as fear of the Poles). On Jesuit morality, Martynov explained that the Jesuits had the same moral standards as any Christian. He underlined that the Jesuits were doing God's work, and that no Jesuits he had ever met

<sup>54</sup> Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery*, pp. 195-96.

<sup>55</sup> Tempest points out that one of the reasons for Khomiakov's essays of the 1850s being published abroad was Russian religious censorship. By the 1860s the climate was evidently changing. Tempest, 'Gagarin and Khomiakov,' p. 85.

<sup>56</sup> I. Aksakov, 'Iz peredovoi stat'i gazety *Den'* 1864, No 12,' in Samarin, *Iezuity*, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9 [my italics].

behaved in the way that Aksakov described.<sup>58</sup> In response to the accusation of secrecy, Martynov emphasized that the Jesuits were open in their activities: ‘ведь мы не духи бесплотные; мы такие же люди как и все прочие’.<sup>59</sup>

The Jesuits were attacked for their secrecy, but Martynov on the contrary emphasizes the volume of their publications and the scope of their influence.<sup>60</sup> Was it the fact that the Jesuits were an invisible, ‘secret society’ propagating Catholicism, or was it their ubiquitous and pervasive visible presence that was the problem? Furthermore, Martynov wrote that the Jesuits had been accused of special loyalty to the Pope, but he maintained that all Catholics were loyal to the Pope.<sup>61</sup> Did the Slavophiles take issue with Jesuit loyalty to the Pope (which was in line with Orthodox disapproval of papal primacy), or was it fear of the Jesuits’ autonomous powers rebelling against the papacy that worried them (a tendency that sometimes appeared in Catholic anti-Jesuit ideas)? Finally, Martynov makes a more general point that drives to the heart of Russian attitudes to Catholicism. He quoted the words of a Papal Bull of Benedict XIV: ‘ut omnes catholici sunt, non ut omnes latini fiant’ [while they are all Catholics, they are not all Latins] in an attempt to emphasise the universal, supranational, nature of Catholicism.<sup>62</sup>

Martynov’s reply provoked another major response, Iurii Samarin’s ‘Iezuity i ikh otnoshenie k Rossii’ (1864), written in the form of a series of long letters to Martynov.<sup>63</sup> Samarin claimed to define the leading principles behind the Order as viewed through their written documents, and he discussed Jesuit activities in Russia and worldwide. Samarin was Ivan Gagarin’s cousin and they had been close friends from childhood. Samarin broke off their friendship after Gagarin informed him of his conversion, and evidently Samarin took his cousin’s decision to join the Jesuits badly.<sup>64</sup> Samarin wrote that when his cousin composed *La Russie*, ‘писал не человек а труп, покорный жезл в чужой руке’.<sup>65</sup> Apparently, Samarin had come to terms with his cousin’s apostasy by presuming that the Jesuits had some kind of infectious influence over him. Moreover, Gagarin was not just an apostate, but ‘dead’ to him.

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<sup>58</sup> Letter of I. Martynov to I. Aksakov, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1864, reprinted in *Den’* 1865, No. 45 and 46, in Samarin, *Iezuity*, p. 18, p. 24.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>63</sup> Iu. Samarin, ‘Iezuity i ikh otnoshenie k Rossii’, in Samarin, *Iezuity* [originally published in *Den’*, 1864].

<sup>64</sup> Tempest, ‘Gagarin and Khomiakov’, p. 81.

<sup>65</sup> Samarin, ‘Iezuity’, pp. 348-49.

Large parts of Samarin's publication are derivative, even including long quotations from secondary sources, among them anti-Jesuit writings from Europe. Samarin accused Gagarin's *La Russie* of being unoriginal and hackneyed, but his own work is far from original<sup>66</sup>. The footnotes and extensive appendices containing historical documents were evidently designed to reassure the reader that Samarin was writing the historical 'Truth'. Tolstoi's *Le Catholicisme romain* contains long appendices. As Sinel notes, it is, however, 'primarily a historical survey' which even earned its author a doctorate.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, despite its historical veneer, Samarin's anti-Jesuit work, written as it was for a journal, consciously sought to continue the thread of anti-Catholic polemics sustained in the previous decades by Khomiakov.<sup>68</sup>

'Iezuity' can be viewed as a piece in the larger jigsaw puzzle of anti-Catholic polemics in this era. While at first sight one might assume that Samarin discusses the Jesuits as a separate phenomenon, it becomes clear that, like Tiutchev, he uses the Jesuits as a metonym for Catholicism. He therefore both indirectly and directly makes wider comments about the image of Catholicism in Russia, touching on many of the same themes as Khomiakov and Tiutchev.

### ***The Influence of Jesuitism: Secrecy and Conspiracy***

Samarin referred to 'Jesuitism' as an illness or infection that twists a true Christian sense of morality.<sup>69</sup> He accused the Jesuits of basing their moral reasoning on the principle of 'using any means to an end'.<sup>70</sup> In order to accomplish immoral goals whilst pretending to be moral, according to the anti-Jesuit myth, Jesuits have developed a complex system, involving casuistry and practices such as mental reservation.<sup>71</sup>

Secrecy and falsehood supposedly come naturally to a Jesuit.<sup>72</sup> Samarin writes, 'Даже прилагательное от собственного имени Иезуитов вошло в употребление для обозначения общих свойств. Иезуитская клятва, Иезуитское слово, Иезуитский прием, не значат клятва надежная, слово правдивое, прием честный.'<sup>73</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>67</sup> Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery*, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' p. 359.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 135-36.

<sup>70</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' p. 114. Wright gives a very balanced, concise description of what he terms 'the anti-Jesuit myth'. See J. Wright, *The Jesuits: Missions, Myths and Histories*, London: Harper Perennial, 2005, pp. 126-63.

<sup>71</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' pp. 215-20. 'Mental reservation' was a practice that involved reserving information when under questioning for some moral purpose so that a statement could not be regarded as an outright lie. It was usually (and most famously) used in circumstances where the Jesuit (or other Christian) would be in danger or would put another person in danger if he told the whole truth. Wright, *The Jesuits*, pp. 139-44

<sup>72</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' pp. 106-107.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 29. In this text 'иезуитский' is capitalized, and I have retained this capitalization.

Not only that, but the Jesuits excuse or deny everything, which makes it difficult to prove that they have done anything wrong.<sup>74</sup>

Смело можно сказать, что нет такого преступления, которого бы они не извинили, нет такого порока, начиная с грубейших и кончая самыми утонченными, нет той слабости, для которых бы не придумали благовидного оправдания и поблажки.<sup>75</sup>

‘Следствие и суд, встречаясь с Иезуитами, почти всегда дают отсечку,’ Samarin bitterly remarks.<sup>76</sup> He repeatedly undermined Martynov’s claim that the Jesuits act in the open. After all, how could one trust a Jesuit to be honest about other Jesuits? ‘Вероятно, и из Иезуитской избы сор на площади и не вывозится среди дня, а выметается, если выметается, в сумерки и с заднего крыльца.’<sup>77</sup>

Russian anti-Jesuitism is at this point reminiscent of a conspiracy theory, further evidence of which can be seen in the fact that in 1863 Gagarin was even implicated in Pushkin’s death.<sup>78</sup> However, Samarin’s version of the ‘anti-Jesuit myth’ was connected to morality. The Jesuits’ supposed lack of morals emerged from their (and Catholicism’s) adherence to concepts derived from Roman law rather than from the Church Fathers or Scripture.<sup>79</sup> Samarin admitted that the Jesuits did not invent casuistry:

Новозаветная казуистика выдумана не Иезуитами. Она родилась раньше их, от латинского корня, который пророс сквозь западное христианство, как только оно отложилось от вселенского общения и зажило своею, местною жизнью. Но Иезуиты овладели казуистикою, усвоили её себе и развили до уродливых последствий...<sup>80</sup>

Just before this passage, Samarin compares the Jesuit casuists to the Scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament. Elsewhere, he refers to them as ‘Praetorians’, as though the ‘Jesuitical’ element in human nature was responsible for Christ’s crucifixion.<sup>81</sup> Overall, he therefore argued that Western society is based on a completely different (and incorrect) moral foundation in comparison with Russian (Orthodox)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-57, 56-60, 63.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> A. Ammosov, *Poslednie dni i konchina Aleksandra Sergeevicha Pushkina, so slov ego byvshego litseiskogo tovarishcha i sekundanta Konstantina Sergeevicha Danzasa*, St. Petersburg: Izd. A.A. Isakova, 1863. Gagarin’s refutation in 1865 was published in *Russkii arkhiv*. See Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, pp. 12-17. On Pushkin’s duel, see S. Vitale, *Pushkin's Button*, trans by A. Goldstein and J. Rothschild, London: Fourth Estate, 1999, and on Gagarin’s alleged involvement, see pp. 143, 161.

<sup>79</sup> Samarin, ‘Iezuity,’ p. 141.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

society. The way of thinking that the Jesuits possessed, their different moral reasoning, had led them to perpetrate some of the worst iniquities in human history.

***The Historical Church: Ad maiorem dei gloriam***

Samarin's work demonstrated the difference between the ideal Church (as revealed in the Orthodox Church) and the reality of the Church in the world (as manifested in the Catholic Church's iniquities). Unlike some of the Slavophiles, Samarin, a historian by training, did occasionally refer to Russian history (especially the era of Catherine II and Paul I). However, he did not place any blame on Russian religion, and in general the Catholic Church is represented in a more historical context than the Orthodox.

Samarin argued that in the case of the Jesuits, even when theory and practice appeared distinct, on further examination there turned out to be an internal consistency.<sup>82</sup> This was because the Society's misdeeds all emerged straight from the allegedly amoral mindset of the Jesuits. One of his sources for their theory is the *Monita secreta societatis iesu* [*Secret Instructions of the Society of Jesus*] (known as the *Monita privata*), a seventeenth-century Jesuit 'handbook' (of questionable provenance) about how to gain power and influence. Samarin, who knew that the document's origins were disputed, nevertheless used it as a historical source to prove the negative reputation of the Society. He claimed that it is genuine and thought that its contents reflected the real truth behind the Jesuit order. He disregarded the opinions of Catholic historians about the document's veracity as biased.<sup>83</sup>

Samarin's work concentrates on what he wanted the reader to believe was historical fact, so he tends to give historical examples of Jesuit activities. For example, he refers to Possevino as '[один из] самых заклятых врагов России, наиболее ей повредивших'<sup>84</sup>. After the Time of Troubles, 'наконец, Русская земля повела плечами и стряхнула с себя всех облепивших её самозванцев, претендентов, Шведов и Поляков, а вместе с ними и Иезуитов.'<sup>85</sup> The Order's inclusion in a list of pretenders and invaders connects them to court intrigue and especially to foreign powers. Based on this, it is not surprising that Samarin wants to keep them out of Russia.

'Iezuity' contains an extensive list of other Jesuit conspiracies. Samarin accused the Jesuits of manipulation and greed: 'Иезуитам издавна, с XVI века,

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-53.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-109.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 287. See also, *ibid.*, p. 123.



приписывалось особенное мастерство в ловле крупных наследств, ещё больше чем в ловле душ'.<sup>86</sup> The use of the word 'ловля' here serves to contrast the idea of Jesus's disciples being 'fishers of men' (Mark 1: 17) with the Jesuits portrayed as sinister 'fishers for wealth.' According to Samarin (and the *Monita secreta*), Jesuits ingratiate themselves with people to gain influence and money. He notes, evidently with Gagarin and friends in mind, that the Jesuits have sought to capture some of the members of the Russian nobility.<sup>87</sup>

Samarin's work describes Jesuit activities not just as representative of the fallibility of human nature. He implies that the Catholic Church has not just occasionally or temporarily fallen from the ideal, but constitutes the opposite of the ideal church, almost an Antichurch. According to Samarin, the Society seeks its own greater glory, not God's, despite their motto ('*Ad maiorem dei gloriam*' [To the Greater Glory of God]). The Jesuit therefore becomes the archetype of the Catholic who meddles in secular affairs and seizes earthly powers in order to accomplish his ends. For anti-Catholic thinkers this claim reflects the view that the Catholic Church seeks its own ends. Having described the Antichurch and its representatives, Samarin hopes that the reader will infer that the Russian Orthodox Church is the ideal Church that has never committed any wrong. He constructs the Catholic Church (Antichurch) as a negative opposite to help define a positive image of the Russian Church.

### ***Nationality and Universality***

Universality and *sobornost'* are not prevalent in Samarin's writing on the Jesuits. However, Samarin does briefly critique the Jesuits' own attempts to get to grips with the problem of universality in an endeavour that Wright terms 'missionary accommodation.'<sup>88</sup> The Catholic Church (like the Orthodox Church) claims to hold Holy Tradition free from national or local particularity. Samarin suggested that Jesuits twisted religion to suit their needs, appeasing the Indians by adhering to the caste system even though this went against Gospel teaching on equality.<sup>89</sup> Samarin therefore re-uses the accusations made by some Catholic writers that the Jesuits' approach was syncretic, although he does not attach any particular term to this concept. Missionaries had been accused of a syncretic approach because they had overstepped the mark when they adapted Catholic rituals and dogmas by mixing them with local pagan religion,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>87</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' p. 118.

<sup>88</sup> Wright, *The Jesuits*, pp. 108-116.

<sup>89</sup> Samarin, 'Iezuity,' pp. 149-52.

creating what Samarin calls ‘рассчетливо подпорченное христианство...’<sup>90</sup> (In colonial terms this might be referred to as ‘going native’)<sup>91</sup>.

The syncretic approach of the missionaries was motivated by an attempt to ensure Catholicism is universally accepted by making it locally acceptable. Samarin must have been aware that it was as difficult an area for the Orthodox Church as for the Catholic Church. The Russian Church had struggled with the people retaining pagan practices for centuries and assimilating them into a Christian belief structure (sometimes called *dvoeverie*).<sup>92</sup> Samarin makes no reference to Russia, but one of the arguments he makes about the Jesuits’ supposed syncretic approach is that they have been guilty of implementing ‘какую-то нездоровую помесь христианской терминологии с догматами и обрядами грубейшего язычества. И все это делалось *сознательно, по системе*.’<sup>93</sup>

The Slavophiles were aware of the difficulty of ‘translation’ when transferring religion across a linguistic or cultural boundary, as the debate on the translation of the term *kafolikos* between Khomiakov and Gagarin shows.<sup>94</sup> The fact that Samarin shows such a lack of sympathy towards the Jesuits’ attempt to accommodate Catholicism to other cultures perhaps reveals a deep-seated fear of this issue on the part of the Slavophiles. Samarin’s objection to this aspect of the Jesuits’ work surely stems from a fear of the creeping presence of pagan religion and superstition within Russia, and from the real challenges represented by maintaining Tradition in the face of change.

Lotman and Uspenskii write that in pre-Petrine Russia ‘Paganism and “Latinism” were, in principle, phenomena of different kinds [...]. Latin heretics were worse than the pagans [...] “Latinism,” unlike paganism, was perceived as a blasphemous parody of genuine Christianity. Externally similar but with a different content: a sort of Orthodoxy inside out.’<sup>95</sup> Paganism has been linked to the Devil, but so too has Catholicism. For the Slavophiles, the principal enemies were not pagans, Jews, or ‘infidel’ Muslims, but Catholics. Samarin therefore connects the Jesuits closely with the Antichrist or the Devil.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>91</sup> For a summary on Jesuit missions, see Wright, *The Jesuits*, pp. 60-125. For references to missions, see, for example, Samarin, *Iezuity*, pp. 66, 73, 125, 149-52.

<sup>92</sup> Billington dismisses the application of the concept of *dvoeverie* as an academic theory of Russian studies, although the title of his book rather suggests a subtle agreement with it. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, p. 18. The existence of some believers who retained certain pagan beliefs is present in most religions.

<sup>93</sup> Samarin, ‘Iezuity,’ p. 150 [my italics].

<sup>94</sup> Wright gives some more examples of ‘missionary accommodation’. Wright, *The Jesuits*, pp. 108-116.

<sup>95</sup> Lotman and Uspenskii, ‘Binary Models,’ p. 40.

*Unity, Freedom, and Papal Authority*

The Jesuits take a vow of loyalty to the Pope, and it is for this reason that Samarin refers to them as the Praetorians of Papism.<sup>96</sup> If they are the Praetorian guard who carried out the sentence against Jesus, then the Pope is identified with Pontius Pilate, who condemned Jesus to death (or with Caiaphas, the High Priest). The identification of Roman Catholicism with Imperial Roman power is very characteristic of the Russian image of Catholicism, but Khomiakov sometimes refers to the Pope as ‘первосвященник’, ‘grand prêtre’ or ‘High Priest’, a motif later to be developed by Tiutchev and Dostoevskii.<sup>97</sup> This chimes with Russian anti-Semitism of this period. Russian anti-Catholicism centres around the Orthodox objections to papal primacy, and so it is not surprising that a particular fear of an Order which claims undying loyalty to the Pope should have developed.

The Jesuits are equally well-known for their tenacity and spirit of independence which have over the centuries led to great achievements and led them into trouble, as when the Pope published a Bull disbanding the Order in Europe. During this time, the Jesuits were allowed to remain in the Russian Empire. As Samarin puts it, ‘Иезуиты, приговоренные к смерти, хотели жить и твердо решились не умирать...’<sup>98</sup> Present-day consideration of Jesuit history, Samarin explained, had forced Jesuits to find an explanation for their disobedience to their ‘master’. The fact that the Pope had disbanded the Order encouraged some Jesuits to argue that Pope Clement XIV was weak and dependent on others. This would mean that the Pope was not the bastion of the Church’s independence from the State, and that he was fallible, a view which played into the hand of the anti-papists.<sup>99</sup>

Samarin agreed that Unity should be a tenet of the Christian Church and argued that Unity was lacking in Catholicism despite papal primacy.<sup>100</sup> He considered that there was disagreement over what papal powers and papal infallibility meant in practice:<sup>101</sup>

Где же единство? Говорить ли о бытовой стороне Латинской церкви и о единстве в жизни? Но вы сами знаете, что вся история её представляет непрерывную, скандальную распрю монашеских орденов между собою и всех монашеских Орденов с епископами. Где же *согласие*?

<sup>96</sup> Samarin, ‘Iezuity,’ p. 117.

<sup>97</sup> Khomiakov, ‘Quelque mots,’ pp. 108-109.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 263, 266-69, 278.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 363-65.

Наружное *однообразие*, которым прельщаются люди, не умеющие отличить однообразие от единства и никогда серьезно не изучавшие ни доктрины, ни практической стороны латинства, поддерживается, в духовенстве, деспотической дисциплиною, а в массах – *равнодушием*.<sup>102</sup>

Samarin adheres to the ideas held by other Slavophiles that the Catholic Church lacked true unity, but offered a kind of sham unity, achieved at the price of submission to authority. However, it is obvious here that he understands ‘unity’ as ‘unanimity’ (agreement). Most Catholics would argue that there is not absolute *unanimity* among Catholics, but that the Pope’s role is ultimately to bring *unity* between members of his flock on specific matters. Samarin argues that papal authority results in monotonous obedience and indifference among the faithful. There remains, however, a lack of coherence in how the thinker visualizes the Catholic Church – just how obedient can warring monastic factions be? The Slavophile’s investigations into the Jesuits’ attitudes to the Pope cause him a problem precisely because the Jesuits were loyal to the papacy and yet capable of an independence of thought that meant that they had disobeyed the Pope. These discussions point to a tension again between theory and practice, between the theory of the Catholic Church presented by the Slavophiles and their references to its practices. This can be contrasted with their discussion of the Orthodox Church, in which only the ideal Church was portrayed.

Samarin’s writing on the Jesuits posits the idea that, as he puts it, ‘Иезуитство было последним и самым законным изчадием латинства.’<sup>103</sup> He uses the Jesuits to point to those traits in human nature, those mistakes of human history, and especially those faults in the Catholic Church, which he despises. To the Slavophiles, the Jesuits are examples of the very worst that the Catholic Church can do, its moral nadir. Samarin re-tells a *skazka* in which the Tsar was given a magic mirror, that showed him his true self; and no matter what he did to try to get rid of the image, it would return to haunt him. He notes that ‘Такое же обличительное зеркало дано латинству в иезуитах. Это его кара. Оно может проклинать его, но пока остается собою, оно не развязается с ним.’<sup>104</sup> For all the grains of truth that may be found in some of Samarin's criticisms of the Jesuits, more so than Khomiakov, Samarin encourages through his use of hyperbole a conspiracy theory that allows Russia to blame its problems on a diabolically inspired agent from without.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 367 [my italics].

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

## Conclusion

The polemics of the 1850s and 1860s built on the ideas that had already been raised by the Slavophiles and Tiutchev in the 1840s, and follow many of the same themes and ideas. The main difference was that the position of the ‘Jesuit’ was now more central to the debate, as both interlocutor and subject of discussion. The Russian Jesuits felt they were seeking a genuine Russian (universal) Catholicism, not ‘Roman’ Catholicism; ‘мы проповедуем не латинство, а католическую веру’, wrote Martynov.<sup>105</sup> By contrast, the Slavophiles construed the Jesuits to be the promulgators of the ‘Latin’ religion, a religion that they defined as being alien to true (universal) Christianity, and in league with the Devil.

The polemics addressed the differences between Orthodoxy and Catholicism but failed even to begin to tackle criticisms of their own Church, or to find any ground in common. They reinforced the differences between Slavophiles and pro-Catholic thinkers. This is partly a result of the medium of polemical writing that tends towards the confrontation and polarization of opinions. It also results from what was seen as the Russian Jesuits’ attempt to proselytize which, rather than opening up a space for ecumenical dialogue, appears to have exacerbated tensions.<sup>106</sup> The Jesuits failed to take account of the negative effects that their activities produced and, more generally of the negative image of Jesuits in Russia. The Slavophiles, meanwhile, did not acknowledge that the Russian Jesuits’ activities held up a magic mirror to Russia and to the Slavophile movement. This mirror could have helped them to examine Russia’s problems, especially the assumption that ethnicity, nationalism and religion were intrinsically bound together and should be the subject of government policy.

The polemics of the 1850s and 1860s represent one of the low points in dialogue between the two Churches as both sides resort to some fairly crude insults to make their points.<sup>107</sup> It can, however, be said that the spirit of questioning, criticism and dialogue (albeit in the form of dispute) that developed in these polemics was positive in the longer term – at least some type of dialogue was occurring, and the subject which in Chaadaev’s day had been taboo could now be discussed in print. A last, paradoxical postscript may be added: while the Slavophiles and the Jesuits were busy polemicizing

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<sup>105</sup> Martynov, ‘Letter,’ p. 21.

<sup>106</sup> This point has also been made by Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 112.

<sup>107</sup> Tamborra, among others, argues that their polemics did not leave space for ecumenical dialogue. Tamborra, *Katolicheskaia tserkov’*, p. 172.

about religious differences, Aksakov and Gagarin managed to work *together* on publishing Tiutchev's poems.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Walicki, Rosja, p. 329.

## Chapter 5: The anti-Catholic poetry of Tiutchev

Following the discussion of Tiutchev's essays in Chapter 2, we may now consider whether his later poems provide evidence of the same type of ideas, and how the genre of poetry influenced the image of Catholicism. His earlier poetry showed no evidence of Catholic themes. In the third stage of his career, after 1850, Tiutchev stopped writing essays about Europe, but continued to write poems. This shift in genre occurred for several reasons. His wife Ernestine attributed it partly to Tiutchev's personality or his working habits and known mood-swings.<sup>1</sup> His essays had been seen as provocative abroad, where they were read as a reflection of official policy.<sup>2</sup> This may help to explain his return to the (supposedly) less politically contentious genre of the poem.

During the 1860s the Pan-Slavist movement played a significant role in Tiutchev's life. Catholicism was the evil 'other' against which the Pan-Slav Empire had to fight, and Catholicism was therefore the *raison d'être* for the Pan-Slav movement in Tiutchev's eyes. As he commented in a letter to Aksakov of 1868, 'папа — и в этом заключается его *raison d'être* — в отношении к России всегда будет поляком, в отношении к православным христианам на Востоке всегда будет туркою.'<sup>3</sup> This again shows how closely connected ethnicity and religion were in Tiutchev's understanding of the nation. In the 1860s he addressed two poems to the Slavs as part of his political campaigning.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that he therefore visualized his role as a poet as creating a voice for a political movement.

Tiutchev needed to find a new way of describing Russia's mission without emphasizing the role of the Russian state, so he utilized a model of Russian messianism or exceptionalism that underlined a vision of the simple people and their faith. This approach is adopted in the 'Russian Christ' poems, 'Eti bednye selenia...' (1855) and 'Nad etoi temnoiu tolpoi...' (1861).<sup>5</sup> If one reads his poems of the 1850s to 1870s, taken together they suggest a third potential reason for his change of genre: in some sense he understood that his Orthodox 'Imperialist' vision was failing. As Gregg puts it, 'the prevailing tone of the [political poems of the] final years is the exasperation of a

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<sup>1</sup> Dewey, *Mirror of the Soul*, pp. 309-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> F. Tiutchev to I. Aksakov, 29 September, 1868, in Tiutchev, *PSS*, VI: 354. In the same letter, Tiutchev repeats the saying that he used in 'Note' about the Pope and the Muscovite Tsar.

<sup>4</sup> Both titled 'Slavianam' (1867), in *PSS*, II: 176, 179. The commentary (*PSS*, II: 540) explains the political context of the poems.

<sup>5</sup> Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 71 and 83.

Jehovah's witness confronted with an oft-postponed millennium'.<sup>6</sup> From the mid-1850s until his death in 1873, therefore, exasperation and an increasing sense of insecurity about his own position as poet-prophet combined with the challenge that the defeat in the Crimean War had provided to Russian national identity. Tiutchev's earlier prophetic predictions, expressed in the relatively straightforward, rational language of essays and political memoranda, had been disproved.

Poems, by contrast, had the potential to give Tiutchev's voice a different kind of authority. Poems could be used as expressions of 'faith,' almost as prayers for the future. The combination of historical circumstances with Tiutchev's desire to express himself as writer led to the development of increasingly vitriolic attacks on Catholicism in his art. Between 1864 and 1871, Tiutchev wrote four anti-Catholic poems, which will be analysed in the sections below. The poems repeat motifs and ideas from the essays of the 1840s, but the power of the Tsar and the Russian state are strikingly absent from the poems, unlike the essays. Catholicism was blamed for Europe's problems, and the Pope was singled out as chief scapegoat.

### **Tiutchev's Poems and their Historical Context**

Tiutchev had filled his essays with references to the actions of the Catholic Church in history and contemporary politics. His poems, likewise, place the Catholic Church within its political and historic context; because they respond to contemporary events, they can be seen as a form of journalism in verse. Reading these poems without understanding their historical context renders them almost meaningless. Frequently, commentary on events is accompanied by the image of judgement and 'God's justice.'

The first of these late political poems, 'Encyclica' (1864) combined a direct protest against the 'Syllabus of Errors' with allusions to the theme of punishment:

#### **Encyclica**

Был день, когда Господней правды молот  
Громил, дробил ветхозаветный храм  
И, собственным мечом своим заколот,  
В нем издыхал первосвященник сам.

5      Еще страшней, еще неумолимей  
И в наши дни – дни Божьего суда –  
Свершится казнь в отступническом Риме  
Над лженаместником Христа.

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<sup>6</sup> Gregg, *Fedor Tiutchev*, p. 127.



- 10 Столетия шли, ему прощалось много,  
Кривые толки, темные дела,  
Но не простится правдой Бога  
Его последняя хула...
- 15 Не от меча погибнет он земного,  
Мечом земным владевший столько лет, –  
Его погубит роковое слово:  
«Свобода совести есть бред!»<sup>7</sup>

Tiutchev comes across as a conservative thinker in his writing, although he was a liberal censor.<sup>8</sup> The fact that he chooses to speak out in defence of the freedoms criticized in the Syllabus is therefore inherently paradoxical. He highlights not the opposition to modernity in the Syllabus, which was the main concern of most of its critics, but rather the Pope's apparent opposition to freedom of conscience. However, the poem concentrates less on the pronouncement made, and more on the reactions to it. This shows the importance of public opinion in Europe and underscores the need for the Pope to be held accountable for his actions. This is indicated by 'Свершится казнь' and the punishment described in the next two stanzas, in lines 13 and 15.

In a second anti-Catholic poem, 'Svershaetsia zaslužhennaia kara...' (1867) Tiutchev suggested that his prophecy in the 1864 poem had been fulfilled; when the Garibaldites invaded the Papal territories, he saw this as the enactment of the 'just punishment' of the first line, thus continuing the theme of the previous poem:

- Свершается заслуженная кара  
За тяжкий грех, тысячелетний грех...  
Не отворотить, не избежать удара –  
И правда Божья видима для всех...
- 5 То Божьей правды праведная кара,  
И, ей в отпор чью помощь ни зови,  
Свершится суд... и папская тиара  
В последний раз купается в крови.
- 10 А ты, ее носитель неповинный, –  
Спаси тебя Господь и отрезви –  
Молись Ему, чтобы твои седины  
Не осквернились в пролитой крови.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 'Encyclica' (1864), in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 132. In pre-Revolutionary editions of Tiutchev's poetry, the capital to refer to the deity (i.e. the Б in 'Божья правда') is capitalised, e.g. see *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Fedora Tiutcheva*, St Petersburg: A. F. Marks, 1900, p. 340-341. I have reinstated the pre-Revolutionary capitalization.

<sup>8</sup> Dewey, *Mirror of the Soul*, p. 302.

<sup>9</sup> 'Svershaetsia zaslužhennaia kara...' (1867), in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 185, commentary, 548-49.

Again, the poem both comments on an event and explores the theme of punishment further. The sin to be punished is the sin of the papacy since the Schism (‘тысячелетний грех’), the assumption of secular power. The reference to this sin of a thousand years politely reminds the reader to recall history. This power of the past, especially in the medieval period, is rebounding onto the papacy, and the lands associated with it are being removed as a punishment. By arguing in the poem that an event in the past has repercussions in the present, Tiutchev framed the Catholic Church firmly within his conceptualisation of history.

‘Gus na kostre’ (1870) has the most overtly historical rather than contemporary theme. In fact, it refers to both past, present and future, adeptly woven together in a single poem driven by a narrative about an ‘unjust punishment’:

### **Гус на костре**

Костер сооружен, и роковое  
Готово вспыхнуть пламя; все молчит, –  
Лишь слышен легкий треск, и в нижнем слое  
Костра огонь предательски сквозит.

5 Дым побежал – народ столпился гуще;  
Вот все они – весь этот темный мир:  
Тут и гнетомый люд, и люд гнетущий,  
Ложь и насилье, рыцарство и клир.

10 Тут вероломный кесарь, и князей  
Имперских и духовных сонм верховный,  
И сам он, римский иерарх, в своей  
Непогрешимости греховной.

15 Тут и она – та старица простая,  
Не позабытая с тех пор,  
Что принесла, крестясь и воздыхая,  
Вязанку дров, как лепту, на костер.

20 И на костре, как жертва пред закланьем,  
Вам праведник великий предстоит:  
Уже обвеян огненным сияньем,  
Он молится – и голос не дрожит...

Народа чешского святой учитель,  
Бестрепетный свидетель о Христе  
И римской лжи суровый обличитель  
В своей высокой простоте,-

25 Не изменив ни Богу, ни народу,  
Боролся он – и был необорим –

За правду Божью, за ее свободу,  
 За все, за все, что бредом назвал Рим.

Он духом в небе – братскою ж любовью  
 30 Еще он здесь, еще в среде своих,  
 И светел он, что собственною кровью  
 Христову кровь он отстоял для них.

О чешский край! О род единокровный!  
 Не отвергай наследья своего!  
 35 О, доверши же подвиг свой духовный  
 И братского единства торжество!

И, цепь порвав с юродствующим Римом,  
 Гнетущую тебя уж так давно,  
 На Гусовом костре неугасимом  
 40 Расплавь ее последнее звено.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the previous anti-Catholic poems, this example is constructed on the Pan-Slavist platform, specifically with the aim of supporting the Czechs. The story of the poem is Jan Hus's resistance to the Catholic Church; accordingly, Pan-Slavism is defined by opposition to Catholicism. Jan Hus, who opposed the Catholic Church in the fifteenth century, before the full evolution of Protestantism, was burnt at the stake for his activities. In line 17 he is referred to as a 'pravednik'. The poet's comparison between him and a sacrificial victim in line 16 may link him with Isaac, and therefore with Christ (Genesis 22: 1-19), although other stories of martyrdom are relevant. Tiutchev uses this historic occurrence to comment on the doctrine of papal infallibility, declared at the end of the First Vatican Council in 1870, thereby demonstrating that the past, present and future of the Catholic Church are firmly linked.

The first part of the poem concentrates on the story of Hus. The imagery of the stake is contrasted with the ideas that have led Hus there and the ideas that he opposed. Line 8 'Ложь и насилье, рыцарство и клир', appears to refer to the problems of medieval Europe connected with the Church. In the third stanza, Tiutchev carefully contrasts infallibility with sinfulness, in just two words, 'pogreshimosti grekhovnoi'. The lexis of the poem brings Catholicism's past fallibility into sharp contrast with the recent declaration of papal infallibility.

Nonetheless, Tiutchev returned to the theme of infallibility a year later, on the anniversary of the declaration of papal infallibility. 'Vatikanskaia godovshchina' (1871) explores why (according to the poet) infallibility was declared, and the consequences of

<sup>10</sup> 'Gus na kostre' (1870), in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 216, commentary, 577-79.

this step. Like other poems, it moves from discussion of a specific event to generalisations about the influence of Catholicism.

**Ватиканская годовщина**

Был день суда и осуждения -  
Тот роковой, бесповоротный день,  
Когда для вящего паденья  
На высшую вознесся он ступень, –

5 И, Божьим промыслом теснимый  
И загнанный на эту высоту,  
Своей ногой непогрешимой  
В бездонную шагнул он пустоту, –

10 Когда, чужим страстям послушный,  
Игралище и жертва темных сил,  
Так богохульно-добродушно  
Он божеством себя провозгласил...

15 О новом бого-человеке  
Вдруг притча создалась – и в мир вошла,  
И святотатственной опеке  
Христова церковь предана была.

20 О, сколько смуты и волнений  
С тех пор воздвиг непогрешимый тот,  
И как под бурей этих прений  
Кошунство зреет и соблазн растет.

В испуге ищут правду Божью,  
Очнувшись вдруг, все эти племена,  
И как тысячетней ложью  
Она для них вконец отравлена.

25 И одолеть она не в силах  
Отравы той, что в жилах их течет,  
В их самых сокровенных жилах,  
И долго будет течь, – и где исход?

30 Но нет, как ни борись упрямо,  
Уступит ложь, рассеется мечта,  
И ватиканский далай-лама  
Не призван быть наместником Христа.<sup>11</sup>

In a mirror image of ‘Gus na kostre’, ‘Vatikanskaia godovshchina’ discusses a current event, but with reference to the past. Line 9 suggests that the Pope bowed to the wills of others in making his decision (this argument against a single person’s

<sup>11</sup> ‘Vatikanskaia godovshchina’ (1871), in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 232-33. Commentary, in *ibid.*, 596.

pronouncements being infallible is intended to impugn the Pope's position as a leading bishop). Just as Catholicism betrayed the Universal Church at the Schism, so the Pope has again betrayed the Church by declaring some of his statements infallible. The use of anaphora – 'o', 'i', 'kogda', 'no' – provides a thread through the poem which represents how the Catholic Church of the present should be connected to the Catholic Church in history.

The poet extensively refers to history in reference to the Catholic Church. In contrast, the poet's ideas on Russia and Orthodoxy's relationship to history are developed rather hazily in his verse. Tiutchev sets Catholicism against the comparatively vague idea of Russia found in his national lyrics, most famously in his Russian Christ poems. Catholic Europe's past and present are described as full of errors. Russia's past is largely ignored, her present doubtful and troublesome, while there is some cautious hope for a future in which she will become Christ to the world.

### **The Image of the Pope**

Most of Tiutchev's metaphors relating to the papacy are driven by the idea of the Catholic Church as a modern-day continuation of the Roman Empire. Tiutchev uses the image of the sword that is wielded by the Papacy, and emphasizes the concept of authority won by violence through repeated use of words such as 'krov'' and 'nasilie'. Secondly, he compares the Pope to the High Priest, a title already used by Khomiakov in the 1850s. Lastly, the sword is transfigured into the 'word' that has been twisted into 'lozh''. In Russian the word 'pravda' has two main meanings – truth and justice. Tiutchev's repeated use of phrases that connect the concept of truth with justice and punishment bring together the concepts and images of the poems.

He makes a direct appeal to the idea that the Catholic Church can be identified with the Roman Empire and the Pope with Caesar:

Тут вероломный кесарь, и князей  
Имперских и духовных сонм верховный,  
И сам он, римский иерарх, в своей  
Непогрешимости греховой.<sup>12</sup>

The connections between Ancient Rome and Catholicism are underlined with the words 'rimskii', 'imperskikh' and 'kesar''. The overt reference to 'kesar'' suggests that the declaration of Papal infallibility should be likened to Caesar's attempt to declare himself dictator in Rome, which, as history tells us, led to his downfall. The poet

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<sup>12</sup> Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 216.

portrays the Pope's desire for authority as an act of hubris that will lead to his tragic downfall. Additionally, the poem makes an implicit, but certainly relevant, link between Hus's rebellion against Rome and the first Christian martyrs, since these had struggled against Rome, in particular its paganism.

The most important image in the poem 'Encyclica' (1864) is the sword, here juxtaposed to the idea of the word.<sup>13</sup> The sword in this poem is a complex vehicle for various allusions, both classical and Biblical. The sword is an image of authority over others, of punishment and death. In Greece, Nemesis, the goddess associated with punishment, was sometimes depicted with a sword; so too was the Roman goddess Justitia [Justice], hence the famous symbol of Justice in courts across the world.<sup>14</sup> Romans sometimes fell upon their swords in an act of dignified suicide. Swords symbolize the right to punish by death, *ius gladii* [right of the sword] meaning the right of a group or individual to execute, because swords were the instrument of execution.

Turning to the image of the sword in the Bible, in the first line of 'Encyclica' the poet alludes to the destruction of the Temple ('vetkhozavetnyi khram') in Jerusalem in 71 AD.<sup>15</sup> He compares the Pope to the High Priest of the Temple. (The phrase 'собственным мечом своим заколот' may allude to King Saul who falls upon his own sword in 1 Chronicles 10:4 in an act of dignified suicide.) In the New Testament, the Evangelists write that Jesus was judged by the religious authorities, headed by the High Priest (representing the Sanhedrin), but handed over to the secular (Roman) authorities, i.e. to Pontius Pilate, for final sentencing and punishment because only the secular authorities had *ius gladii*.

There is another level to the Biblical allusion in the sword references in the first and last stanzas of 'Encyclica'. In Matthew 26:52, when Jesus is arrested, He says to one of His disciples who has drawn his sword, 'put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.'<sup>16</sup> By tradition the sword-bearer in question was St Peter. St Peter, considered the first Pope, was renowned for his impetuosity. Tiutchev may have been subtly pointing to the connection between the impetuous disciple and the

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<sup>13</sup> 'Encyclica' (1864), in *ibid.*, 132.

<sup>14</sup> W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (3 vols.), London: John Murray, 1876, II: 1152. Nemesis can also be pictured with other items indicating the same kind of purpose, such as a whip or scourge.

<sup>15</sup> Commentary, in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 496-97.

<sup>16</sup> Despite this, Peter's emblem is keys (i.e. the keys to heaven) and the phrase originally directed at Peter was used in Christian legend to apply to St Paul, one of whose symbols is the sword. Paul in his days as Saul had been a man of violence, and he was martyred by the sword. By contrast, Peter was crucified upside down. Nonetheless, the Biblical base of this allusion would appear to be more likely, given the context of the Papacy.

current-day Pope – impetuous, acting without the consent of the other ‘disciples’, taking authority on himself by the pronouncement of the Syllabus.

In the medieval period, swords continued to be understood as metaphors for authority and power. Representations of the swords were built on classical and Biblical allusions. Medieval theologians discussed the doctrine of two swords (which related to the right to rule and the division of the temporal and spiritual powers).<sup>17</sup> Pope Boniface VIII’s Papal Bull, *Unam Sanctam*, ‘notoriously claimed that “it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” He insisted that the Pope wielded both the spiritual and secular sword, but gave the secular sword to princes for the good of the Church.’ These claims were of course disputed between Church and state in the Middle Ages and since.<sup>18</sup> During medieval times, the Pope was originally intended to perform the role of a final court of appeal, but in fact the Pope became head of a developed judicial system.<sup>19</sup> This appears to have influenced Tiutchev’s understanding of the Pope’s role. He associated the papacy with the role of judgement and punishment, and for this the Pope will be in turn judged and punished. According to the second stanza, the day of judgement (‘дни Божьего суда’) are imminent.

Tiutchev suggests that the Papacy will perish as a result of the wielding of its power, the power of words. St Paul wrote that ‘the word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword’ (Hebrews 4:12). Words are associated with the concept of truth and right, and the Papacy does not have these concepts on its side. Tiutchev’s poem, referring to a specific pronouncement, implicitly refers back to centuries of papal history. The words of the papacy can be turned against it, as Europe criticizes the Pope, and Tiutchev’s poem itself demonstrates the power of words. He predicts that the papacy will perish as a result of its own words.

In ‘Gus na kostre’ papal authority has been opposed by Hus. In the second part of the poem, Tiutchev describes in more detail what Hus was dying for: justice, truth and freedom. The poet again uses the phrase ‘pravda Bozh’ia’, contrasted with the use of the word ‘lozh’’, which is emphatically linked back to Rome and shows one of the instruments by which papal authority was carried out. The reference to freedom is connected with the ‘Syllabus of Errors’. In ‘Encylica,’ Tiutchev had quoted the

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<sup>17</sup> A. Vauchez, et al., *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, trans. by A. Walford, Cambridge: James Clarke, 2000, II: 1400.

<sup>18</sup> Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

Papacy's pronouncement as 'Свобода совести есть бред!' He writes that Hus had struggled 'За все, за все, что бредом назвал Рим.' We cannot be certain that he intended this to mean that Hus struggled for freedom of conscience, but given that he died as a result of a lack of freedom of conscience in the society in which he lived, this is a convincing reading. The poet was clearly describing the events of the fifteenth century from the point of view of the nineteenth.

In 'Vatikanskaia godovshchina' the declaration of Papal Infallibility is an act of overreaching, the sin of Faust. The poem introduces the concept of the Man-god or superman who featured in Dostoevskii's works, 'О новом бого-человеке / Вдруг притча создалась'. The Man-god was linked with Caesar, thus we can note that when Tiutchev used the image of Caesar in his poems he was suggesting the same trope without specifying the term.<sup>20</sup> The third stanza suggests that the Pope obeyed another's will, not having the strength to resist, while the phrase 'жертва темных сил' hints at diabolic forces. The institution of the Papacy has claimed divine status a claim contrasted to the evident fallibility of the Pope. He becomes a Faust figure, tempted by the Devil and giving in to that temptation.

### **The Judgment of the Poet-Prophet**

Tiutchev's thought appears to carry a contradiction about figures of authority: he seemingly favoured Russian autocracy (in principle) while criticizing papal authority.<sup>21</sup> In his poems the Russian Christ was loosely painted in a way intended to inspire Russians with a new form of national consciousness, but although his Russian Christ is a significant image in Russian literature, the content of this image is insubstantial at best. His other political poems, especially the anti-Catholic poems, seem to have a more authoritative poetic voice, but these too have their flaws when examined more closely.

One of Tiutchev's tentative 'answers' to Papal authority and the dangers of Catholicism was to provide an illustration of how people have struggled against the Catholic Church in history, which in turn implies suggestions for the future. In the last part of the poem 'Gus na kostre', the poet linked Christ's blood with the Slavic blood of the Czechs, tying together sacrifice, martyrdom, Christ and the Slavic people. In fact, the Czechs were included in Tiutchev's definition of a 'Christ-bearing people' by their very opposition to Catholicism, rather than by the fact they were Orthodox. Tiutchev

<sup>20</sup> Florovskii, 'Tiutchev i Vladimir Solov'ev,' p. 353.

<sup>21</sup> Scanlan argues that Dostoevskii's appraisal of autocracy is positive. Scanlan, *Dostoyevsky the Thinker*, pp. 171-75.



emphasized the sufferings of those who opposed Catholicism by comparing them to Christ, representing the Czechs as true Christians, and the Catholics as some kind of pagan, heretic or diabolic executioners. Tiutchev's anti-Catholicism flowed into and mingled with a political programme.

Tiutchev's second answer to the problem of Papal authority is represented by the theme of punishment. Each of his anti-Catholic poems assumes that the Catholic Church has committed some 'sin' from the days of the Schism to the present; this sin could be the spreading of falsehood ('lozh'), the declaration of papal infallibility, usurpation of earthly powers, leading to the burning at the stake of Jan Hus, or to the spilling of blood ('krov'). These sins taken together constitute the results of wrongful assumption by the Church of authority over people.

Throughout the poems the concept of justice is problematic. In 'Encyclica', the reader is left uncertain as to precisely how the words of the Pope will lead to his downfall, and how 'just' that downfall is. Tiutchev implies in this poem that Europe's censure (or his own) somehow enacts God's judgement and punishment. It appears (especially in 'Svershaetsia zasluzhennaia kara...') that he felt that his own statement would cause the demise of the pope; his was potentially the hand of God (or the gods).

'Svershaetsia zasluzhennaia kara...' contains a particularly high concentration of words associated with justice ('sud', 'pravda'), punishment ('kara') and violent imagery ('udar', 'krov'), and the phrase 'Bozh'ia pravda' is repeated twice in close succession for added emphasis. In addition, the rhyme scheme underscores the words 'kara' and 'krov', and the poet is not afraid to repeat the same words and sounds in the three stanzas. Poetic devices all function together to emphasize the extreme anger of the poet, even vitriol, while the hiatus in the third line of each stanza adds an extra dramatic tension between the act committed and the hand of judgement punishing. Even though the punishment has allegedly already been exacted, judgement is, at the same time, a future certainty; as Tiutchev writes, 'свершится суд.'

Unlike the essays, this particular poem does not allocate a specific role to Russia or the Tsar in this drama, as the secular powers of Europe have already taken punishment into their hands. Future judgement may involve Russia, as in the essays, but such a hint is not as strongly developed as in the essays; anger replaces hope. While Tiutchev does not highlight his role in this poem by mentioning poetry or prophecy, the fact that he has previously frequently referred to the Church's usurpation of power, for

which it is now being punished, puts the poet tentatively in the role of judge or prophet, following the model of Old Testament prophets challenging kings.<sup>22</sup>

In ‘Vatikanskaia godovshchina,’ the penultimate stanza contains a questioning note of despair, but an attempt to repair it is made in the last stanza. The poem contains the motif of judgement, ‘Был день суда и осужденья, / Тот роковой, бесповоротный день.’ However, the judgement promised in the poem’s first line is not described in the poem, but only hinted at for the future. An antidote is required, but where is that antidote to be found?

The statements pronounced in the essays are made more persuasive by poetic devices, including imagery, allusions and language. Yet the poet’s voice introduces an ambivalent note to the poems. Tiutchev’s lyric voice appears uncertain about the concepts of Fate, Divine Justice and Mercy, and how these are enacted in the world. His poetry hovers between a classical conceptualisation of an avenging deity with its powers of violent revenge over mortals and his Russian Orthodox standpoint, in which a humble Russian Christ and a merciful God ought to have figured. Although the poet apparently fervently hopes for justice, there is some uncertainty as to how this will come about and his own role in relation to it. Tiutchev, the lyric poet, attacks the Pope’s declaration of infallibility not only because he did not agree with the concept, but also because he knew too well the fallibility of human nature. He appears to lack confidence in divine mercy. It is the lyric persona that introduces the small patches of ambivalence, confusion, uncertainty, sometimes sympathy, to each poem, and leaves the confident civil servant Tiutchev (of the essays) behind. Although the poet may have been trying to find an antidote, by casting himself in the role of the poet-prophet in practice he added to his verse certain flaws and points of ambivalence.

## Conclusion

This chapter and Chapter 2 have shown that Tiutchev’s place in the developing tradition of representations of Catholicism in Russian culture is complicated but far more pivotal than has previously been recognized. His writing on Catholicism painstakingly followed events in Europe through the century, providing a unique literary-journalistic record. After the Crimean War, the anger he feels over the problems in Russia and Europe and the insecurity of his position, is directed even more strongly against Catholicism, used as a scapegoat. His poems succeed in polemicizing against Catholicism, in re-presenting

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<sup>22</sup> Tiutchev turned against Tsar Nicholas after the Crimean War, writing an unpleasant epitaph against the dead Tsar, ‘Ne Bogu ty sluzhil, i ne Rossiii...’ (1855), in Tiutchev, *PSS*, II: 73, eg. see Dewey, *Mirror of the Soul*, pp. 355-56.

the content of the Slavophile polemics in a new, persuasive form. However, there is a lack of clarity or certainty in his poetry about what the real alternative to Catholicism is and about the poet's position in regard to this. In the end, he effectively conveys his anti-Catholic views, yet the paradox of his standpoint is also conveyed: Tiutchev had spent his professional life condemning in Catholicism many features that he had supported, by word or deed, in Russian or Orthodox imperialism.

Tiutchev was at heart a mystic poet of the lyric tradition, and this was how poets of the Silver Age would remember his work. As we will see below, they developed the lyric genre to approach Catholicism from completely different angles. Ivanov, for example, credits the lyric inheritance he received from Tiutchev, Fet and Solov'ev in his *Rimskii Dnevnik* (1944), a cycle of poetry which contains several meditations on the Catholic faith.<sup>23</sup> This is somehow both paradoxical and appropriate.

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<sup>23</sup> 'Tainik nochei, Tiutchev neznyi...' (24 October), from 'Rimskii dnevnik 1944 goda', in Viacheslav Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii v 4 tomakh*, ed. by D. V. Ivanov and O. Deschartes, Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1971, III: 632-33.

## Chapter 6: Fedor Dostoevskii

Fedor Dostoevskii is the Russian writer perhaps most known for his ‘anti-Catholic’ views. This chapter examines how his choice of form shaped the image of Catholicism in his novels and *Dnevnik pisatelja*, and how his works contributed to the development of it in Russian literary culture. As early as 1894, Vasilii Rozanov (1856-1919) drew attention to the Catholic theme in Dostoevskii’s work in his book *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F. M. Dostoevskogo*. He concentrated on the anti-Catholicism of Dostoevskii’s ‘Legenda’, as he termed it, and made reference to *Idiot* and *Dnevnik pisatelja*.<sup>1</sup> Much of subsequent Dostoevskii scholarship has touched on the writer’s attitudes to Catholicism, although comparatively few scholars have chosen to focus on this aspect of his oeuvre.<sup>2</sup>

Some important scholarship has helped to contextualize Dostoevskii. Hudspith has explored in detail the connections between Dostoevskii and the Slavophiles – an argument that will be further developed here.<sup>3</sup> A second important influence on Dostoevskii’s thought was the *pochvennichestvo* movement (native soil conservatism), which Dowler examined in his major study.<sup>4</sup> Dostoevskii was inspired and to some extent influenced by the thought of Chaadaev, Khomiakov, Kireevskii, Samarin, Grigor’ev, Solov’ev and other thinkers.<sup>5</sup> This thesis concentrates on his literary texts, which are examined here within the context of traditions of Russian anti-Catholicism.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter discusses Dostoevskii’s treatment of several themes: how the Jesuits were a starting-point for discussion of Roman Catholicism; the influence of Roman Catholicism on Europe; the Catholic Church in history; the image of the Pope

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<sup>1</sup> V. Rozanov, *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F. M. Dostoevskogo*, in *Sobranie sochinenii: Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 1996, pp. 65, 70, 71, 86, 105-111, n. 126, 127, 129.

<sup>2</sup> W. Lednicki, *Russia, Poland and the West. Essays in Literary and Cultural History*, London: Hutchinson, 1952, pp. 133-179; Dirscherl, *Dostoevsky*; Walicki, *Rosja*, pp. 120-50.

<sup>3</sup> While broadly agreeing with Hudspith’s idea I disagree with some of her arguments and aspects of her approach. However, her study is useful as an attempt to integrate Dostoevskii’s fiction with his non-fiction and is probably the best discussion of the topic of Dostoevskii and Slavophilism to date. S. Hudspith, *Dostoevskii and the Idea of Russianness: A New Perspective*, London: Routledge Curzon, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> W. Dowler, *Dostoevsky, Grigoriev and Native Soil Conservatism*, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> On Chaadaev and Dostoevskii, see R. Aizlewood, ‘To Europe and Back: Chaadaev and Dostoevskii,’ in *Convergence and Divergence: Russia and Eastern Europe into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by P. Duncan, London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, UCL, 2007, pp. 121-37, especially pp. 122-23. See also, Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, pp. 50-51. On Dostoevskii and Solov’ev see M. Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997. She also refers to Chaadaev, pp. 6-8.

<sup>6</sup> Dirscherl’s book provided a great deal of context for the tradition of anti-Catholicism in Russia, see Dirscherl, *Dostoevsky*, pp. 1-39. Its overview of Dostoevskii’s Catholicism refers to all his works but does not discuss them in great detail. Lednicki’s approach is more psychological, Lednicki, *Russia*, pp. 133-79. These scholars both attempt to answer the tendentious question of ‘why’ Dostoevskii was anti-Catholic, rather than ‘how,’ an approach which now seems rather out-dated, although still useful as a starting-point.

and papal authority. Lastly, the chapter will look at how the writer sought in his novels and other prose works to answer the questions that he thought Roman Catholicism raised.

### **Dostoevskii's Image of Catholicism**

#### ***Enter the Jesuit***

In Dostoevskii's *Idiot* (1869) the Jesuits are only briefly mentioned, but their role is provocative. Prince Myshkin once knew a man called Pavlishchev, and finds out that Pavlishchev had been converted to Catholicism by a Jesuit. Pavlishchev then became a Jesuit himself. This passage can be read as an attack on Ivan Gagarin (to whom Dostoevskii referred in his *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* of 1876):<sup>7</sup>

— Не с этим ли Павлищевым история вышла какая-то... странная... с аббатом... с аббатом... забыл с каким аббатом, только все тогда что-то рассказывали, — произнес, как бы припоминая, “сановник”.

— С аббатом Гуро, иезуитом, — напомнил Иван Петрович, — да-с, вот-с превосходнейшие-то люди наши и достойнейшие-то! Потому что всё-таки человек был родовой, с состоянием, камергер и если бы... продолжал служить... И вот бросает вдруг службу и всё, чтобы перейти в католицизм и стать иезуитом, *да еще чуть не открыто, с восторгом каким-то*. Право, кстати умер... да; тогда все говорили...

Князь был вне себя.

— Павлищев... Павлищев перешел в католицизм? Быть этого не может! — вскричал он в ужасе.

[...] они даже претензии по завещанию хотели выставить, и мне даже приходилось тогда прибегать к самым, то-есть, энергическим мерам... чтобы вразумить... потому что мастера дела! У-ди-вительные!<sup>8</sup>

Ivan Petrovich pointedly notes that those who converted were the best type of people, i.e. the upperclasses. He finds further problems with the fact that, once converted, Pavlishchev acts secretly. This suggests that he may have been involved in publicizing Catholicism, although this is not specified in the text (references to Gagarin's *La Russie* were previously banned from print and could still have been censored). Ivan mentions that (once again) the Jesuits were involved in some attempt to

<sup>7</sup> F. Dostoevskii, *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, June 1876, in F. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*, ed. by V. Bazanov et al. Leningrad: Nauka, 1974, XXIII: 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Idiot*, IV: 7, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, VIII: 450-51 [my italics].

obtain money from a will. Since the idea that Jesuits were driven by pecuniary interests was widespread at this time, it is not possible to be certain from where Dostoevskii derived this detail, but it may allude to Samarin's polemics and the *Monita privata* [Secret Instructions] discussed above. It is likely that Dostoevskii had read Samarin's polemics.<sup>9</sup> In Dostoevskii's novel the story comes to the reader as an anecdote within a dialogue. It is spoken by a character, not a narrator, and therefore appears vague, even elliptical. As in so many of Dostoevskii's novels, the idea can provoke comment, debate, reaction and counter-reaction. The passage effectively visualizes how a real person might have heard about Gagarin's conversion in Russia in the 1840s and 1850s (most likely through hearsay), and the type of reactions this could have elicited.

The response to Myshkin's initial comment by Ivan Petrovich is perhaps more revealing than the Prince's horror:

— Это всё от нашей, я думаю... усталости, — авторитетно промямлил старичок; — ну, и манера у них проповедывать... изящная, своя... и напугать умеют. Меня тоже в тридцать втором году, в Вене, напугали, уверяю вас; только я не поддался и убежал от них, ха-ха! Право от них убежал...

— Я слышала, что ты тогда, батюшка, с красавицей графиней Ливицкой из Вены в Париж убежал, свой пост бросил, а не от иезуита, — встала вдруг Белоконская.

— Ну, да ведь от иезуита же, всё-таки выходит, что от иезуита! — подхватил старичок, рассмеявшись при приятном воспоминании...<sup>10</sup>

In explaining the Jesuit influence, as though to apologize for Pavlishchev, the old man points out that there is some fault on the side of Russian Orthodoxy ('от нашей... усталости'). He claims that these Jesuits have a persuasive eloquence. The emphasis on their magnificence is bound to cause further worry to the reader. 'If they are so good, why are ours so bad?' The old man's remarks are challenging to the positive image of Russian Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century. The fear of the Jesuits implied by the old man's comments is, as in other texts such as Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*, associated with a fear of women and their influence. In this case, it undermines the fear of the Jesuits because it is slightly comical.

The story of Pavlishchev's conversion leads Myshkin to respond:

<sup>9</sup> Hudspith notes that Dostoevskii was reading the Slavophiles in *Den'* in the 1860s. Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, pp. 5, 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Idiot*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, VIII: 450.

— Вы вот дивитесь на Павлицева, вы всё приписываете его *сумасшествию*, или доброте, но это не так! [...] Отчего это, отчего разом такое исступление? [...] От того, что он отечество нашел, которое здесь просмотрел, и обрадовался; берег, землю нашел и бросился ее целовать! Не из одного ведь тщеславия, не всё ведь от одних скверных тщеславных чувств происходят русские атеисты и русские иезуиты, а и из боли духовной, из жажды духовной, из тоски по высшему делу, по крепкому берегу, по родине, в которую веровать перестали, потому что никогда ее и не знали!<sup>11</sup>

This comment refers to the idea that admiration of Catholicism could be linked with madness (one recalls here Chaadaev, of whom Dostoevskii was certainly well aware) or alternatively to the notion that conversion had its roots in an ignorance of Russia and its religion. It may imply that Myshkin partially agrees with his interlocutor that Russia needs to better educate her people.

The Prince's 'reply' to the conversion is lengthy, and goes far beyond a comment on the conversion itself, or on Jesuits, a fact that the narrator remarks on, 'Понять не могли отчего это вышло: не известие же о Павлицеве было причиной.'<sup>12</sup> Thus, in the text itself, Dostoevskii points out that the Jesuits were only a trigger for a more serious and lengthy discussion that dwelt on Catholicism and Russia's relationship to European ideas. Dostoevskii (like Tiutchev and Samarin) uses the Jesuit example to epitomize all that he dislikes about Catholicism, but particularly as a springboard for a whole set of arguments about what true Christianity should be:

— Павлицев был светлый ум и христианин, истинный христианин, — произнес вдруг князь, — как же мог он подчиниться вере... нехристианской?.. Католичество — всё равно что вера нехристианская! — прибавил он вдруг, засверкав глазами и смотря пред собой, как-то вообще обводя глазами всех вместе.

— Ну, это слишком, — пробормотал старичок и с удивлением поглядел на Ивана Федоровича.

— Как так это католичество вера нехристианская? — повернулся на стуле Иван Петрович; — а какая же?

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 452 [my italics].

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 453.

— Нехристианская вера, во-первых! — в чрезвычайном волнении и не в меру резко заговорил опять князь: — это во-первых, а во-вторых, католичество римское даже хуже самого атеизма, таково мое мнение.<sup>13</sup>

The remaining content of this tirade is similar to several other texts, including passages in *Besy*, *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* and the 'Legenda', a fact that leads some scholars to conclude that Myshkin's views may be identified with the author's.<sup>14</sup> However, during Myshkin's tirade, the narrator repeatedly notes that the Prince is behaving unusually and the other characters react badly to his comments.<sup>15</sup> This may suggest some narrative distance from the views expressed. Hudspith has argued that Myshkin's role as a *iurodivyi* (holy fool) means that his markedly strange behaviour at this time and 'the perplexity, disapproval and ridicule it invites from the listeners, including the narrator, paradoxically affirm it as a message of truth'.<sup>16</sup> The position of Myshkin in the text is far from straightforward. Whilst the question of whether Myshkin's views represent Dostoevskii's is not to be dismissed, we might as well ask if the views of Ivan Petrovich represent Dostoevskii's views. In fact the author represents a variety of views.

The Jesuits had provoked debate within Russia, even whilst being absent from Russian soil. Samarin had written about Gagarin as though he had died – exile, to a great extent, was treated as death.<sup>17</sup> Despite their absence from Russia, the Jesuits had laid down a challenge to representatives of Russian Orthodoxy and had 'disrupted' the activities of the Slavophiles. (After all, Khomiakov's main theological contributions were constructed as a reply to Western clergy.) Likewise, a Jesuit provokes a tirade and debate in the novel, even though he is absent from Russia and the novel, because he is in fact dead. In this novel, Russian Orthodox Christianity ought perhaps to be represented by Myshkin, but his response does not properly meet that challenge, as he does little to explain the positive attributes of Orthodoxy.

Some read Myshkin's tirade as representative of Dostoevskii's view of Russian Orthodoxy and its opposition to Catholicism and atheism as it appears in other texts. However, this passage in *Idiot* can be differentiated both from the *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* and the 'Legenda', not only because of its content and its genre, but because of how it is framed within the novel, especially the use of 'comment'. Narration and framing constitute a very important feature of Dostoevskii's work.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 450-51.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 160, Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 126.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 449-53.

<sup>16</sup> Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> Hence Pecherin's title for his *Apologia pro vita mea* – 'Zamogil'nye zapiski.'



The passage does not just provide a forum to project the views of the Slavophiles or Dostoevskii, but a commentary on them, a meta-debate. Triggered by the story of the Jesuits and the idea of a conversion, the text is an illustration or echo of the debates that were taking place in Russian salons in the 1840s and 1850s and in the journals of the 1850s and 1860s. It represents many aspects of the whole debate on Catholicism within Russian culture. If we understand it in this way, it becomes far less important to establish whether Myshkin's views can be identified with Dostoevskii's. Dostoevskii provides a literary space for debate.

An outburst of a few words cannot prove to those around Myshkin (and clearly does not do so) that Russian Orthodoxy is true Christianity, in the same way that Khomiakov and Samarin's attempts at polemics, had inadequately and only partially answered the ideas of the Russian Jesuits, *because of their form*. The outburst does not seem to move the plot forward. However, it echoes a tension in Dostoevskii's works between the value of acts of faith and words. Here the need to account for one's religious opinions before others (under pressure) is not a wholesome opportunity for a profound *profession de foi*, but can instead make that person look strange and undermine the way that person's faith is seen by others. Rather, it is by deeds that an Orthodox Christian shows his true worth, with an act of faith.<sup>18</sup>

In novels such as this, the Jesuits appear to be useful as background characters who stand in the shadows. This role may arise from the position of the Jesuit at the centre of Aksakov's and Samarin's conspiracy theories about Catholicism in the 1860s. However, while they do not move the plot forward, they provoke debate and enable Dostoevskii to create a new literary space within which different reactions to Jesuits and Catholicism can be explored. This new space is far more open and consequently ambivalent than the monologic genre of polemics.

### ***The Catholic Church in Europe***

Scholarship on Dostoevskii has surveyed the author's attitude to the influence of Europe and its roots in Catholicism.<sup>19</sup> He records the rising threat created by industrialization and its effects on society, and particularly by socialism. At least from the 1860s when he travelled to Europe, he represented Catholicism, rationalism, capitalism,

<sup>18</sup> Hudspith is among those who suggest that Dostoevskii's works suggest a failure of words, but this has not been connected to the polemics. Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 137

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Aizlewood, 'To Europe and Back', pp. 121-37. Lednicki, *Russia Poland and the West*, esp. pp. 160, 178. K. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*, trans. by M. Minihan, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 228-35. Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p. 542.

individualism, socialism and atheism as inter-related ideologies. He took this anti-European view to a greater extreme than his predecessors – Khomiakov had, after all, been an Anglophile, while Tiutchev had enjoyed his time in Italy and Germany. Dostoevskii's *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniakh* (1863) presents a very negative portrait of Europe, in which it becomes apparent that Europe is a type of Babylon, probably beyond redemption.<sup>20</sup> Aizlewood writes that Dostoevskii makes a prediction of a 'Eurocentric apocalypse' and notes that 'his exposure of the false moral foundations of French and European society leads into an outline of the ideal society of selfless brotherhood, to be found by implication in Russia.'<sup>21</sup>

Dostoevskii's *Zimnie zametki* contains an interesting passage on Catholicism. The narrator records that he met a woman in London who handed him a piece of paper in an attempt to evangelize him. On the piece of paper was written in French 'Crois-tu cela? [...] Аз есмь воскресенье и живот.'<sup>22</sup> The narrator then goes on to explain: 'Мне растолковали потом, что это католическая пропаганда, шныряющая всюду, упорная, неустанная.'<sup>23</sup> He uses the explanation given to him by an anonymous source as the basis for an attack on Catholicism.

The vignette is intriguing in terms of content and its framing in the text.<sup>24</sup> Both of the phrases on the piece of paper are taken from John 11: 25-26, a fragment from the same passage that Sonia Marmeladova reads to Raskolnikov in *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (1866), in which Jesus meets Martha and asks for her statement of faith before he raises Lazarus. Both Sonia and the London woman remain silent, apart from giving over the words from the Bible. Both are acting in an attempt to evangelize, but the meanings of the two stories are intended to be different.

In *Zimnie zametki* the evangelising activity is negatively framed, whereas in the novel Sonia's evangelising of Raskolnikov in a similar way is framed very positively. Sonia's actions are selfless, self-sacrificing, kenotic. By contrast, in *Zimnie zametki* the anecdote is explained differently. Dostoevskii's 'source' has informed him that the Catholic Church converts poor families by feeding them. The woman, once converted by this means, is then engaged in 'propaganda' activity. The idea that the Catholic Church engaged in social work fits into the picture of nineteenth-century Britain,

<sup>20</sup> *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniakh*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, V: 69.

<sup>21</sup> Aizlewood, 'To Europe and Back,' pp. 133, 126.

<sup>22</sup> *Zimnie zametki*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, V: 73. The author does not explain why, since he is in London, the note is in French. Possibly, the reason for the note being in French is that the propaganda was aimed at tourists who were assumed to know French.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> This episode is followed by criticism of Anglicanism.

although the level of cynicism that Dostoevskii attributes to it seems unwarranted and unproved. As for the evangelization, although we cannot be certain that Catholics were not handing out Biblical quotations on London streets, it seems unlikely. Frank has suggested that what Dostoevskii thought was Catholic activity was actually that of a Salvation Army volunteer, but ‘whether accurate or not, Dostoevsky seized on this information to nourish his anti-Catholic prejudices.’<sup>25</sup> As Hudspith has noted, this passage contains the kernel of the later argument in the ‘Legenda’ that the Catholic Church provides ‘bread’ to win followers.<sup>26</sup> The fact that the reader knows that Dostoevskii is writing from ‘impressions’ and that he will not identify the source of his information helps the reader know that the account is based on a subjective opinion. The use of a real experience related in first-person narrative suggest that the author is trying to convince the reader of the truth of his opinion by providing ‘evidence’. The combined impression is, at best, confusing.

Dostoevskii takes this impression and turns it into an argument against the Catholic Church in Europe. The text chooses to criticize Catholic social activism by understanding it as a form of bribery, which is a question of motive rather than action. Although *Zimnie zametki* is presented as impressions, rather than fully formed arguments, it is not difficult to find in it the germ of the anti-Catholic thrust of Dostoevskii’s later texts. He wrote of a Europe that was dying and rotten (to the core), and of a Catholic Church that was cynical and determined to use any ends to gain earthly powers.

In *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (1876-1881), Dostoevskii extended his pen to cover analysis of current events in Europe. The author of the *Dnevnik* argued that Europe had been divided between Roman (later Catholic) and German (later Protestant) ideas since the time of the Roman Empire.<sup>27</sup> This theory draws on the earlier connection made by the Slavophiles between Protestantism and individualism and its protest against the Catholic Church’s authority. According to the *Dnevnik*, the Catholic Church intervened in the political affairs of Europe in numerous ways, including in Poland.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly, the *Dnevnik's* ready answer to this in 1877 was the advent of a New Poland to be taken under the wing of the Russian Empire, evidence of Dostoevskii’s Pan-Slavist views:

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<sup>25</sup> J. Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865*, Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1986, p. 188, cited in Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 52.

<sup>26</sup> Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, January 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, October 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 57-59.

Есть Новая Польша, Польша, *освобожденная царем, Польша возрождающаяся* и которая, несомненно, может ожидать впереди, в будущем, равной судьбы со всяким славянским племенем, когда славянство освободится и воскреснет в Европе. Но Старой Польши никогда не будет, потому что ужиться с Россией она не может. Ее идеал — стать на месте России в славянском мире.<sup>29</sup>

There is an element of competitiveness or threat that shaped the relationship between Russia and Poland. Poland was a crucial buffer state between Russia and states such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and France. This meant that the perception that the Catholic Church had been and was still a controlling force in Poland helped shape opinions on Poland and vice versa.

Dostoevskii's *Dnevnik* is a prime example of a Russian writer's preoccupation with European affairs, following in the tradition of Tiutchev's memoranda but reaching a much wider audience. No other writer seemed to perceive this threat as seriously as Dostoevskii. In the last issues of the *Dnevnik* for 1877, the writer managed to work his anti-Catholicism to fever pitch by not just implying, but repeatedly stating that there was a Catholic conspiracy ('zagovor') and Catholic 'anti-Russian league' in Europe.<sup>30</sup> Journalistic genres (to which the *Dnevnik* at least partially belongs) frequently seek to provide commentary but rarely attempt neutrality in doing so; for readers to continue to subscribe to his journal, Dostoevskii needed to maintain their interest – if this meant playing on their fears, then so be it.<sup>31</sup>

### ***The Church in History***

The Catholic Church's involvement in society was evident in *Zimnie zametki*, but *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* (1876-1881), mainly a work of journalism, includes many overt references to Catholicism. Overwhelmingly, these references occur as a result of a specific recent event on which Dostoevskii is commenting. Like Tiutchev, he moves from particular commentary to much broader generalisation. His use of the phrase 'Catholic idea' is revealing of how Catholicism was used as a construct, rather than a

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 59 [my italics].

<sup>30</sup> Dostoevskii, *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, September 1877, in Dostoevskii, PSS, XXVI: 11, October 1877, in ibid., pp. 54-57, November 1877, in ibid., p. 90.

<sup>31</sup> For more on the genre of this work, see G. Morson, The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevskii's Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

simple, verifiable reality.<sup>32</sup> He differentiates some individual Catholics from this Catholic idea and his image of the Catholic Church.<sup>33</sup>

In the late 1870s the narrator of the *Dnevnik* was agitated by rumours of the Pope's imminent demise and the potential consequences of this for Europe.<sup>34</sup> (Pius IX eventually died in 1878, and was succeeded by Leo XIII.) Dostoevskii was incensed by the fact that the Pope had supposedly sided with the Turks in the war against Russia.<sup>35</sup> This added fuel to his PanSlavist messianic posturing in the *Dnevnik* and helped feed a vitriolic anti-Catholicism, similar to that of Tiutchev in the 1860s and 1870s.

The *Dnevnik's* author interpreted contemporary affairs but, like many journalists, sought to make predictions for the future arising from his observations. His ideas on socialism are a case in point. He wrote that socialism emerges from and is closely tied to Catholicism.<sup>36</sup> Socialism and Catholicism were seen as a past, present and future threat:

Социализм есть сила грядущая для всей западной Европы, и если папство когда-нибудь будет покинуто и отброшено правительствами мира сего, то весьма и весьма может случиться, что оно бросится в объятия социализма и соединится с ним воедино. Папа выйдет ко всем нищим пеш и бос и скажет, что всё, чему они учат и чего хотят, давно уже есть в Евангелии, что до сих пор лишь время не наступало им про это узнать, а теперь наступило, и что он, папа, отдаёт им Христа и верит в муравейник.<sup>37</sup>

Dostoevskii was working from a premise that Catholicism (like socialism) seeks active social involvement (as he had tried to explain in *Zimnie zametki*). As in that text, Dostoevskii attributed cynical motives to the representatives of the Catholic Church. The image of the Pope he created in this extract would fit well with that of Tiutchev's poems and his own later 'Legenda'. Similar ideas about the Catholic Church's involvement in society would later be discussed in the 'Legenda', especially in the use of the Temptations in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-14, Luke 4:1-14). For Dostoevskii, both socialism and Catholicism echoed the Devil's offer of bread to the fasting Jesus.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Dostoevskii, *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, January 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 6.

<sup>33</sup> March 1876, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXII: 88.

<sup>34</sup> September 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> May/June 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 124.

<sup>36</sup> November 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 89.

<sup>37</sup> May/June 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 160.

<sup>38</sup> 'Legenda', in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV: 230-31.

In around 1870 the Pope lost the last vestiges of the once great papal lands, and it was at this time that the doctrine of infallibility was declared.<sup>39</sup> Since the *Dnevnik* was written in the years following the Vatican Council, there is no immediate response to the declaration of papal infallibility, but several references to the concept are included in Dostoevskii's discussion of the papacy.<sup>40</sup> In the *Dnevnik*, the temporal powers of the Pope were connected to this doctrine:

Провозгласив как догмат, «что христианство на земле удержаться не может без земного владения папы», оно тем самым провозгласило Христа нового, на прежнего не похожего, прельстившегося на третье дьяволово искушение, на царства земные: «Всё сие отдам тебе, поклонися мне!» О, я слышал горячие возражения на эту мысль; мне возражали, что вера и образ Христов и поныне продолжают еще жить в сердцах множества католиков во всей прежней истине и во всей чистоте. Это несомненно так, но главный источник замутился и отравлен безвозвратно.<sup>41</sup>

This text contains the phrase 'Он непогрешим', revealing a misunderstanding of papal infallibility. Rather than understanding that the doctrine actually applied to specific pronouncements, Dostoevskii understands it to apply to everything the Pope says and does. He admits that some Catholics are still Christian, but counteracts this by suggesting that the source of their religion is 'poisoned', likening Christian religion to a stream of water from a pure source. For the writer, the Pope is the dominating force in its religion, and therefore the faults of the Pope (the poison) affect all Catholics and no cure is possible.

In the *Dnevnik*, the writer connects his analysis of the Pope's involvement in European politics with the suggestion that the papacy has always desired earthly kingdoms – the 'third temptation'. The third temptation was identified with the Church's involvement in society (i.e. its activities in contemporary Europe and in history) and this was intrinsically associated with the use of authority to exert influence over temporal affairs. Thus a Gordian knot was tied between papal authority and the Church's involvement in history.

Despite the similarities in content, theme, tropes and language, the 'Legenda' (1881) is very different from the *Dnevnik* in other respects. In Dostoevskii's last novel, the narrator of the 'Legenda', Ivan Karamazov, distances the events of his tale from

<sup>39</sup> The current status of the Vatican as a City-State came about as a result of the Lateran Treaty in 1929.

<sup>40</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, May/June 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 124,158, and March 1876, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXII: 89.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

contemporary Russia (and Europe) in both time and place. The historical period in which the story is set is underlined by its narrator at the beginning ('Видишь, действие у меня происходит в шестнадцатом столетии'), then again when he adds 'Действие у меня в Испании, в Севилье, в самое страшное время инквизиции...'<sup>42</sup> The narration places the events in a time when the Catholic Church's powers were far stronger than they were at the time when the novel was written.

The story is set in a time and space 'not here, not now'. Ivan placed the story in the farthest extreme of Western Europe in a historically Catholic country. Russians rarely visited Seville. The 'Legenda' contains details that draw for the reader a picture of sixteenth-century Seville. These include the reference to the smell of lemons, the description of the Inquisitor's garb, his position on the steps of the Cathedral, and so on.<sup>43</sup>

Schiller's *Don Carlos* (also an opera by Giuseppe Verdi) influenced Dostoevskii's choice of Seville as a location and the form of the Inquisitor story.<sup>44</sup> Yet it is not surprising that Dostoevskii should choose the Inquisition to provide a backdrop for his story, because it had already been firmly established in the list of the Catholic Church's wrongdoings in the works of Chaadaev, Gogol', and the Slavophiles.<sup>45</sup> Dostoevskii's novel gives the reader a powerful evocation of the Inquisition in Russian literature.<sup>46</sup> Ivan's *poema* echoes the story of Hus being burnt at the stake in Tiutchev's poem. Here, the scope of such punishments is widened, counting in their hundreds, while the sense of fear pervading the story, especially terror of the figure of the Inquisitor, evokes the awe felt by Christians throughout history in the face of the Church's authority. The historical setting is primarily designed to provide fuel for the fire of the anti-Catholicism of his text.

### ***The Pope***

Tiutchev and Dostoevskii share a common body of images and specific words. The majority of the images derive from the idea that Roman Catholicism is an extension of

<sup>42</sup> 'Legenda', in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV: 224, 226.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226, 227. Seville is certainly famous for its citrus fruit trees. This is a quotation from Pushkin's *Kamennyi gost'* (1835) which in turn was based on the Don Juan legend and influenced by Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

<sup>44</sup> V. Terras, *A Karamazov Companion: Commentary on the Genesis, Language and Style of Dostoevsky's Novel*, Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981, p. 16.

<sup>45</sup> Chaadaev, 'Apologie d'un fou', in Chaadaev, *PSS*, I: 296; Kireevskii, 'V otvet A.S. Khomiakovu' (1838), in Kireevskii, *PSS*, I: 112; Gogol', 'O srednikh vekakh' (1835), from *Arabeski*, in Gogol', *PSS*, VIII: 23-34.

<sup>46</sup> Though not the first, it is probably the best to date, and certainly the most well-known. Terras points out that another influence on Dostoevskii may have been A. Maikov's epic poem 'The Queen's Confession: A Legend about the Spanish Inquisition,' published in *Vremia*, 1861, No. 1. Terras, *A Karamazov Companion*, p. 230.

the Roman Empire, which carried with it associated images. It is therefore difficult to be certain of the extent of Tiutchev's influence, although Dostoevskii's regular quotations from Tiutchev's poems certainly indicate that the poet influenced the novelist.

As Myshkin explains in *Idiot*:

По-моему, римский католицизм даже и не вера, а решительно продолжение Западной Римской империи, и в нем всё подчинено этой мысли, начиная с веры. Папа захватил землю, земной престол и взял меч; с тех пор всё так и идет, только к мечу прибавили ложь, пронырство, обман, фанатизм, суеверие, злодейство, играли самыми святыми, правдивыми, простодушными, пламенными чувствами народа, всё, всё променяли за деньги, за низкую земную власть.<sup>47</sup>

Myshkin's speech uses the image of the sword. This is followed by falsehood through the word – the modern evolution of the sword, which is somehow (seemingly) worse. The reference in this particular extract to money may partially arise out of the fact that in the original context Myshkin's speech is provoked by the story of Pavlishchev and the Jesuits and their interest in a share of an inheritance.

In the *Dnevnik* of March 1876, the narrator (assuming that the first-person voice represents the Pope) uses the same overarching metaphor of the Roman Empire:

«Знайте же, что я всегда считал себя владыкой всего мира и всех царей земных, и не духовным только, а земным, настоящим их господином, властителем и императором. Это я – царь над царями и господин над господствующими, и мне одному принадлежат на земле судьбы, времена и сроки; и вот я всемирно объявляю это теперь в догмате моей непогрешимости».

Нет, тут сила; это величаво, а не смешно; это – воскрешение древней римской идеи всемирного владычества и единения, которая никогда и не умирала в римском католичестве; это Рим Юлиана Отступника, но не побежденного, а как бы победившего Христа в новой и последней битве. Таким образом *продажа* истинного Христа за царства земные совершилась.<sup>48</sup>

The reference to Ancient Rome is explicit, as is the link with papal infallibility. Julian the Apostate was a Roman Emperor who tried to return the Empire to paganism. It is unclear from where the reference to a 'продажа' may arise. It could refer to Judas,

<sup>47</sup> *Idiot*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, VIII: 450 [my italics].

<sup>48</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, March 1876, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXII: 89. The reference to eight centuries relates to the time that has passed since the Schism.



who ‘sold’ Christ, but likely alludes to the idea of indulgences, referred to by Khomiakov.<sup>49</sup>

The Inquisitor, like Myshkin and his predecessor in the *Dnevnik*, admits the same theory that Catholicism is a continuation of the Roman Empire:

*Мы не с тобой, а с ним, вот наша тайна! Мы давно уже не с тобою, а с ним, уже восемь веков. Ровно восемь веков назад как мы взяли от него то, что ты с негодованием отверг, тот последний дар, который он предлагал тебе, показав тебе все царства земные; мы взяли от него Рим и меч Кесаря и объявили лишь себя царями земными, царями едиными, хотя и донныне не успели еще привести наше дело к полному окончанию.*<sup>50</sup>

In the last of these extracts ‘Caesar’ is named and the Pope is revealed as an Emperor over his Roman Empire. The first phrase of this quotation suggests that the Catholic Church has followed the Devil. (‘You’ addresses Christ, and ‘him’ refers to the Devil of the Temptations in the Wilderness.)

In the *Dnevnik*, Dostoevskii emphasizes the association of the Catholic Church with violence and even claims that, like an Empire, it needed an army:

Революционеры же иезуиты не могут действовать законно, а именно необычайно. Эта черная армия стоит вне человечества, вне гражданства, вне цивилизации и исходит вся из одной себя. Это *status in statu*, эта армия папы, ей надо лишь торжества одной своей идеи, – а затем пусть гибнет всё, что на пути ей мешает, пусть гибнут и вянут все остальные силы, пусть умирает всё не согласное с ними - цивилизация, общество, наука!<sup>51</sup>

This comment alludes to the Jesuits’ involvement with Poland and the False Dmitrii in the Time of Troubles and tallies with similar references in Samarin’s essays.<sup>52</sup> The extract echoes Tiutchev’s turn towards increasing interest in the Pope as the figurehead of Catholicism, because the *Dnevnik* effectively attaches the fear of the Jesuits to fear of the Pope.

One of the paradoxes of the image of the Pope as a sword-wielding Caesar was that the temporal powers of the Papacy during this period were in decline and, although not completely inconsequential, much less than that of many other states. Even though the last religious wars between Russia and Catholic powers had taken place centuries previously, writers saw the war in Crimea as a religious war, and the Pope’s

<sup>49</sup> Khomiakov, ‘Quelques mots,’ (1853), in *L’Eglise Latine*, pp. 38-39 (quoted in Chapter 5 above).

<sup>50</sup> ‘Legenda,’ in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV: 234 [my italics].

<sup>51</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel’ia*, May/June 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXV: 162.

<sup>52</sup> Samarin, ‘Iezuity’ p. 287. See also, *ibid.*, p. 123.

‘interference’ in the Russo-Turkish war as a sign that Catholicism’s influence was still leading to violence. In fact, one of the most powerful authorities on earth was, in reality, the Russian Emperor. The only power the Pope possessed at this time was that of influence, via his words. However, in their view, his words could still be powerful.

Another prevalent image for the Pope was ‘High Priest’. In the ‘Legenda’, Ivan quotes a poem by the nineteenth-century Russian poet, Aleksandr Polezhaev ‘В великолепных автодафе / Сжигали злых еретиков.’<sup>53</sup> In this poem Polezhaev refers to the Inquisitor as Caiaphas in the line preceding this quotation. Thus, the author may draw a line between the High Priest who led the trial for the execution of Christ and the Inquisitor. During the Inquisition, the religious authorities sentenced heretics and handed them over to secular authorities for imprisonment, just as in Jesus’s day the High Priest and Sanhedrin had judged Jesus, but sent him to Pilate for final sentencing. Despite Alesha’s disagreements with aspects of the content of Ivan’s speech, he recycles the title of High Priest and the idea of the Jesuits as a papal army in his response, as well as other aspects of the Catholic Church’s wrongdoings.<sup>54</sup> Alesha’s argument is with the motivations behind their acts, not with what has occurred.

The Pope is imagined as both Caesar and High Priest. This emphasizes the image of the Catholic Church as a theocracy gone wrong, where religion and state power are intermeshed, but with terrible consequences. The Pope is a frighteningly powerful and authoritarian figure, connected with great violence and spilling of blood. As Dostoevskii puts it in his *Dnevnik*, ‘Разумеется, католичество даже выгодно будет резня, кровь, грабеж и хотя бы даже *антропофагия*.’<sup>55</sup> The author of the *Dnevnik*’s anti-Catholic rhetoric is not shy of over-statement and his rhetoric can at times be similar to the language used in anti-Semitism.

Finally, in Dostoevskii's works, the Pope is equated with the Antichrist or the Devil. The connection between Catholicism and the Devil and the image of the Pope as Antichrist is not new in Russian culture or European culture.<sup>56</sup> In Dostoevskii this association is organically connected to his idea of the Catholic Church as the Antichurch, which can be traced back to Slavophile thought from the 1830s. The

<sup>53</sup> Terras, *A Karamazov Companion*, p. 229. See, A. Polezhaev, ‘Koriolan’ (1834), in A. Polezhaev, *Sochineniia*, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1955, p. 319.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Legenda’, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV: 237.

<sup>55</sup> *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, November 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 90. Anthropophagy is the consumption of human flesh or blood, i.e. cannibalism [my italics].

<sup>56</sup> For some potential sources on the Pope as Antichrist, see C. G de Michelis, ‘L'Antéchrist dans la culture russe, et l'idée protestante du “Pape-antéchrist”’ *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique*, Vol. 29, No. 3/4, (Jul. - Dec., 1988), pp. 303-315. For more on the Antichrist in Russian culture, see Platt, ‘Antichrist enthroned,’ pp. 87-124.

Catholic Church had been presented as a false version of the true Church of Christ, and it followed that the head of such an Antichurch would necessarily be an Antichrist. We find an allusion to the Antichrist in Dostoevskii's earlier text, *Idiot*, as Myshkin says, (referring to Catholicism) 'Он антихриста проповедует.'<sup>57</sup> The image of the Pope as Antichrist and Devil as developed in the 'Legenda' is the most powerful evocation of this idea in Russian literature. Once the Catholic Church had been depicted as the reign of the Antichrist and therefore as the work of the Devil, the high point of anti-Catholicism in Russian literature had been reached.

### **Dostoevskii's Answer to Catholicism**

#### ***Church and Antichurch***

Dostoevskii's novel *Brat'ia Karamazovy* (1881) was written during the period of his friendship with the philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev and his family.<sup>58</sup> Both men apparently discussed ideas about theocracy at this time and went on to develop them in their respective works. Dostoevskii's last novel contains a discussion about theocracy, which develops as a debate between several characters.<sup>59</sup> The principal argument for theocracy was explained by Ivan's summary of his article. One of the other speakers (Father Iosif) argues that Christ's 'My Kingdom is not of this world' meant that the Church could not work towards bringing the Kingdom of God about on Earth, making it purely an ideal. However, Father Paisii dismisses this with an emphatic rebuttal.<sup>60</sup> The speaker posits a difference between Christ's kingdom on this earth, which is represented by His Church, and his heavenly kingdom, only obtainable to people after death. Kostalevsky has averred that the argument for theocracy in this passage echoes Solov'ev's ideas.<sup>61</sup> Further, the character Miusov makes several criticisms. He calls the idea of theocracy 'ultramontane', which links it to Catholicism and especially the Pope. Later, he claims that theocracy is 'Прекрасная утопическая мечта об исчезновении войн, дипломатов, банков и проч. Что-то даже похожее на социализм.'<sup>62</sup> Finally, Miusov again returns to the idea that theocracy is ultramontane, but is again remonstrated against by Father Paisii:

<sup>57</sup> *Idiot*, in Dostoevskii, PSS, VIII: 450.

<sup>58</sup> Kostalevsky, Dostoevsky and Soloviev, pp. 49-80, 66.

<sup>59</sup> *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, in Dostoevskii, PSS, XIV: 55-63.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>61</sup> Kostalevsky, Dostoevsky and Soloviev, pp. 120-21.

<sup>62</sup> *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, in Dostoevskii, PSS, XIV: 58 [my italics].

Да что же это в самом деле такое? — воскликнул Миусов, как бы вдруг прорвавшись: — устраняется на земле государство, а церковь возводится на степень государства! Это не то что *ультрамонтанство*, это *архипультрамонтанство*! Это папе Григорию Седьмому не мерещилось!

Совершенно обратное изволите понимать! — строго проговорил отец Паисий,— не церковь обращается в государство, поймите это. *То Рим и его мечта. То третье диаволово искушение!* А напротив, государство обращается в церковь, восходит до церкви и становится церковью на всей земле, — что совершенно уже противоположно и ультрамонтанству, и Риму, и вашему толкованию, и есть лишь великое предназначение православия на земле. От Востока звезда сия воссияет.<sup>63</sup>

According to Duffy, Pope Gregory VII's pontificate (1073-1085) 'represents the highest point of papal aspiration to dominion over the secular world.'<sup>64</sup> Miusov's hyperbole implies that the type of theocracy suggested is worse than anything achieved by the popes in history. Ivan is therefore playing Devil's Advocate. Father Paisii suggests here that while Catholicism seeks earthly powers, true theocracy should consist in the State following religious aims, although it is not clear from his comments how this would take place.

The scene itself must not be taken out of context. The Devil's 'Third Temptation' is again mentioned here, and the references to Catholicism and Ivan's interest in theocracy link it to the 'Legenda'. This connection to Dostoevskii's other texts might suggest that the author is critical of theocracy. Kostalevsky has called Ivan's 'Legenda' an example of a 'corrupted theocracy'.<sup>65</sup> Walicki calls it 'Królestwo Boże bez Boga' [A Kingdom of God without God].<sup>66</sup> Despite the historical nature of the story, the novelist presents in Ivan's 'Legenda' a dystopian version of a theocratic ideal. Dystopias can present satirical portraits of current or historical regimes, and the Catholic aspect in the 'Legenda' does this. Dystopias can move the reader towards looking for, or making, an attempt to build their opposite.

The novel provides cautionary criticism, but it does not follow from this that its author disagreed with theocracy in principle; rather it articulates a whole debate on the idea of theocracy.<sup>67</sup> Dostoevskii uses the Catholic Church as the negative 'other' in his

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-62 [my italics].

<sup>64</sup> Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, p. 127, see also pp. 121-128.

<sup>65</sup> Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev*, p. 128.

<sup>66</sup> Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 137.

<sup>67</sup> Some scholars have concluded that Dostoevskii did believe that the Kingdom of God should be built on earth, eg. Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 144. Scanlan sees evidence of both strains, but argues that the earthly Kingdom of God dominates

novel to show how some attempts at theocracy do not work, with the Orthodox Church posited ideally as the opposite of the Catholic Church, but not practically – it is given no active role. In doing so, the novel raises questions which Dostoevskii was unable to answer about the role of the Orthodox Church in society, but which later thinkers would tackle.

### *Sobornost'*

In Russian culture, as in Christian theology more generally, the idea of the Kingdom of God was connected to the *Eschaton* or *parousia* that develops in part from Jesus's phrase 'my kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). This was paraphrased in the debate on church and state in *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, although such an idea is apparent elsewhere in Dostoevskii's work.<sup>68</sup> Russian messianism might at times be closely identified with millenarianism. Consequently, depictions of how the Kingdom of God could be enacted became pictures of the coming Apocalypse, rather than positive constructions of how the Orthodox Church should work 'in the real world.' As Wachtel argues (in relation to Dostoevskii), 'if the meaning of history is the harmonious union of all humankind, and if the Russian Orthodox ideal (which is about to be realized) is identical to it, then it follows that history is about to come to an end.'<sup>69</sup>

The implied author of texts such as *Zimnie zametki* and the *Dnevnik* referred to the principle of love on which Russian Christianity and the Kingdom of God could or should be built.<sup>70</sup> In *Idiot* Myshkin states in his tirade 'Надо, чтобы воссиял в отпор Западу наш Христос, которого мы сохранили и которого они и не знали!'<sup>71</sup> This comment provides the reader with the glimpse of an idea about how Russian Orthodoxy has the answer to the problems that Catholicism and Europe had come to represent for Dostoevskii.

However, Dostoevskii does not construct a theory of how theocracy would work if the contemporary Orthodox Church as an institution were to have more power, that is, were it to be socially active and involved. There are hints of active Orthodoxy in the fact that Alesha is sent out to the world from the monastery, but the reader never sees

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towards the end of Dostoevskii's life, see, Scanlan, *Dostoyevsky The Thinker*, Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2002, pp. 190-94.

<sup>68</sup> Scanlan, *Dostoyevsky the Thinker*, p. 190.

<sup>69</sup> A. Wachtel, *An Obsession with History: Russian Writers Confront the Past*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> *Zimnie zametki*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, V: 79-80; *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, November 1877, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 81.

<sup>71</sup> *Idiot*, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, VIII: 451.

the fruition of this idea. Just as Gogol's works never emerged from his Hell to depict his Heaven, so did Dostoevskii's work stop in Purgatory as a result of his death after the first two parts of *Brat'ia Karamazovy*.

Dostoevskii's novels contain many characters whose Christian love and *sobornost'* should combat the influence of Catholicism and European values.<sup>72</sup> Without the kernel of this idea at the centre of his works they would be some of the most negative portrayals of humanity ever written. Although, seemingly, Dostoevskii was certain that the Catholic Church had overstepped the line between spiritual and earthly authority, his work contains no completed picture of how the Orthodox Church should operate in the world. The project of a world where love could bind people together into a perfect society, a theocracy of the Christian heart, was only envisioned, never fully realized.

### Conclusion

Chaadaev had formulated the concept of 'universality' through his idea of Europe and Catholicism's influence. Russian Catholics often felt that the finest way of being both Russian and universal was by becoming Catholic. Dostoevskii's 'Pushkin Speech' (1880), later published in the *Dnevnik*, which can be read as a reply to Chaadaev's ideas expounded his theory of Russian 'universalism'.<sup>73</sup> The fact that Dostoevskii's 'universalism' was 'national' has confounded many scholars, but although at first sight it seems paradoxical, other scholars have argued that it is not.<sup>74</sup> Kostalevsky phrased Dostoevskii's position thus: 'ecumenicity, as a Christian quality, becomes a purely Russian quality.'<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, it is problematic, particularly where it meets with the alternative ecumenical model of universalism hinted at by Chaadaev, polemicized for by Gagarin, and better represented (in its fullest form) by Solov'ev and later Ivanov.

One point clearly differentiates Dostoevskii from Chaadaev: Dostoevskii's speech extols his idea of universalism almost solely through cultural, indeed, literary terms. Dostoevskii posits Pushkin's superiority over other European writers, which moves his argument towards the idea that Russia can lead the world because of the

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<sup>72</sup> Hudspith identifies this Christian love with rootedness and Khomiakov's *sobornost'*, which she sees exemplified by Tikhon, Sonia Marmeladova, Zosima and Alesha Karamazov. One could also place Myshkin in this list. Hudspith, *Dostoevsky*, p. 128.

<sup>73</sup> 'Rech' o Pushkine,' from *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, August 1880, in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 129-49.

<sup>74</sup> Scanlan, *Dostoevsky The Thinker*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>75</sup> Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev*, p. 139.

allegedly universal quality that Pushkin possesses.<sup>76</sup> Ivan in the prelude to his ‘Legenda’ informs Alesha that ‘Есть, например, одна монастырская поэмка (конечно с греческого): Хождение Богородицы по мукам, с картинами и со смелостью не ниже Дантовских.’<sup>77</sup> This makes a similar claim to the ‘Pushkin Speech,’ but phrased in more religious terms: ‘Orthodox culture’ can equal ‘Catholic culture’. As Ivan notes, this *poemka* is a translation from Greek, which highlights the originally imitative principle of Russian Orthodoxy. The ‘Pushkin Speech’ seeks to confirm Pushkin’s place as the ‘Russian Dante’, and since Davidson writes, ‘Dostoevskii’s celebrated speech [...] elevated Pushkin to the status of national prophet and thereby prepared the ground for Dostoevskii’s own assumption of this role’, Dostoevskii is the heir apparent to Dante too.<sup>78</sup>

Unlike almost every other formulation of Russian nationalism and discussion of Europe in Dostoevskii’s works, the Pushkin Speech contains no explicit reference to Catholicism, although it is the negative other lying behind Russian universalism. Firstly, it was difficult for Dostoevskii to claim that he was continuing a tradition of anti-Catholicism begun by Pushkin. Secondly, perhaps the ‘Pushkin Speech’ does not allude to Dostoevskii’s own anti-Catholicism because he himself was aware that outright xenophobia undermined his ‘universalism’. This, in turn, suggests that Dostoevskii constructed different writer’s identities for himself. This is not a new idea. As Kostalevsky puts it, the identity of the *Dnevnik*’s implied author is ‘dogmatic’ and ‘banally conservative’.<sup>79</sup> Worse, he appears xenophobic and inclined to conspiracy theories, even paranoia. In contrast, the writer of the ‘Pushkin Speech’ strives towards universalism and unity, even though his expression of these concepts can be read as contradictory and messianist in ways that might have worried both Pushkin and Chaadaev. Thirdly, but most importantly, the lack of reference to Catholicism almost certainly arises out of the destabilizing threat to Dostoevskii’s fragile idea for Russian universalism that Catholic culture (and Catholicism more broadly) represented.

Despite the anti-Catholicism indisputably present in Dostoevskii’s works, his novels have become more universal than he could have predicted, so much so that a twenty-first century Jesuit Pope recommended that Catholics should read them.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> ‘Rech’ o Pushkine,’ in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XXVI: 148.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Legenda’ in Dostoevskii, *PSS*, XIV: 225.

<sup>78</sup> P. Davidson, ‘Vladimir Solov’ev and the Ideal of Prophecy,’ *Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, 4, 2000, p. 644. For more on this aspect, see, Davidson, ‘The Validation of the Writer’s Prophetic Status,’ pp. 524-35.

<sup>79</sup> Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev*, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> See, <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=23070>, accessed 8/08/13.

Dostoevskii's appeal appears to rely on his gift of presenting a multi-voiced debate that reflects the struggles within human societies and the individual, rather than his attempt to dictate a particular view in a monologic fashion.

Anti-Catholic conspiracy theories reached a peak in the 1860s and 1870s, when what one might term 'anti-Catholicism ad absurdum' took place. Perhaps inevitably, the period following this in Russian literature took a very different approach to Catholicism, and Russian Orthodoxy. In other words, the writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries looked to Dostoevskii's novels for guidance and inspiration.

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### **Part III: 1881-1909**

‘L’union parfaitement libre et intérieure des hommes avec la Divinité et entre eux, –  
c’est le but suprême, le port vers lequel nous naviguons.’

(Vladimir Solov’ev)<sup>1</sup>

#### **Catholicism and Russian History, 1881-1909**

Fedor Dostoevskii died in February 1881, and a few weeks later Tsar Alexander II was assassinated. The reign of his successor, Alexander III, has generally been characterized as a period of conservatism in comparison with that of his predecessor. Alexander III died in 1894 leaving Nicholas II to inherit the throne. The last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century were marked by political unrest alternating with attempts at reform.<sup>2</sup>

The period up to and around the revolutionary year 1905 (partly precipitated by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05) witnessed a renewed interest in the reform of the Orthodox Church amongst the clergy. These included calls for a church council, which was, according to Meyendorff, in part inspired by Khomiakov’s concept of *sobornost’*.<sup>3</sup> There were also new attempts at social activism. However, these reforms were not encouraged by the Tsar or other reactionaries in positions of power and thus ground to a halt.<sup>4</sup> A theme of renewal and rebirth pervades Russian literary culture of this period, and concurrently a general interest in religion and in Catholicism in particular. As a result of perceived weaknesses in the way the Orthodox Church functioned, many intellectuals sought either the revival of the Orthodox Church from within, or searched for answers outside mainstream Orthodoxy.

Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) was renowned for his attempts at diplomacy despite the fact that the Pope now had no corporeal state of his own.<sup>5</sup> Relations between the Catholic Church and the Russian Empire of Alexander III considerably eased in the 1880s, doubtless partly as a result of this very fact.<sup>6</sup> The attitude of the Russian state towards the Catholic Church in Poland improved, in part because the Tsar thought that

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<sup>1</sup> V. Solov’ev, *La Russie et l’Eglise Universelle*, Paris: Delamain, Boutelleau et Cie., 1922, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> See Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, pp. 355-91.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Meyendorff, ‘Russian bishops and Church Reform in 1905,’ in *Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime*, pp. 170-82, especially p. 172 see also, P. Valliere, ‘The Idea of a Council in Russian Orthodoxy in 1905,’ in *ibid.*, pp. 183-201.

<sup>4</sup> Meyendorff, ‘Russian bishops and Church Reform in 1905,’ p. 173; Hosking, *Russia and the Russians*, p. 381.

<sup>5</sup> Chadwick, *A History of the Popes*, p. 285.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and representatives of the Catholic Church in this period, see Tamborra, *Katolicheskaia tserkov’*, pp. 292-411.

enhanced relations with the Catholic Church might help control that part of the Empire.<sup>7</sup> On the whole, this fragile entente cordiale was maintained during the pontificate of Pius X (1903-1914). However, it would be unwise to think that attitudes on either side had genuinely changed. In legal terms the reforms of 1905 included significant concessions towards religious freedom. Conversion to non-Orthodox religions, including Catholicism, was now permitted along with other freedoms. This particularly affected the large minority of Catholics in the Russian Empire, although permission to convert did not mean that Catholics were truly emancipated.<sup>8</sup>

In literary culture, a space had been left vacant for the writer-prophet of the nation after Dostoevskii's death. Pyman refers to Lev Tolstoi and Solov'ev as the 'two moral giants of the age.'<sup>9</sup> Solov'ev became increasingly well known through his writing, lectures and acquaintance with Dostoevskii. He became a leading figure of his time, and a ring of disciples grew up around him, especially among the religious Symbolists.

Around 1901, shortly after the death of Solov'ev, several figures began to press for greater dialogue between representatives of the Orthodox Church and intellectuals, leading to the Religious-Philosophical Meetings in St Petersburg. An example of the flowering of thinking on the role of intellectuals in society was the publication of a volume of essays entitled *Vekhi* (1909) in which several writers responded to the questions that had arisen after the 1905 Revolution.<sup>10</sup> This period therefore witnessed a shake-up in thinking by Russian intellectuals about their own religiosity and role in society and culture.<sup>11</sup> Rozanov, one of those involved in setting up the Religious-Philosophical Meetings was a thinker, *publicist* and literary critic who sought to influence social policy and reforms of the Orthodox Church while remaining essentially faithful to the Russian Church.

Many new journals began to be published, figuring debates on culture and the role of religion. Several loose movements and groupings developed in literary culture. These were very fluid and subject to changing alliances and disagreements. The most

<sup>7</sup> Chadwick, *A History of the Popes*, pp. 432-33.

<sup>8</sup> See P. Werth, 'Arbiters of Free Conscience: State, Religion, and the Problem of Confessional Transfer after 1905,' in *Sacred Stories*, pp. 179-99. See also, Chadwick, *A History of the Popes*, pp. 434-35.

<sup>9</sup> A. Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of *Vekhi*, see C. Read, *Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia 1900-1912: The Vekhi Debate and its Intellectual Background*, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979, pp. 106-120.

<sup>11</sup> For a good summary of themes in this period, see Ruth Coates, 'Religious renaissance in the Silver Age,' in *A History of Russian Thought*, pp. 169-93. See also Robert Bird, 'Imagination and Ideology in the New Religious Consciousness,' in *A History of Russian Philosophy, 1830-1930: Faith, Reason and the Defense of Human Dignity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 266-84.

influential ‘movement’ in Russian literature before the Revolution was Symbolism, which emerged in the 1890s. One of its leading figures was Dmitrii Merezhkovskii (1865-1941), a co-founder of the Religious-Philosophical Meetings, erudite essayist, literary critic, novelist and poet.

Part III will trace the reassessment of the ideas articulated by the Slavophiles and Dostoevskii in the 1880s and 1890s. It will examine in particular how new and varied forms of literary expression radically changed the image of Catholicism. Almost all of the writers (whether thinkers or poets) responded in some way to, and were influenced by the work of Solov’ev.

## Chapter 7: Vladimir Solov'ev

Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900) is a writer well known for his interest in Catholicism. This chapter does not examine in detail the sources of, or influences on Solov'ev's views, although placing his texts in the context of a tradition of writing on Catholicism will help to illuminate these influences. The chapter asks what contribution Solov'ev's poetry and fiction and his ideas about Russian culture made to the new image of Catholicism that he fashioned.

### **Solov'ev and Russian Literary Tradition**

The work of Solov'ev was influenced by many previous writers, including Chaadaev, the Slavophiles, Tiutchev, Gagarin and Dostoevskii. Florovskii saw certain similarities between Solov'ev and Tiutchev, although he does not refer to Tiutchev's anti-Catholic poetry.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars have seen Gagarin as a significant link between Chaadaev and Solov'ev.<sup>2</sup> Beshoner points out that the philosopher had contact with two of Gagarin's fellow Jesuits, Pierling and Martynov, and characterizes Solov'ev's views in his pro-Catholic period as similar to Gagarin's.<sup>3</sup> Solov'ev had moved away from Slavophilism by the 1880s. He absorbed Slavophile ideas, so that his later work both continues Slavophile work and responds to it.

In the years 1881-1883 Solov'ev gave three lectures on Dostoevskii. His comments on Dostoevskii aim in part at bolstering his position as heir to Dostoevskii's role as writer-prophet.<sup>4</sup> Solov'ev attempted to make the case for Dostoevskii's 'universalism', following the latter's treatment of Pushkin in his Pushkin Speech.<sup>5</sup> Dostoevskii's alleged Russian universalism becomes a template for Solov'ev on which to model his own project for unity. Despite Dostoevskii's evident dislike for the power of Catholicism, Solov'ev refers to the benefits of the strength of the Catholic Church in the last of his lectures.<sup>6</sup> He was aware of Dostoevskii's anti-Catholicism, but ignores it,

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<sup>1</sup> Florovskii, 'Tiutchev i Vladimir Solov'ev,' pp. 344-58.

<sup>2</sup> Walicki, 'The Religious Westernism of Ivan Gagarin'; see also Walicki, *Rosja*, 287-360, especially pp. 356-60.

<sup>3</sup> Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>4</sup> Davidson, 'Vladimir Solov'ev,' pp. 643-70.

<sup>5</sup> V. Solov'ev, 'Tri rechi v pamiat' Dostoevskogo: Rech' tret'ia', in *Sobranie sochinenii Vladimira Sergeevicha Solov'eva s 3-mia portretami* (9 vols.), ed. by S. Solov'ev and E. Radlov, St Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1911, III: 206-10. See, Davidson, 'Vladimir Solov'ev,' p. 658.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

choosing instead to concentrate on the Pushkin Speech which, as previously noted, is one of the least anti-Catholic of Dostoevskii's works.

The philosopher makes reference to Russia's religious mission as the great vocation of the nation, connecting this to its cultural (literary) history, not just to works of theology and philosophy. He sees this religious mission as one of the common themes of Russian literature, including Pushkin (who, he argues, died before this aspect of his work was manifested to the full), Gogol', and Dostoevskii.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, Solov'ev characterized Tiutchev as a figure of the poet-prophet.<sup>8</sup> In his essay 'Poeziia F. I. Tiutcheva' (1895) he argued that Tiutchev's views on Catholicism underwent a change:

Одно время условием этого великого события он считал соединение Восточной церкви с Западной чрез соглашение царя с папой, но потом отказался от этой мысли, находя, что папство несовместимо со свободой совести, то есть с самою существенною принадлежностью христианству.<sup>9</sup>

Solov'ev provided in this essay a motivation for Tiutchev's anti-Catholic attitudes – a kind of disappointed ecumenism or type of uniatism.<sup>10</sup> His attempt to shift Tiutchev's nationalism towards an ecumenical point of view echoes his better-known work on Dostoevskii. Tiutchev's published texts do argue for unity, but the anti-Catholic tone of his works suggests that the Pope should be subject to the Tsar. This implies caesaropapism, which Solov'ev himself criticized. Solov'ev's attempts to reposition the work of previous writers has led to some confusion in the mind of later critics and thinkers such as Florovskii, who saw similarity, rather than conflict, between Tiutchev and the philosopher. However, Solov'ev and Tiutchev share another bond, they were both poets interested in mysticism.

During the 1880s, Solov'ev increasingly worked on a project for theocracy, designed to bring about the unity of the Churches. The germ of this idea was evident in his earlier work, and many of his writings relate to the theme of Russian nationality and religion. However, he devoted one book entirely to the question of Catholicism and the 'Universal Church,' which brought together much of his previous work.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Davidson, 'Vladimir Solov'ev,' pp. 657-58.

<sup>9</sup> V. Solov'ev, 'Poeziia F. I. Tiutcheva,' in *Vladimir Solov'ev*, Saint Petersburg: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1994, pp. 372-73.

<sup>10</sup> 'Uniatism' is usually interpreted to mean that the Orthodox Churches submit to the Papal primacy whilst retaining their own rites. The quotation implies a union giving the Tsar a role of authority.

## **La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle**

Solov'ev worked on *La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle* during the 1880s, and published it in French in 1889.<sup>11</sup> A Russian translation appeared only in 1911, after the author's death.<sup>12</sup> Although the book itself may not have been read in Russian before that date, many of its ideas had already been presented elsewhere. In the book's introduction, Solov'ev provided an explanation of his decision to publish in French: he was pessimistic of the chances of his work being printed in Russia.<sup>13</sup> According to Valliere 'an ecumenical proposal addresses churches and religions that make specific dogmatic claims and suggests a course of dialogue or action designed to recognize these actions.'<sup>14</sup> *La Russie* provides one of the best examples of an ecumenical proposal in Russian culture up to this period. To a much greater extent than his predecessors including Chaadaev or even Gagarin, Solov'ev tackles some of the questions that have divided the Churches.

### ***Building the Temple***

In *La Russie* Solov'ev uses a number of extended metaphors or parables in order to demonstrate his arguments. For example, in the introduction, which outlines some of the points later covered in detail, he describes the parable of a great architect who goes away, leaving his followers his plans in the hope that those who remain will continue building in his absence. The builders disagree over how the Temple should be completed, and many abandon the attempt to continue building. However, some go back to the Master's designs and one figure points out that all those involved in the building should unite again behind this intention, out of faithfulness to the Master.<sup>15</sup>

The parable illuminates several characteristics of the Christian Church – its desire to preserve Tradition, not to betray Christ – and reveals the divisions among Christians from the Church's earliest days. It concludes with the following words:

L'exhortation de cet ouvrier parut étrange à la plupart de ses compagnons. Les uns l'appelèrent utopiste, d'autres l'accusèrent d'orgueil et de présomption.

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<sup>11</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie et l'Eglise Universelle*, Paris: Delamain, Boutelleau et Cie., 1922. All citations are from this edition. The numbers re-start at p. 1 after the introduction. I have first page references with [first pagination] or [second pagination] in the citations.

<sup>12</sup> V. Solov'ev, *Rossii i vselenskaia tserkov'*, trans by G. Rachinskii, Moscow, 1911.

<sup>13</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 60-61 [first pagination].

<sup>14</sup> P. Valliere, *Modern Orthodox Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov. Orthodox Theology in a New Key*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000, p. 170.

<sup>15</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 61-66 [first pagination].

Mais la voix de la conscience lui disait clairement que le maître absent était avec lui en esprit et en vérité.<sup>16</sup>

Solov'ev's introduction does not describe the problems he expects to confront in his project, but he hints at them in his parable by pointing to himself as this last builder who has found it necessary to alert others to the idea of unity. Some evidence of humility can be seen in the fact that he places himself within a group of others with similar ideas, and more importantly in his admission that others may accuse him of pride. Prophetic zeal and the desire to change the world are accompanied in many of Solov'ev's works by an acceptance of his own failings and the recognition that others may not respond as he desires. This is a factor that differentiates him decisively from Gagarin and Chaadaev.

***St Nicholas's Coat: The Church in Society***

Solov'ev's argument about the Church and society draws on the premise that the Catholic Church is active and socially involved, whereas the Orthodox Church is withdrawn and contemplative. He retells what he refers to as a Russian legend about Saints Cassian and Nicholas who are on a trip to earth. On returning to heaven, St Nicholas's cloak is dirty because he stopped to help a peasant whose wagon had got stuck in the mud, and St Peter asks them what happened. The story ends with the verdict of St Peter:

‘Eh bien, dit saint Pierre, toi, saint Nicolas, pour ne pas avoir eu peur de te – sâler en tirant de peine ton prochain, tu seras fêté dorénavant deux fois chaque année et tu seras considéré comme le plus grand des saints après moi par tous les paysans de la sainte Russie. Et toi, saint Cassien, contente-toi du plaisir d’avoir une chlamyde immaculée: tu n’auras ta fête que les années bissextiles – une fois tous les quatre ans.’<sup>17</sup>

On the one hand, Solov'ev underlines the traditional image of Catholicism. He will not deny that the Catholic Church is active because his ideas about theocracy are predicated on the idea that the Universal Church should be involved in society:

Jésus-Christ a fondé son Eglise visible non seulement pour contempler le ciel, mais aussi pour travailler sur la terre et pour combattre les portes de l'enfer. Il a

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66 [first pagination].

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 2 [second pagination]. St Nicholas of Myra (Николай Чудотворец) is a popular saint in Russia, the patron saint of travellers and sailors. St John Cassian's feast day falls on the 29 February in the Orthodox Church.

envoyé ses apôtres non pas dans le désert et la solitude, mais dans le monde pour le conquérir et le soumettre au Royaume qui n'est pas de ce monde...<sup>18</sup>

He implies that this active aspect has been lacking in the Orthodox Church thus far in history, but he points out that the contemplative aspect is present in Catholicism too: 'L'Oriental prie, l'Occidental prie et travaille. Lequel des deux a raison?'<sup>19</sup> Thus, in Solov'ev's thinking, the Catholic Church is not a Martha who has neglected to listen to Jesus's teaching, but a combination of Martha and Mary in one person. He does not refer to Martha and Mary in his comparison of the Churches in this text, even though he must have been aware of this common analogy. This is perhaps because an attempt to re-present this story from the Gospels might suggest that he was going against the teachings of established Christianity (including the tradition of Orthodoxy), because Jesus gives priority to Mary over Martha in this Gospel passage. Instead, by drawing on an example from a Russian legend which has a popular appeal to it, he hopes to make social action in Christianity seem fully Russian, even historically embedded in Russian national consciousness.

According to the author, therefore, the two principles, active and contemplative, should not be opposed but should complement each other, as though parts of a whole. This is reflected in his parable of the Temple, where the builders will be united (despite their historical arguments), rather than quarrelling with each other. The writer meditates on the nature of polemics, which so often cause rifts to widen. The idea of the Church as active in society is one of the foundation stones for the Temple of Solov'ev's project.

After re-telling the legend of St Nicholas, Solov'ev continues: 'L'Eglise occidentale, fidèle à la mission apostolique, n'a pas craint de s'enfoncer dans la fange de la vie historique.'<sup>20</sup> Whereas the tendency in anti-Catholic writing (of the Slavophiles, Tiutchev and Dostoevskii) had often been to refer to all the ills that the Catholic Church has committed in history, Solov'ev makes the Church's involvement in history into a point of commendation. His work frequently refers to occasions when the Christian Church and individual Christians have fallen short of the ideal, whilst appealing to the ideal of unity, love, and co-operation that his philosophical project required. These criticisms of Christianity's failings range from heresies, prevalent in the early Church, to wars, slavery and capital punishment in the contemporary world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-33, 23 [first pagination].



Unlike Chaadaev, he argues that there are as yet no truly Christian states in Europe, which means that true Christian society has not yet been established there.<sup>22</sup> Rather than denigrating the effects of Catholic power on European society as Dostoevskii had done, he states that the Church has not had enough power.<sup>23</sup> European society is not presented as perfect. This perfection will be reached when a true theocracy is brought into being.

Through his exploration of the history of the early Church, Solov'ev notes how an inclination to caesaropapism arose in the Eastern Church. The caesaropapism of Russia was inherited from Byzantium.<sup>24</sup> The balance of power should be corrected:

Pour être chrétien l'État doit être soumis à l'Église du Christ; mais pour que cette soumission ne soit pas fictive, l'Église doit être indépendante de l'État, elle doit avoir un centre d'unité en dehors de l'État et au-dessus de lui, elle doit être en vérité l'Église Universelle.<sup>25</sup>

The alleged weakness of the Orthodox Church against the State's power is inextricably linked in his view to the absence of a bulwark of authority, namely the Pope. Solov'ev felt that a powerful Church could stand up against the monarchy. In his 'free theocracy', the Church therefore acts as a counterbalance against state power and maintains its own freedom, which is to the advantage of both State and Church.

Solov'ev's ideas on the Church in society are substantially different from those of his Slavophile predecessors. During this period, criticism of the Orthodox Church's part in maintaining a status quo that was not always healthy for Russian society increased. Solov'ev was the most prominent figure for half a century to suggest that the Catholic Church performed a role that the Orthodox Church should embrace. This was not a new idea, but the strident presentation of it in his works and his attempt to make Church activism seem 'Russian' (with his use of the St Nicholas legend) differentiate his work from preceding writers such as Chaadaev or Gagarin, whose tendency to idealize Europe led to defence and counter-attack from the Slavophiles and Dostoevskii. His admission of the weaknesses of Europe made it more difficult to accuse him of blinkered Westernism. This enhanced his image as the great synthesizing figure he wished to be, and enabled him to occupy a central, balanced position.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12, 57 [first pagination].

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 57 [second pagination].

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 67-76 [second pagination].

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 76 [second pagination].

***Sophia: Universality against Nationalism***

Solov'ev's acknowledgement of the weaknesses of both Europe and Russia differs from the nationalism of the Slavophiles. His version of Russian universalism was accompanied by a widely acknowledged dislike of nationalism, anti-Semitism and anti-Polonism.<sup>26</sup> He had developed an antagonistic attitude to the Slavophiles, noticeable in *La Russie*, and he had also begun to criticize Dostoevskii.<sup>27</sup>

Instead of ignoring the fact that the Slavophiles had described the Orthodox Church as 'universal', Solov'ev argued that they had in fact promulgated a national church:

Ainsi tout en acceptant *en principe* l'idée de l'Eglise universelle, les slavophiles la renient *en fait* et réduisent l'universalité chrétienne à une Eglise particulière qui d'ailleurs est fort loin de répondre à l'idéal qu'ils professent eux mêmes.<sup>28</sup>

Solov'ev attacked the Slavophiles for concentrating on difference and thereby distorting Orthodoxy. He claimed that the Slavophile idea of Russian Orthodoxy is predicated on denial of that which the Catholic Church holds as doctrine.<sup>29</sup>

Solov'ev did not ignore nationality by appealing to unity, but considered that nations were agents in history. Nations were on a journey towards the overcoming of nationalism, and could have a positive role in achieving this goal.<sup>30</sup> This helps to explain why a book that was written as an apologetic for the Catholic Church, could also place the Russian nation on a path to the Kingdom of God. As he noted, 'Le caractère éminemment religieux du peuple russe, ainsi que la tendance mystique qui se manifeste chez nous dans la philosophie, dans les lettres et les arts parait réserver à la Russie une grande mission religieuse'.<sup>31</sup> In order to bring together more closely the Catholic Church and the Russian national mission, it was necessary to bring the image of Catholicism closer to Russianness. This could be achieved by appealing to common values of Christian faith and everyday practices, the 'universal' aspects of being Russian or Catholic. An example of shared 'practice' was the following reference to piety:

<sup>26</sup> D. Merezhkovskii, 'Rech' skazannaia 14 noiabria 1916 goda na vechere v pamiat' V. S. Solov'eva,' in *Kniga o Vladimire Solov'eva*, ed. by V. Averin, D. Bazanov, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1991, pp. 472-74.

<sup>27</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 9-10. Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev*, p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, p. 39 [second pagination. All italics are in the original unless otherwise stated].

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>30</sup> G. Gaut, 'Can a Christian be a nationalist? Vladimir Soloviev's Critique of Nationalism,' *Slavic Review*, 57, 1, Spring 1998, p. 82.

<sup>31</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, p. 14 [second pagination].

...la plus grande partie de ces peuples (la partie catholique) a absolument le même fond religieux que nous [...] non seulement le culte de la saint Vierge, – un des traits caractéristiques de catholicisme, – est pratiqué par la Russie orthodoxe – en général, mais il y a même des images miraculeuses spéciales vénérées en commun par les catholiques-romains et par les orthodoxes russes (par exemple le sainte Vierge de Czenstochovo en Pologne). Si la piété est vraiment le caractère distinctif de notre esprit national, le fait que les principaux emblèmes de cette piété nous sont communs avec les Occidentaux nous oblige à reconnaître notre solidarité avec eux dans ce que nous considérons comme le plus essentiel.<sup>32</sup>

This point about common piety, prayers, practice, and beliefs, had not previously been made in Russian writing on Catholicism apart from indirect references in the work of Gogol', such as his admission that he prayed in Catholic churches. The common body of teachings of the Church Fathers is briefly alluded to in the introduction, where Solov'ev asks for intercession from several saints, all of them venerated by the Orthodox and Catholic alike.<sup>33</sup> However, he does not further explore the idea of reverence for saints or holy images. Although he does return to the cult of the Virgin Mary in his poetic works, especially in his translation of Petrarch, he does not expand on the other practices or beliefs of Catholics. He instead moves on from these issues quickly towards other appeals to unity.

For Solov'ev the image of the Virgin Mary was connected with Divine Wisdom or Sophia.<sup>34</sup> As Oliver Smith has shown, Solov'ev's idea of Sophia was integrally linked to his ontology, to his conceptualisation of the Trinity, Incarnation, Godmanhood, The Universal Church and the Kingdom of God.<sup>35</sup> The philosopher's different conceptions of Sophia have been considered confusing and inconsistent.<sup>36</sup> Certainly, Sophia is presented in different ways in *La Russie*, his poetry, and his philosophical works, which will not be discussed here. In his earlier work, his concept of Sophia verged on the heretical.<sup>37</sup> His work was problematic because it seemed to imply that Sophia was almost the fourth person of the Trinity.<sup>38</sup> Doctrinally, Divine Wisdom is an attribute of the Godhead in its three hypostases, not a separate entity, or hypostasis. The fact that the Virgin Mary should not be seen to be identical with Wisdom itself is emphasized by

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17 [second pagination]. [i.e. Częstochowa, the Black Madonna].

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 66 [first pagination].

<sup>34</sup> For an overview of the concept of Sophia see Copleston (SJ), *Russian Religious Philosophy*, pp. 81-99.

<sup>35</sup> See O. Smith, *Vladimir Soloviev and the Spiritualization of Matter*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy*, pp. 82, 85, 86. Cf. M. Carlson, 'Gnostic Elements in the Cosmogony of Vladimir Soloviev,' in *Russian Religious Thought*, ed. by J. Kornblatt and K. Gustafson, Madison, Wisc.: Wisconsin University Press, 1996, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Carlson, 'Gnostic Elements,' pp. 49-67, especially pp. 58-61.

<sup>38</sup> J. Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 56, 76.

her title as *Sedes sapientiae* [Seat of Wisdom]. Wisdom is identified in this appellation with Jesus Christ, the only true incarnation of Wisdom is Christ. In Solov'ev's work, Sophia becomes connected with earthly women, whilst remaining an abstract ideal, which suggests that Sophia can have material 'incarnations'.

With regard to the philosopher's understanding of the Virgin Mary, Davidson writes: 'in his view the long-standing tradition of applying Biblical references to Wisdom or Sophia to the figure of the Virgin Mary had received doctrinal sanction in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, defined by Pius IX in 1854'.<sup>39</sup> This approach, indicating a respect for the teachings of Catholicism, left the philosopher open to attack in Russia on the grounds that the dogma was not recognized by the Orthodox Churches.<sup>40</sup> Copleston notes that the 'confusion' between the Virgin Mary and Sophia had existed in Russia long before Solov'ev, whose work picks up on this existing tradition, elaborates it and makes it an important part of Russian culture.<sup>41</sup> By linking the Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary (and Catholic doctrine) to Sophia, Solov'ev weaves different cultural and theological traditions together into a new, syncretic whole.

Solov'ev drew on his idea of Sophia and the Universal Church as a point of unity in *La Russie*:

Ainsi, à côté de la forme humaine *individuelle* du divin, – à côté de la Vierge-Mère et du Fils de Dieu – le peuple russe a connu et aimé, sous le nom de sainte Sophie, l'incarnation *sociale* de la Divinité dans l'Église Universelle. C'est à cette idée, révélée au sentiment religieux de nos ancêtres, – à cette idée vraiment nationale et absolument universelle qu'il nous faut maintenant donner une expression rationnelle. Il s'agit de formuler la Parole vivante que l'ancienne Russie a conçue et que la Russie nouvelle doit dire au monde.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, just as Dostoevskii is reconfigured and invoked to support the image of Solov'ev as a prophet, the philosopher uses the Catholic Church and Sophia in order to reinforce the ideas of theocracy and the Universal Church which he believes will bring about the Kingdom of God to earth. His views on Sophia and Catholicism are both sublimated into his greater vision of all-unity. In choosing to discuss Sophia, he provoked criticism from Catholic theologians as well as Orthodox thinkers. Among

<sup>39</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, p. 65; see Solov'ev, *La Russie*, p. 262.

<sup>40</sup> The Orthodox and Catholic churches concur on the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ, but differ on the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a doctrine which promulgates that she was conceived *without original sin*. Unfortunately, the terminology is identical in Russian for both – 'neporochnoe zachatie' but the two should not be confused. For a summary of the Orthodox perspective, see Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 259-260. For the text of the decree of 1854, *Ineffabilis Deus*, see <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm> accessed 16/09/2013.

<sup>41</sup> Copleston, *Russian Religious Philosophy*, p. 82.

<sup>42</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, p. 264 [second pagination].

others, his work was criticized as heretical by the Jesuits, Pierling and Martynov – in particular, the part of *La Russie* about Sophia.<sup>43</sup>

By emphasizing an idea as lofty as Sophia or the ideal of the Universal Church, Solov'ev avoided some of the contentious issues about the divisions between the Churches. Valliere has argued that his vision of unity did not in fact amount to an ecumenical proposal.<sup>44</sup> However, it contains the germ of an ecumenical proposal. Solov'ev attempted to eliminate the differences between Russianness and Catholicism partly by repudiating some of the doctrinal differences between the two denominations, such as the *filioque* clause, and, in particular, Orthodox objections to papal primacy.

### ***The Ship: Solov'ev, unity and sobornost'***

Solov'ev's project of church unity relates to other aspects of his thought, such as his protests against anti-Semitism, his idea of romantic love, and even his epistemology. He took the concept of unity and *sobornost'* as developed by thinkers from Chaadaev through the Slavophiles to Dostoevskii, and applied it to his project for the Universal Church. In Chapter 5 of Part I of *La Russie*, he takes up the formulations of Khomiakov about unity. In the 1850s Khomiakov had written:

Это Вера, Вера православная, которой, слава Богу, и по особенному чувству правды, никто еще не называл религией (ибо религия может соединять людей, но только Вера связует людей не только друг с другом, но еще и с Ангелами и с самим Творцом людей и Ангелов.<sup>45</sup>

Solov'ev replied to these formulations of ideal Orthodoxy:

Que trouverait-on à redire à un *idéal* semblable? Quel est le catholique romain que, si on lui montrait l'humanité entière ou une partie considérable de l'humanité pénétrée de l'amour divin et de la charité fraternelle, n'ayant qu'une âme et un coeur et demeurant ainsi dans une union libre et tout à fait intérieure, – quel est, dis-je, le catholique romain qui voudrait imposer à une telle société l'autorité extérieure et obligatoire d'un pouvoir religieux public? Y a-t-il quelque part des papistes qui croient que les séraphins et les chérubins ont besoin d'un pape pour les gouverner?<sup>46</sup>

The philosopher contests Khomiakov's tendency to equate ideal Christianity with Orthodoxy and to show how Catholicism and Protestantism fall short of the ideal.

<sup>43</sup> K. Mochul'skii, *Vladimir Solov'ev: Zhizn' i uchenie*, Paris: YMCA, 1936, pp. 182-84; Walicki 'The Religious Westernism of Ivan Gagarin,' p. 50; Walicki, *Rosja*, p. 181. See also, Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy*, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> Valliere, *Modern Orthodox Theology*, p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Khomiakov, 'Po povodu stat'i I. V. Kireevskogo,' in *PSS*, I: 257.

<sup>46</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 35-36 [second pagination].

Catholicism as linked with authority, Protestantism with freedom (a notion that had been repeated and developed by Dostoevskii in his work). Solov'ev suggests that all Christians are striving to reach the same goal as the Slavophiles, merely by different means:

L'union parfaitement libre et intérieure des hommes avec la Divinité et entre eux, — c'est le but suprême, le port vers lequel nous naviguons. Nos frères occidentaux ne sont pas d'accord entre eux quant aux meilleurs moyens d'y parvenir. Les catholiques croient qu'il est *plus sûr* de traverser la mer ensemble dans un grand vaisseau éprouvé, construit par un maître célèbre, gouverné par un pilote habile, et muni de tout ce qui est nécessaire pour le voyage. Les protestants prétendent au contraire que chacun doit se fabriquer une nacelle à sa guise pour voguer avec *plus de liberté*. [...] Mais que pourrait-on entreprendre contre ces soi-disant orthodoxes, selon lesquels le vrai moyen d'arriver au port c'est de s'imaginer qu'on y est déjà.<sup>47</sup>

This metaphor helps support Solov'ev's argument in favour of the papacy. It absorbs the triune of Freedom, Authority, Unity, corroborates the concern over 'freedom' implied in Protestantism, and discards the negative attributes of authority by implying that submission to authority requires putting oneself in the hands of a good captain. There is unity among the believers on the Catholic ship as form a community, unlike the Protestants. Solov'ev does not suggest that the Orthodox are incapable of a similar method of conveyance – the Orthodox Church as a whole is absent from his metaphor. He differentiates between 'the Orthodox Church', and those who write apologetics for it, the 'soi-disant orthodoxes'. In his view, the Universal Church must simply aspire to unity in faith, to becoming one with Christ:

La vérité fondamentale, l'idée spécifique du christianisme, c'est l'union parfaite du divin et de l'humain, accomplie individuellement dans le Christ et s'accomplissant socialement dans l'humanité chrétienne où le divine est représenté par l'Église (concentrée dans le pontificat suprême).<sup>48</sup>

The ship metaphor demonstrates that unity is maintained through a free submission to authority. Solov'ev, like Chaadaev and Gagarin, emphasized the role of the Church and the Pope in providing a centre of authority for all Christians.

### ***The Mustard Seed: Papal and Ecclesial Authority***

Although *La Russie* refers to many doctrinal aspects of Catholicism, the papal primacy stands out as one of the most important components of his theocratic utopia. In

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 36 [second pagination].

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 25 [first pagination].

Solov'ev's view a false idea of Russian nationality and Orthodoxy had developed in Russia, where contemporary writers such as the Slavophiles are obsessed with the papal primacy: 'Tout votre "orthodoxie" et tout votre "idée russe" n'est donc, au fond, qu'une protestation nationale contre la puissance universelle de pape.'<sup>49</sup> He therefore responds to, and seeks to counter this bias in his own work. He does not mention specific writers in this chapter of his book, but his idea of the Orthodox Church as a protest against the Papacy bears some similarity to Khomiakov's description of the Protestant church in his letter to Palmer.<sup>50</sup>

Solov'ev based his argument for the papacy firstly on Biblical sources. He paraphrased words from the Gospel accounts, Matthew (16:17-19), Luke (22:32) and John (21:15-17), particularly the passage from Matthew 16:18, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it...'<sup>51</sup> In his writing he frequently alluded to the 'rock' and 'gates of hell'. Referring to the Pope through these allusions, he attempts to support the claims with Biblical sources, thereby suggesting that they are divinely given. Whereas Dostoevskii and other anti-Catholic thinkers had identified the Pope with the devil and the Antichrist, *La Russie* promotes the image of the Pope as a bastion against the 'powers of hell'. By contrast, the Russian Orthodox Church is presented as weak, lacking in such a bulwark.

Solov'ev openly admits Peter's faults in a witty remark:

Il ne lui a pas dit: Tu es Pierre parce que je te préfère aux autres ou parce que tu as naturellement un caractère ferme et solide (ce qui ne serait pas d'ailleurs tout à fait conforme à la vérité), mais: *Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre j'édifierai mon Église.*<sup>52</sup>

This distinction between Peter's role as key-bearer, and his role as a private individual corresponds to Solov'ev's understanding of how the papacy should function within the Catholic Church.<sup>53</sup> Papal infallibility does not mean that the Pope is meant to be perfect in Catholicism, which was the angle often taken by opponents to infallibility in order to make it seem absurd. By identifying examples of infallibility in the papacy's

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> 'Protestantism is for ever and ever protesting [...] because of its unceasing cry, "No Popery", it stands on Popish ground and lives on Popish definitions...'. Khomiakov to Palmer 6) 1851, in Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church*, p. 102. Beshoner suggests that Palmer's writings may have influenced Solov'ev; Beshoner, *Ivan Sergeevich Gagarin*, p. 285 (note).

<sup>51</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 94, 100, 102, 120.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

earlier history, he contests the claim that the nineteenth-century clergy (specifically the Jesuits) invented the idea of papal infallibility.

Solov'ev's use of the parables of the Temple and of the ship coheres with the Gospel image of Peter the fisherman, and of Peter as the 'foundation stone' of the historical Church. Elsewhere he retells the parable of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32; Mk. 4:30-32), Solov'ev writes :

Puisque Dieu, qui n'est pas sujet aux nécessités du temps, de l'espace et du mécanisme matériel, voit dans la semence actuelle des choses toute la puissance cachée de leur avenir, Il a dû dans le petit gland voir, déterminer et bénir le chêne puissant qui devait en sortir; dans la graine de sénevé ; de la foi de Pierre, Il a aperçu et annoncé l'arbre immense de l'Eglise catholique qui devait couvrir la terre de ses branches.<sup>54</sup>

By comparing Peter to the acorn or mustard seed and the modern Catholic Church to the oak or mustard tree, he relates Peter as apostle to the modern papacy. The suggestion of an organic process of growth and the use of one of Jesus's parables to convey it endow the writer with both divine and prophetic authority and enable him to explain himself to his audience in simple terms. This argument can be contested on several levels, not least because it implies an unbroken line of development, which many might dispute or repudiate. Solov'ev does not sharply distinguish between the historical papacy of St Peter and the contemporary institution.

As Nichols explains, for Solov'ev 'Papal power does not belong to the eternal foundations of the Church mystic but to the believing community's temporal condition as the Church militant.'<sup>55</sup> In other words, the Pope is unnecessary in an ideal Church (he has no role among the cherubim and seraphim!) but is absolutely necessary in the historic Church. In order to support the idea that the papal primacy is an historical necessity and not 'new' as an idea, Solov'ev re-examines the history of the early Church. Nichols has pointed out that the philosopher's knowledge of Byzantine history was limited, and that his attack on caeseropapism is made paradoxical when he suggests a prominent role for kingship in his theocracy.<sup>56</sup> However, his model was based on an ideal Emperor, not on a particular Romanov one.<sup>57</sup> He underlined that the Pope had helped deal with heresy in the early Church, that his authority helped define dogma.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>55</sup> A. Nichols, 'Solovyov and the Papacy: A Catholic Evaluation,' *Communio*, 24, 1997, p. 156.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>58</sup> Solov'ev, *La Russie*, pp. 34-35.



Like Gagarin, he asserted that the Orthodox Church's countering of the differences in doctrine between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church (particularly the *filioque* clause, the Immaculate Conception, and the papal primacy) did not rest on any authority which was accepted by all Orthodox as binding.<sup>59</sup>

Mais il n'en coûte rien à nos soi-disant orthodoxies d'opposer un concile impossible aux conciles réels de l'Église catholique et de défendre leur cause avec des armes qu'ils ont perdues et sous un drapeau qu'on leur a enlevé.<sup>60</sup>

This lack of 'authority' in the Orthodox Church serves as proof for the writer that the division between the two churches, the Schism itself is therefore unfounded (although not irrelevant).

Solov'ev's work on the papacy goes much further than Chaadaev's relatively vague remarks in his correspondence and 'Lettres philosophiques'. He tackles the papal primacy in more detail. Gagarin's work, in comparison, took the primacy for granted. For Solov'ev the papacy is important as a centre of unity, and authority, one of the pivots on which his theocracy turns. *La Russie* can be read as his answer to Dostoevskii's negative representation of the Pope in his novels and *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*.

Although Solov'ev's support for the Catholic Church distances him from his predecessors and contemporaries, and responds to their writings, he does not cast himself as a polemicist for the Catholic Church, but rather as a synthesizer and unifier of ideas. He regards his own work as emerging from religious thought and contributing to tradition in a new way, not as making a complete break from it. He therefore presents himself as one of many builders of the Temple, not as its architect.

One of the interesting aspects of *La Russie* is not its arguments, some of which are hackneyed, but the fresh ways in which they are conveyed, the use of parables and metaphors. The parables do make the work more approachable, but they also suggest a narrator. It has been noted that of the triad 'prophet, priest and king' in *La Russie*, Solov'ev least of all fleshes out the role of the prophet.<sup>61</sup> However, if the role of prophet can be identified with Chaadaev's 'sages et penseurs' or a 'Russian Dante' it becomes evident that Solov'ev put forward the figure of 'the literary writer', not the theologian as

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Smith, *Vladimir Soloviev*, p. 194.

the prophet of a future theocracy. It remains, therefore, to consider the role of the literary text in Solov'ev's vision.<sup>62</sup>

### **Catholicism in Solov'ev's Literary Work**

#### ***The Poet's Approach to the Sacred***

With the exception of selected poems, Solov'ev's interest in Catholicism is generally less overt in his verse than in his published essays. Previous scholarship has already examined in detail his translations and imitations of Petrarch and Dante.<sup>63</sup> Davidson writes that Dante was 'traditionally regarded as the major poet of the Catholic tradition,' a fact which Solov'ev had noted even in his non-poetic work, *La Russie*.<sup>64</sup> Reading, translating and *imitatio* of Dante and other Catholic poets such as Petrarch, and the evocation of similar ideas in his own original works, become, for Solov'ev, a window through which to see, understand, represent and even be mystically united with the Catholic world. He could fuse the Russian and Catholic traditions in a literary way. Other poets would follow him along this path.

Whereas the Pope and the Catholic Church as an institution play a large and integral role in Solov'ev's essays, this is not the case in his verse (unlike in Tiutchev's poems and Dostoevskii's novels). Although his representation of Sophia can be identified as a symbol of the Church, Sophia stands for the Universal Church. In *La Russie* the writer had already argued that the Black Madonna of Czestochowa was a common figure of veneration for the Christian Church. The feminine aspect of Christianity becomes a focal point in the poems through the poet's interest in Sophia and the Virgin Mary. His verse represents Sophia as a type of ideal female muse, the subject of praise and invocation, whereas the essays sought to explain and contextualize her significance in more general terms. The poems bring Sophia 'to life' like Galatea, but in some respects make her seem more distant, as she is a fleeting figure, only visible through mystical intuition.

Davidson argues that 'although in his prose writings Solov'ev always made it clear that Sophia and the Virgin Mary were quite separate figures, however closely they might be associated, this distinction was subsequently blurred by the religious

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<sup>62</sup> According to Clowes, the place of poetic language in Solov'ev's ideas is left unclear. E. Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat*, p. 114. Davidson argues that poetic language was used to convey prophetic and mystic intuitions more convincingly. Davidson, 'Vladimir Solov'ev,' pp. 643-70.

<sup>63</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 53-71.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62. See Solov'ev, Introduction to *La Russie*, p. 56.

Symbolists.<sup>65</sup> This ‘blurring’ of the two figures can be better understood if we recall that the Virgin Mary is treated as an ideal female muse figure in Christian art, functioning in a similar way to Dante’s Beatrice and Petrarch’s Laura. Furthermore, if Solov’ev’s poetry is read as a corpus, one encounters a variety of poems which address or describe earthly women, unnamed muses, Sophia, the Eternal Feminine, as well as translations of poems by Dante dedicated to Beatrice and translations of poems by Petrarch addressed to the Virgin Mary.<sup>66</sup>

Solov’ev’s love poetry strengthens the connection that Pushkin had already made between devotion to the Virgin Mary and an earthly woman.<sup>67</sup> This can be seen clearly (as Davidson points out) in his ‘Akrostikhi’ poems, referring to a real woman, but beginning with the line ‘Мадонной была для меня ты когда-то...’<sup>68</sup> Symbols associated with the Virgin Mary in Catholicism, such as roses, lilies, and the colour azure, appear in several Sophia poems and in his love poems.<sup>69</sup>

In 1883 Solov’ev wrote a ‘partial translation’ of the final canzone of Petrarch’s *Sonetti e canzone in morte di Madonna Laura*. Petrarch’s original is devoted to the Virgin Mary and contains a mixture of hymns of praise and pleas for her intercession. Solov’ev translated the first six stanzas of the canzone, and then added a final stanza of his own in a similar style, which he nevertheless does not identify as being an original composition:<sup>70</sup>

Лилия чистая среди наших терний,  
В мрачной пучине жемчужина ясная,  
В пламени злом купина не горящая,  
В общем потоке ладья безопасная,  
5 Облако светлое, мглою вечерней  
Божьим избранникам ярко блестящее,  
Радуга, небо с землею мирящая,

<sup>65</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>66</sup> For example; ‘real’ women: ‘S. M. Martynovoi’ (1892), in V. Solov’ev, ‘Nepodvizhno lish’ solntse liubvi...’: *Stikhovoreniia. Proza. Poema. Vospominaniia sovremennikov*, Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1990, pp. 73-74, ‘Akrostikhi’ (1892), in *ibid.*, p.73, female muses, (probably real women): ‘Iz Platona’ (1874), in *ibid.*, p. 19; ‘Lish’ god nazad – s muchitel’noi toskoiu....’ (1874), in *ibid.*, pp. 20-21; ‘My soshlis’ s toboi nedarom...’ (1892), in *ibid.*, p. 74, ‘Tebia polibil ia, krasavitsa neznaia’ (1894), in *ibid.*, p. 92; Sophia: ‘Vsia v lazuri segodnia iavilas’...’ (1875) in *ibid.*, pp. 22-23, ‘U tsaritsy moei est’ vysokii dvorets...’ (1876), in *ibid.*, pp. 23-34, ‘Tri svidaniia’ (1898), in *ibid.*, pp. 118-24; The Eternal Feminine: ‘Das Ewig-Weibliche’ (1898), in *ibid.*, pp. 113-14, Beatrice, Dante’s *Vita Nuova*: ‘Iz Dante: Iz Vita Nuova’ (1886), in *ibid.*, pp. 50-51, Petrarch, the Blessed Virgin Mary: ‘Iz Petrarkhi: “Khvaly i moleniia presviatoi deve”’ (1883), in *ibid.*, pp. 35-58.

<sup>67</sup> See for example, ‘Madona’ (1830), in Pushkin, *PSS*, III: 224; ‘К \*\*’ (‘Ty bogomater’, net somnen’ia...’) (1826), in *ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Akrostikhi’ (1892), in Solov’ev, ‘Nepodvizhno lish’ solntse liubvi...’, p. 73. Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, p. 59.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Vsia v lazuri segodnia iavilas’...’, in Solov’ev, ‘Nepodvizhno lish’ solntse liubvi...’, pp. 22-23, ‘Das Ewig-Weibliche,’ in *ibid.*, pp. 113-14, ‘My soshlis’ s toboi nedarom...’ in *ibid.*, p. 74, ‘U tsaritsy moei est’ vysokii dvorets...’, in *ibid.*, pp. 23-34, Iz Petrarkhi: ‘Khvaly i moleniia presviatoi deve,’ in *ibid.*, pp. 35-58.

<sup>70</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 67-69.

10           Божьих заветов ковчег неизменный,  
               Манны небесной фиал драгоценный,  
               Высь неприступная, Бога носящая!  
               Дольний наш мир осени лучезарным покровом,  
               Свыше ты осененная,  
               Вся озаренная  
               Светом и словом!<sup>71</sup>

Petrarch and Solov'ev address the Blessed Virgin Mary through a series of titles and images derived from various Biblical, patristic, liturgical and artistic traditions. The medieval litany to the Virgin Mary is one such source because it is a form of poem-prayer based on Church tradition.<sup>72</sup> The Virgin Mary's association with the lily in line 1, alluding to her purity, is reflected in many artistic depictions of her in Catholic culture. Line 2 could be the poet's variation on another Catholic title *Stella maris* [Star of the Sea] which was already used by Petrarch in his sixth stanza. It may allude to the Kingdom of God or Mary as a pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45). (In Proverbs 31:10-31 the 'ideal wife' is described as 'beyond the price of pearls'.) This description has been identified with Divine Wisdom and the Church. This metaphor can therefore be seen as carrying a sophiological tint, although it can be read as a reference just to Mary herself.

In line 3 Mary is identified with the Burning Bush of Exodus 3:1-21. The Burning Bush (*Kupina neopalimaia*) and is understood in the Catholic and Orthodox Church as a 'type' (prefiguration) for Mary's virginity and the Virgin Birth of Christ.<sup>73</sup> The Burning Bush, Noah's Ark (line 4, suggested in the rainbow of line 7 and possibly in the word *kovcheg*, line 8) and the Ark of the Covenant (line 8), were all quoted by Pius IX in his papal decree on the Immaculate Conception.<sup>74</sup> The references to these 'types' in the last stanza is therefore ambiguous – they could be a method of subtly asserting this Catholic dogma in verse. However, it is not likely that an Orthodox theologian would even recognize the papal source of the metaphors. Moreover, by using Old Testament images whose origins in Tradition pre-date the Schism, the writer is on 'ecumenical' ground.<sup>75</sup> The reference to Mary as a safe boat can be read as a metaphor

<sup>71</sup> Solov'ev, 'Nepodvizhno lish' solntse liubvi.', p. 58.

<sup>72</sup> *Dictionary of Mary*, ed. by Alphonse Bossard et al., Totowa, N.J.: St Pauls, 2010, pp. 257-58.

<sup>73</sup> See the use of this phrase as a title to Sergii Bulgakov's work on the Virgin Mary, which was originally intended as a polemical criticism of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. S. Bulgakov, *Kupina neopalimaia*, 1926. S. Bulgakov, *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God*, trans. and with an introduction by T. Allan Smith, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009, pp. xii-xvi.

<sup>74</sup> See *Ineffabilis Deus*, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm> accessed 16/09/2013.

<sup>75</sup> For example, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century St Hippolytus referred to the Ark of Covenant as a type for Mary. See P. Palmer, (SJ), *Mary in the Documents of the Church*, London: Burns Oates, 1953, p. 15. Similar sources can doubtless be

for the Church, as we have seen that the ship is already a metaphor for the Church in Solov'ev's writing. She is a vessel for Christ, *theotokos* (which the poet translates into Russian in line 10).

The poet therefore uses Catholic poetry as a source for his own religious poetry. From this reading of Petrarch, he develops a personal, artistic approach to the figure of the Virgin Mary. By making his imitation of Petrarch's poem more sophiological than the original, he suggests that Russian culture has a special contribution to make to the devotion to the figure of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Divine Wisdom. He creates a 'Russian Catholic poem' or, as he would doubtless have seen it, a Russian poem for the Universal Church. He was using his poetic and artistic voice and talents to realise a theoretical ideal he had only presented in his other works.

In Catholicism the delineation between (secular) poetry and (sacred) prayer was traditionally much more blurred than in modern Russia, especially in the centuries prior to the nineteenth century, as the works of Petrarch and Dante suggest. Catholicism had a long tradition of saints writing mystical prayers and poems. Nineteenth-century poetry in Russia contains many religious poems by writers such as Pushkin, Khomiakov and Tiutchev. However, Solov'ev's use of Petrarch enables him to write a new type of mystical prayer-poem. He had therefore picked up and assimilated into Russian the spirit that the Catholic tradition had given birth to in Dante and Petrarch, and not just its letter.

The most famous example of Solov'ev's mystical poetry is his long poem, 'Tri svidaniia' (1898), in which he describes his three 'encounters' with the figure of Sophia.<sup>76</sup> This is an original work, and an exact parallel for this poem is lacking in Catholic culture. However, a large part of the inspiration for the poem appears to lie in Catholicism. Solov'ev must have been aware of the numerous accounts of saints who had seen visions of Christ or the Virgin Mary. One potential influence on the mystic strain in his literary work is St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), notable for his devotion to the Virgin Mary, and commonly depicted in Renaissance art having a vision of the Virgin Mary. When the Virgin Mary appeared to Catholics, she would give the recipient some kind of 'message'.

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found for all these metaphors. The Byzantine and Russian tradition of icon paintings includes the subject 'Kupina neopalimaia'.

<sup>76</sup> 'Tri svidaniia' (1898), *'Nepodvizhno lish' solntse liubvi..'*, pp. 118-24.

Solov'ev's poem echoes this Catholic tradition of mystic visions, but does so in literary form. An important link between the mystic vision in Catholicism and its expression in literature is provided by Dante. St Bernard appears as one of Dante's 'guides' in *Paradiso*.<sup>77</sup> As Davidson has argued, Dante's *Vita Nuova* influenced the concept of 'Tri svidaniia'.<sup>78</sup> The idea of mystic visions of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism is reflected in Dante's account of his love of Beatrice. Together these two aspects of Catholic culture help Solov'ev create a narrative out of his own religious mystical experience which in turn becomes part of the Russian poetic tradition. He uses the Catholic tradition to add to the idea of the poet-prophet in Russia, now augmented by the idea of the Catholic-mystic. He finds authority in Catholic religious culture.

Whereas writers such as the Slavophiles had sought to prove that Catholicism was rational and scholastic, Solov'ev's work began to make the case for the fact that mysticism is a crucial part of Catholic tradition, and as noted (in passing) by Gogol', Pushkin and Tolstoi. Instead of simply referring to Catholic mysticism, Solov'ev illustrates or re-creates the spirit of Catholic mysticism in his works, linking together mystic poetry with personal experiences. Many of his works promised unity between Catholicism and Russian culture, but it was his poetry that came closest to creating a space where this unity might occur; his texts gave substance to this ideal of ecumenism by representing it in literary form.

### *A Literary Apocalypse*

Solov'ev turned to fiction in his late work *Tri razgovora* (1900). This unusual text contains an even more unusual appendix, the 'Kratkaia povest' ob antikhriste'. It appears to take a very different approach from *La Russie*. However, there are connections. Just as parables are woven into Dostoevskii's *Brat'ia Karamazovy* and into *La Russie*, so can 'Kratkaia povest'' be viewed as a literary parable. The narrator presents a world where a superman figure, Apollonii (who represents the Antichrist), claims that he can give people everything they need: 'Я дам всем людям все, что нужно.'<sup>79</sup> This claim was never made by any Church, whether Orthodox, Protestant or Catholic, and the writer emphasizes this fact in two ways. It is underlined by

<sup>77</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 38, 41, 86, 125, 142, 221, 292. See Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXI-II.

<sup>78</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>79</sup> 'Kratkaia povest' ob antikhriste,' in Solov'ev, *SS*, X: 199.

Apollonii's protest against Christ's teaching, and by the fact that representatives of all three Churches stand up to the Antichrist.

In the end, as the writer explains through his narrator, the union of the Churches becomes the obvious step to combat the activities of the Antichrist. The heads of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches finally accept papal primacy.<sup>80</sup> The fact that this only happens after a long period of time during which many Christians have abandoned Christianity to join the Antichrist certainly allows for a pessimistic reading of the story. The Antichrist can be seen as a *deus ex machina* in the story of the Christian Church, and some have described the work as a 'literary apocalypse.'<sup>81</sup> Both of these judgments place an inevitable emphasis on the eschatological aspect of the work, ignoring the writer's point about the present. Valliere argues that 'Solov'ev's point is not to invalidate ecumenism but to show that the father of lies can pervert any ideal, even the most sublime. This is [...] an ironic reminder of the limits of Christian activism.'<sup>82</sup>

However, Solov'ev still chooses to visualize that union for which he had worked all his life, even if union happens in the most unlikely of circumstances.<sup>83</sup> He is sympathetic to the plight of the Christian Churches. Despite its complex, multi-faceted approach to the question of Church union, the 'Kratkaia povest'' an experiment in fiction, does not suggest that unity is impossible. The appearance of the 'woman clothed with the sun' (Revelation 12:1) (also inserted into the Petrarch 'translation') in the last lines of the story adds Solov'ev's apparent 'stamp of approval' to the union of the Churches. As Nichols tellingly writes, 'the division of the sons, treated by Solov'ev hitherto in somewhat 'masculinist' terms, are, he evidently believed, not to be healed without the gracious presence of a mother.'<sup>84</sup> As well as its important message about false prophets, false idols and the dangers of growing secularism, the 'Kratkaia povest'' adds an important postscript to the rest of Solov'ev's work on Catholicism: the knowledge that he would not live to see the fulfilment of his project for theocracy, an admission of the difficulties inherent in the realisation of his ideal, and finally suggests that ideas can sometimes be conveyed more fruitfully in literature than in essays or polemics.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>81</sup> Valliere, *Modern Orthodox Theology*, p. 214.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 220-21. Smith, for example, sees the story as a continuity, rather than a break, from Solov'ev's previous work. Smith, *Vladimir Soloviev*, p. 168.

<sup>83</sup> Sergei Solov'ev argues that his uncle never refuted what he had hoped for in *La Russie*, even if his views did change in some respects. S. Solov'ev, *Vladimir Solov'ev: Zhizn' i tvorcheskaia evoliutsiia*, Moscow: Respublika, 1997, p. 322.

<sup>84</sup> Nichols, 'Solovyov and the Papacy,' p. 158.

## Conclusion

Solov'ev never discarded the merits of the questions that the Slavophiles had asked; he borrowed from some of their concepts of Russian identity and from the way that they wrote (particularly in the case of Khomiakov). He had a widely recognized admiration for, as well as disagreement with, Dostoevskii. He absorbed the preceding tradition of representations of Russia and Catholicism and developed it, forming a link between the nineteenth century and twentieth.

Solov'ev's life and work provoked criticism from subsequent thinkers, ranging from accusations of heresy to concern over his syncretism and arguments over his conversion. Apart from the reference to Catholic piety in *La Russie*, 'everyday' Catholic practice remains an unimportant part of his portrayal of Catholicism. The realities of Catholicism are treated as subsidiary to its ideal. *La Russie* did, however, help to bridge the void between the Catholic Church and the Russian national idea, foremost via its most extensive criticisms of the Orthodox Church's activities in history, critique of the nationalist ideas of the Slavophiles, and emphasis on Catholic piety, suggesting a common ground with Orthodoxy.

His work could be criticized for its lack of realism. When Pope Leo XIII heard about the writer's *La Russie* from Strossmayer, he reportedly said 'Bella idea! Ma fuor d'un miracolo è cosa impossibile,' ['a great idea! But impossible without a miracle?']. Mochul'skii, reporting this comment, defined it as a 'death sentence' for the writer's ideas.<sup>85</sup> However, the image of the Temple builders in the Introduction to *La Russie* is relevant, for the philosopher was aware that his project might not be completed and that he might encounter disagreement. He was aware of his work's limitations, whatever mantle he donned, whether that of poet, prophet or philosopher. It was the idealism at the core of his personality that made him such a powerful figure to be followed by later writers.

Solov'ev's true legacy derived from the example of his life as well as his writings. In 1896 Solov'ev took communion from a Uniate priest (Fr Nikolai Tolstoi) in Moscow; according to his nephew Sergei Solov'ev this is an act any Catholic would consider to be a conversion.<sup>86</sup> However, unlike his nephew, Vladimir died in communion with the Orthodox Church. Some subsequent writers have sought to prove

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<sup>85</sup> According to Mochul'skii, Strossmayer told Solov'ev this response of the Pope, and Solov'ev conveyed it in a letter to his brother, Mikhail. Mochul'skii, *Vladimir Solov'ev*, p. 183.

<sup>86</sup> Solov'ev, *Vladimir Solov'ev*, p. 319.



that Solov'ev's 'conversion' was not genuine.<sup>87</sup> Sergei Solov'ev concludes that his uncle's ideas may have been confused, certainly not entirely in accordance with the letter of either Church's laws.<sup>88</sup> As Zernov puts it, 'His communion at the Roman altar was a prophetic act demonstrating his belief that no barriers built by men could break the unity within the Church of Christ.'<sup>89</sup> Some might seek to conclude that Solov'ev was a Catholic 'at heart', or Orthodox 'in spirit', or that he changed his mind during his life. The reasonable conclusion (and the one most scholars now arrive at) is that Solov'ev seems to have believed, with characteristic idealism, that although he recognized the differences between the Churches, there should be no division between them, and that taking communion was the most concrete way of establishing this point of unity and acknowledging the Universal Church.

Viewing Solov'ev as an apostate against Russian Orthodoxy, or as a critic or rebel against the *status quo* of Russian national thought, detracts from acknowledging one of his great strengths as a synthesizer of ideas. It has been noted that 'Solov'ev's polemics awakened the polemicist in others and that his most perceptive readers turned out to be his critics.'<sup>90</sup> Like Chaadaev before him, he provoked a debate about Catholicism and extended it into literary culture, thus widening its scope and opening up new approaches.

In his poetry Solov'ev did not argue for the merits of Catholicism. Instead, it taught by example, assimilating elements of Catholic culture and embodying them into Russian culture. He extended and developed the ways in which writers could explore their faith and emotions such as romantic love in their artistic work. He brilliantly demonstrated the blending of life, faith and works. This was potentially a more powerful testament. Ecumenism should not be approached purely in terms of its end goal, *telos*, or the end of all things, *eschaton*. It involves a spirit of co-operation, a process of dialogue, a journey. Solov'ev drew attention to the problem of the unfinished Temple, sought ways to return to building it, and gathered numerous disciples around him to assist him.

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<sup>87</sup> Mochul'skii, *Vladimir Solov'ev*, pp. 214-18, 261-63. See also, Solov'ev, *Vladimir Solov'ev*, pp. 318-20.

<sup>88</sup> Solov'ev, *Vladimir Solov'ev*, p. 320

<sup>89</sup> N. Zernov, *Three Russian Prophets: Khomiakov, Dostoevsky, Soloviev*, London: SCM Press, 1944. pp. 131-32.

<sup>90</sup> Glazov cites a paper given by Jonathan Sutton at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kairos Symposium, Oxford, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1996, in G. Glazov, 'Vladimir Solovyov and the Idea of the Papacy,' *Communio*, 24, 1997, p. 138.

## **Chapter 8: Vasilii Rozanov**

Vasilii Rozanov (1856-1919) was a contemporary of Solov'ev's. They shared common interests in religion, especially Christianity, love, sex and the family, the purpose of art, but their approaches were radically different. This chapter does not comprehensively explore all the references to Catholicism in Rozanov's published writings. Rather, it examines the image of Catholicism as evoked through a series of key texts which made a fresh contribution to the image of Catholicism in literary culture. The works that Rozanov wrote on Catholicism analysed here were produced over a period of about twenty years spanning the turn of the century. Many of his most important essays on this topic were written between 1900 and 1904.

Rozanov's initial ideas on Catholicism originally emerged from his roots among the later *pochvenniki* and from his critical analysis of Dostoevskii's work. Some critics have labelled his views as conservative, and on this basis we might expect to find the type of anti-Catholicism displayed by the Slavophiles or Dostoevskii in his work.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, his writings contain some examples of anti-Catholicism. His response to Catholicism was partially defined by his complicated, at times polemical, relationship with Solov'ev and the poet-philosopher's works. Rozanov, although to a lesser degree, reacted to the ideas of the Slavophiles on Catholicism, and in this area we see certain points of originality emerge. Lastly, he chose to travel to Italy and Germany and later began to write about his *experience* of Catholicism in these countries. He discussed Catholicism in his journalistic work of the same period. Rozanov's texts project a highly intuitive, reactive, and reflective response to the experience as well as ideas of Catholicism.

### **Rozanov and the Literary Tradition**

#### ***Dostoevskii as an Anti-Catholic Writer***

Rozanov was among the first literary critics to point out the anti-Catholicism of Dostoevskii. In his seminal monograph, *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F. M. Dostoevskogo* (1894), he chose to write about one of the most anti-Catholic sections of Dostoevskii's work, to underline and expand on the writer's ideas. As well as

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<sup>1</sup> C. Read, Religion, Revolution and the Russian Intelligentsia: 1900-1912: The *Vekhi* Debate and its Intellectual Background, London, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979, p. 123.

emphasising the Inquisitor's Catholic origin, Rozanov identifies him as Satan.<sup>2</sup> He took pains to point to other passages of the older writer's oeuvre that were anti-Catholic.<sup>3</sup> He expands on Dostoevskii's division of Europe into (Germanic) Protestant, (Roman) Catholic and Orthodox (Slavic) peoples, connecting religion to ethnicity and to his own preoccupation with the physical, especially race, blood and family ties.<sup>4</sup>

Rozanov's monograph links Catholicism to socialism through their association with France, a link presumably derived from Dostoevskii.<sup>5</sup> Following Dostoevskii, Catholicism is contrasted with the German individualist, Protestant 'idea' and to the Slavic, Orthodox 'idea', defined in terms of love. However, in Rozanov's thinking, and here he draws away from Dostoevskii, the main characteristic of the Catholic 'idea' is its 'стремление к универсализму'.<sup>6</sup> And yet, as for many Russian thinkers, Rozanov saw Russian Orthodoxy as the true form of Christianity.<sup>7</sup> He is yet another writer who draws on the Biblical story of Martha and Mary to represent the beauty of Orthodoxy as he sees it. Unsurprisingly, his *Legenda* concludes with a eulogy to Russian Orthodoxy, setting the tone for much of Dostoevskii scholarship in the next century.

Despite the undoubted importance of Rozanov's writing for Dostoevskii studies, the *Legenda* contains nothing very original with regard to its understanding of Catholicism, apart from its emphasis on biology, which distinguishes it from Dostoevskii's work. By the time the work was republished in 1901, Rozanov had added a note criticizing Dostoevskii's conception of Orthodoxy as 'genuine' and 'pure' Christianity.<sup>8</sup> This raises the question of what happened between 1894 and 1901 causing him to change his mind. In his later essays, the thinker achieves much greater originality, partly because he moves away from writing about another author and relies more on his own thoughts, derived from his encounter with Catholicism. Between the writing of his monograph on Dostoevskii and the later works examined below, Rozanov had found greater success as a writer and inclusion in the intellectual circles of his time and thus perhaps greater self-confidence and independence as a result.

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<sup>2</sup> V. Rozanov, 'Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F. M. Dostoevskogo,' p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 65, see notes on pp. 127-32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 104. See A. Ure, *Vasilii Rozanov and the Creation: The Edenic Vision and the Rejection of Eschatology*, London, New York: Continuum, 2011, p. 12 (Ure also cites Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 198).

<sup>5</sup> Rozanov, *Legenda*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. [Italics in the original.]

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

### ***Khomiakov***

A different approach to Catholicism from that of the Slavophiles and Dostoevskii can be witnessed in Rozanov's tentative critique of Khomiakov's ideas in his essay 'Pamiati A. S. Khomiakova' (1904).<sup>9</sup> In accusing the Slavophile of not understanding the 'великая драма' of Protestantism or Catholicism, he cast doubt on the simplistic conclusions that Khomiakov, Samarin, Dostoevskii and others had so frequently drawn about Catholicism.<sup>10</sup> He continues, 'о рабстве в Католицизме набраны горы пустяков: нет, такое гордое и долговечное здание на рабстве не основывается.'<sup>11</sup> These words undermine the oft-cited idea that loss of freedom is the inevitable price for submission to papal authority. Although Rozanov notes some of the iniquities of Catholicism (the immorality of the Jesuits, the Inquisition, the St Bartholemew Day massacre), he makes the point that Khomiakov had ignored other positive aspects of the Catholic Church's influence.<sup>12</sup>

Rozanov's words in this essay do not attempt to blur the differences between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, instead a significant comparison is made between the two, represented by Dante and Gogol'.

...на церковно-религиозной почве вылилось такое великое создание, как "Divina Commedia", когда у нас на этой почве появилось у бесспорно гениального человека только «Переписка с друзьями» и проч.<sup>13</sup>

These words indicate that a religion's effect on a nation can be judged through its cultural manifestations (here, literature). Catholicism is compared to fertile soil: the riches of Catholicism can be seen in Catholic 'culture.' By writing this, Rozanov begins to forge a different path from some of his predecessors.

### ***Solov'ev***

Close contemporaries (born only three years apart), Rozanov and Solov'ev polemicized with each other, but since Solov'ev died in 1900, Rozanov was able to describe his opponent's legacy. Rozanov's response to Solov'ev after his death mingled notes of apology, regret and criticism. Dimpleby has convincingly argued that his work

<sup>9</sup> My thanks to Pamela Davidson for pointing out the existence of this essay to me and helping to provoke a new line of enquiry.

<sup>10</sup> V. Rozanov, 'Pamiati A. S. Khomiakova,' in V. Rozanov, *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 1995, p. 424.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 425.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 425-26.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

demonized Solov'ev, especially by suggesting that he was a *shut* and thereby associating him with the Devil.<sup>14</sup> He was concerned that religion should not be empty and distant from earthly matters and the flesh; this constituted one of his most important criticisms of the Orthodox Church.<sup>15</sup> He believed in the interconnectedness of love, sexuality, and reproduction, placing great emphasis on the family. He was therefore concerned by the apparent asexuality of writers such as Solov'ev and Gogol', and in his own work connected the act of writing with sexual reproduction.<sup>16</sup> He attacked the trend towards mystical eroticism in the Silver Age for similar reasons.<sup>17</sup> Solov'ev is therefore one of the key figures against whom Rozanov defined his own views on the importance of everyday life and human sexuality. However, Rozanov's view of the thinker as a demonic figure is not apparently connected to Solov'ev's interest in Catholicism, nor does his criticism of the writer's celibacy seem to be connected by him with Solov'ev's known pro-Catholicism.

Rozanov's review of *La Russie* following its publication in Russian in 1911 is critical of Solov'ev's pro-Catholicism as displayed in this particular work.<sup>18</sup> However, his review does not slate the Catholic Church in general, as it might have done, but rather concentrates on particular features of Solov'ev's book. From the fact that the book was written in French, Rozanov deduced that it was written for a foreign audience. He argues that it was written not only for Catholics, but specifically for the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> He goes on to write that Solov'ev ignored the idea of culture, of a nation's soul, in favour of hierarchy:

Он менее имел в виду и католичество, его службы, его музыку, его святых, его строй, законы и учреждения. Глубоко проникающим в сущность вещей глазом он усмотрел во всем этом одно главное: лицо ПАПЫ.<sup>20</sup>

Rozanov's words emphasize the idea of Catholic faith as subjugation to authority, which, according to his analysis, was underlined by Solov'ev's book through its emphasis on the Pope. He therefore argues that Solov'ev misunderstood Russia and

<sup>14</sup> Dimpleby, 'Rozanov and his Literary Demons,' p. 316.

<sup>15</sup> See A. Ure, 'Rozanov, the Creation, and the Rejection of Eschatology,' *Slavonic and East European Review*, 89, 2, April 2011, pp. 239-40.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 235. See Ure, *Vasilii Rozanov and the Creation*, pp. 163-96, especially on Gogol', pp. 186-87.

<sup>17</sup> Dimpleby, 'Rozanov and his Literary Demons,' p. 314, 320.

<sup>18</sup> V. Rozanov (writing as Varvarin), 'Katolitsizm i Rossiia', in V. Rozanov, *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma. Stat'i i ocherki 1911 g.*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 2005, pp.103-10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

simplified (perhaps misunderstood) Catholicism. He is able to make such a claim because by this time he feels he has himself come to know Catholicism. His works in fact refer to many aspects of Catholicism (its services, music, saints) neglected in *La Russie*. Part of Rozanov's attempt to build up an image of himself as a new kind of writer-prophet for Russia consists to some extent in setting up Solov'ev as a false prophet.<sup>21</sup> This approach gives weight to his own views on religion; the attempt to create a voice for himself will include a re-appraisal of Catholicism and criticism of Orthodoxy.

Rozanov approached Solov'ev as a multi-faceted figure, and not simply as a writer, poet or philosopher.<sup>22</sup> For example, he insisted on the importance of Solov'ev's poetic output. He admired the ability of poets to express ideas that seemed clumsy in prose, noting that philosopher-poets were to philosopher-prose-writers as jewellers are to carpenters.<sup>23</sup> Evidently he considered that literature could achieve more than essays in some areas where greater delicacy was required. Moreover, he argued that Solov'ev's evocation of the feminine in his poetic version of Petrarch's *canzone* was much more effective than any similar attempt in his prose works.<sup>24</sup> The fact that he chose to note the importance of the role of the feminine (and the idea of love) for Solov'ev and Petrarch ties in with the importance of the feminine element in his representation of Catholicism.

Rozanov's assessment of Solov'ev's Catholicism is therefore complex. In an essay of 1911, while discussing Solov'ev's conversion he writes, 'как полемист, как писатель, он «был католиком» [...], а как жилец мира он оставался православным. Сила православия – не в умозрении, а в быте.'<sup>25</sup> He confirms that Solov'ev took communion in both churches, regarding this act as one of religious syncretism and seeing Solov'ev as an Orthodox-Catholic or a Catholic-Orthodox.<sup>26</sup> He perceives Solov'ev's example as very different from the actions of converts such as Volkonskaia, Martynov, Gagarin and Pecherin, who, he argues, had abandoned Orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup> He makes the important point that Solov'ev had not chosen to write about Catholic saints such as St Francis as other writers had done in the late nineteenth century, but had

<sup>21</sup> Dimbleby, 'Rozanov and his Literary Demons,' pp. 316-17.

<sup>22</sup> 'Pamiati Vl. Solov'eva' (1900), in *ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>23</sup> V. Rozanov, 'Pamiati Vl. Solov'eva' (1900), in V. Rozanov, *O pisatel'stve i pisateliakh*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 1995, pp. 65-66.

<sup>24</sup> V. Rozanov, 'Na granitsakh poezii i filosofii (Stikhotvoreniia Vl. Solov'eva)' (1900), in *ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> 'Religioznyi 'eklektizm' i 'sinkretizm' (Iz vospominanii o Vlad. S. Solov'eva)' (1911), in V. Rozanov, *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma*, p. 154.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-52.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

written about Orthodox saints.<sup>28</sup> He avers that for an Orthodox to take Catholic communion is possible, whereas the reverse is forbidden due to Catholic ‘rules’.<sup>29</sup>

Rozanov’s ideas on his contemporary help him formulate his view of the ‘true essence’ of Orthodoxy. In this essay he gives primacy to piety, practice and *byt* over polemics or theological disputes such as the one on the *filioque* clause. He is one of the first writers to attempt to ‘reclaim’ Solov’ev as a Russian Orthodox believer. Solov’ev’s syncretism is understood by Rozanov to be a Russian characteristic – here, he echoes Dostoevskii’s idea of Russian universalism, in this case seen to include Catholicism’s influence. His view of Solov’ev’s Catholicism in this essay can best be understood as part of a broader attempt to adjust the focus of understanding of religion from doctrinal or purely institutional issues to issues of everyday practice and piety and social concerns.<sup>30</sup>

### **Rozanov’s Exploration of the Catholic World**

In 1901 Rozanov travelled to Italy, followed by a tour of Germany. The editors of his collected works have suggested that there were numerous motivations for this trip: the recent publication of Merezhkovskii’s novels, especially *Voskresshie bogi* (discussed in the following chapter), his interest in Gogol’, and a long-term preoccupation with the ancient world. Rozanov decided to recount his experiences in some ‘impressions’ entitled *Ital’ianskie vpechatleniia* (1904).<sup>31</sup> The introduction to the work emphasizes his interest in the history of Europe. Of Italy, he writes that ‘Вообще, путешествуя по Италии, дотрагиваешься рукою до истории; тогда как, сидя дома, только думал о ней.’<sup>32</sup> There is a very real sense of exploration in the impressions. Provoked by his impressions, he then discusses ideas, just as Dostoevskii had done in his *Zimnie zametki*. The approach of building upwards from small impressions, sensations, and instinctive reactions to larger ideas changes the representation of Catholicism in Russian culture in a radical way.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.155. The issue of communion (i.e. the Sacrament of the Eucharist) remains a complex and thorny one. For an overview, see Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 279-88, p. 314.

<sup>30</sup> For more on Rozanov’s emphasis on *byt* see Ure, *Vasilii Rozanov and the Creation* especially pp. 49-55 and 141-44.

<sup>31</sup> I am indebted to Adam Ure for pointing out the relevance of this text to my thesis.

<sup>32</sup> V. Rozanov, *Ital’ianskie vpechatleniia*, in V. Rozanov, *Sredi khudozhnikov*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 1994, p. 107.

### ***Ancient Rome***

Rozanov, like Ivanov and Merezhkovskii, was intrigued by pre-Christian culture and religion. His visit to Italy therefore includes visits to many sites famous for their links to Italy's classical past, including the Coliseum, Pompeii and Capri. Rozanov, who did not speak Italian, was apparently surprised to learn that Italians on the street did not understand when he spoke Latin to them, an indication of the degree to which he identified Italy with Ancient Rome and Roman Catholicism.<sup>33</sup> In an essay on Catholicism he stated simply, that 'Папство и католичество – это *imperium spirituale*. Духовное кесарство'.<sup>34</sup> He was an enthusiast for numismatics, a fact he refers to at the beginning of the *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, when he remarks on recognising the faces of the prelates in the Vatican from his coin collection.<sup>35</sup> This creates a vivid and tangible link between the hierarchy of the Roman Empire and that of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>36</sup>

In an essay published shortly after *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, he refers to this work as '*Rimskie vpechatleniia*', as though his trip had only been to Rome.<sup>37</sup> In a sense he reversed Dostoevsky's 'pointed failure to get to Rome', both in his travels and in his writing.<sup>38</sup> Like many other Russians he went to Rome first, before travelling around Italy. Reactions to the Roman past and Roman Catholicism are the warp and weft of the *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*. Barely any parts of it (or of the German notes which follow) are unrelated to either of these subjects, and very often, reactions to classical architecture are followed by reactions to the Catholic Church.<sup>39</sup> This emerges from the historic fact of Rome as the heart of the Roman Empire and administrative centre of Catholicism, and results in many obvious comparisons.

On Rome, Rozanov comments 'Сила – вот отличие, вот сущность Рима.'<sup>40</sup> This remark applies equally to the power of Ancient Rome and the might of the Roman Catholic Church (especially in its heyday). In Rozanov's thinking Rome's power is not necessarily a negative attribute. In another essay, he summarizes the important characteristics of Catholicism as 'сила ... 'деятельность'', while Orthodoxy is

<sup>33</sup> Commentary to Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 424.

<sup>34</sup> Rozanov, 'Lev XIII i katolichestvo,' in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, ed. by A. Nikoliukin, Moscow: Respublika, 1995, p. 354.

<sup>35</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> For more on the significance of Rozanov and numismatics, see A. Ure, 'Rozanov and the Coin,' *Slavonica*, 16, 1, April 2010, pp. 15-28.

<sup>37</sup> V. Rozanov, 'Kto zaderzhivaet obnovlenie tserkvi?,' in Rozanov, *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, p. 310.

<sup>38</sup> Aizlewood, 'To Europe and Back,' p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 109.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.



‘покорность ... тихость’.<sup>41</sup> Following Gagarin and Chaadaev Rozanov sees Catholicism, like Ancient Rome, as a dynamic power. He contests the idea, supported by Khomiakov and Dostoevskii among others, that Catholicism entails obedience and submission to authority. He notes a special freedom of discussion at the First Vatican Council and identifies Catholicism with a sense of purpose, rather than submissiveness.<sup>42</sup> Rozanov thus sees Catholicism through a less clouded lens than many other Russian thinkers and is able to see aspects of the history and culture of Catholic Europe that are strengths. His understanding of the Catholic Church is in dialogue with his view of the contemporary Orthodox Church and his ideas about what the Christian Church should be like. His main contribution to the image of Catholicism in the broader context of literary culture is to challenge commonly held prejudices about the Catholic Church.

### ***The Pope and Infallibility***

Rozanov chooses to emphasize the importance of hierarchy and the role of the Pope, but from a different angle. In a note that attempted to explain his impressions of Italy, he wrote:

Когда я собирался, прошлый год, в Рим, то наскоро выстриг в одном из нескольких у меня имеющихся изданий Библии последнюю страницу из евангелиста Иоанна и заложил в бумажник.

«Ведь вот что я еду смотреть, и проверить и обдумать».<sup>43</sup>

Rozanov's words reverse Dostoevskii's apparent unwillingness to go to Rome; he implies that he was prepared to look and consider before making a judgment. The part of John's Gospel referred to concerns Jesus' meeting his disciples on the shore of Lake Tiberias [the Sea of Galilee] after the Resurrection (John 21:1-25). In this passage Jesus gives Peter a special mission as leader of the apostles. As Rozanov explains, this passage is often cited to support the papal primacy (as in Solov'ev's *La Russie*). He criticizes Russian theologians for their arguments against the primacy, regarded as inadequate and dishonest.<sup>44</sup> He does not choose to support the papal primacy; rather, he makes a more general point that Christianity is hierarchical. He thus broadens out the

<sup>41</sup> Rozanov, 'Lev XIII i katolichestvo,' p. 352.

<sup>42</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> 'Nebesnoe i zemnoe,' in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, p. 162.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.

hackneyed discussions of so many Christian polemics and apologetics, relating primacy back to the question of conciliarity.

Rozanov devoted another essay to papal infallibility. The first part of ‘Papskaia nepogreshimost’ (1901) repeated several anti-Jesuit tropes, almost certainly derived from writers such as Samarin, Tiutchev and Dostoevskii. Like Tiutchev Rozanov referred to Pascal’s *Lettres provinciales*, a famous European anti-Jesuit tract, and observed that the Jesuits, ‘люди весьма практические [...] иезуиты съели папство и совершенно (внутренно) преобразили католицизм.’<sup>45</sup> However, returning to the issue of infallibility, Rozanov once more attacked Orthodox critics of Catholicism:

Мы, русские, ужасно смешно понимаем этот догмат, воображая, что в нем содержится мысль о каком-то чуть ли непорочном зачатии пап; что они – без греха, вне первородного греха, без возможности дурных поползновений и проч. Ничего подобного! Лев XIII снимает фотографии и вероятно, негативы у него выходят не всегда хорошо, ‘погрешительно.’ Папа может быть влюблён, гневаться, хитрить, дипломатничать. А непогрешимость остаётся. Дело в том, что самый термин ‘непогрешимость’ принадлежит только русским и есть приём полемики.<sup>46</sup>

Rozanov underlines the tendency to generalize and to over-simplify when writing polemics and the power of language to determine the course of a debate. For clarity, he therefore uses the Latin term *infallibilitate* (sic.) to refer to the Catholic doctrine, and *nepogreshimost’* to refer to the Russian concept. He explains infallibility by using metaphors from real life, echoing Solov’ev’s references in *La Russie* to St Peter’s foibles. For Rozanov, papal infallibility was not a bone of contention but part of the wider issue of development of dogma within Christianity, an important theme for him.<sup>47</sup>

Neither the Pope nor the Catholic hierarchy are as much the focal point of attention in Rozanov’s works as one might expect. This is because Catholicism, particularly in the *Ital’ianskie vpechatleniia*, is seen far more in terms of its practices and effect on everyday life and culture, than in terms of its political aspect, as had been the case with some other writers such as Dostoevskii and Tiutchev.

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<sup>45</sup> ‘Papskaia nepogreshimost’ kak orudie reformatzii bez revoliutsii,’ in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 264-65.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* Rozanov’s ideas on dogma and church reform are worthy of separate discussion, but it is worth noting here the relationship between his ideas on Catholicism and his desire for change within the Russian Orthodox Church.

### ‘Catholic culture’

Most Russians went to Europe to discover something of European culture: its art, architecture, music and theatre. Rozanov’s initial impressions of Catholic Church music were negative; he likened it disparagingly to opera music. Later, however, he apparently warmed somewhat to the sounds of the ‘Gloria’ sung on Easter Sunday; it seemed to help him to experience something of the Catholic Easter spirit.<sup>48</sup>

Like many Russians visiting Italy, Rozanov was understandably overawed by its art and architecture. In common with writers such as Merezhkovskii and Ivanov, he picked out the great Renaissance painters for special attention in his travels in Europe, commenting on works by Raphael and Michelangelo, among others.<sup>49</sup> On his visit to Dresden, where he viewed Raphael’s ‘Sistine Madonna’, he initially noted a feeling of anti-climax.<sup>50</sup> This is not because he did not value Raphael’s talent, but because his expectations had been inflated by all he had read about the painting, and so it did not impress him in the way he expected. He used writing about the painting to explore his impressions of it – the passage on the ‘Sistine Madonna’ begins with a lukewarm reaction, but gradually it becomes clear that Rozanov felt an admiration for the artist and his painting. His view that the picture ‘имеет [...] БОЛЬШОЙ ИКОННЫЙ ХАРАКТЕР’ (sic.) indicates that he did not subscribe to the view that all Catholic art on religious themes was somehow profane and unworthy. Although interest in and pleasure of paintings by Catholic artists do not necessarily mean that a writer warmed towards Catholicism, openness to other cultural traditions tended to shape an openness to other religious traditions.

Moreover, the space given to Raphael’s painting of the Madonna, and references to other depictions of Mary in Rozanov’s works underline the importance he notes elsewhere of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism.<sup>51</sup> This appears to be connected to his wider concept of the feminine as fertile and maternal, and of the Catholic Church as similar to this maternal figure. This is a radical departure from the representation of Catholicism in Dostoevskii.

<sup>48</sup> Rozanov, *Ital’ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 31; see also p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Raphael was popular in Russia in the nineteenth century. Pearson, ‘Raphael as seen by Russian writers,’ pp. 346-69.

<sup>50</sup> Rozanov, *Ital’ianskie vpechatleniia*, pp. 127-29. Averintsev refers to the significance of this painting, although not to Rozanov. Sergii Bulgakov cited his viewing of the painting as a stimulus to his return to the church and to faith. See, S. Averintsev, ‘Tsvetiki milye bratstva Frantsiska,’

[http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek/Buks/Literat/aver/cvet\\_mil.php](http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek/Buks/Literat/aver/cvet_mil.php), accessed 15/03/12. See also Pearson, ‘Raphael as seen by Russian writers,’ pp. 346-69.

<sup>51</sup> See also, for example, ‘Pamiati A. S. Khomiakova,’ p. 428.

Examples of relatively early Christian art (frescoes and mosaics) held a special fascination for Rozanov, presumably because this period predated the divide between the Orthodox and Western Churches. The writer commented on a familial, ethnic connection between the artists who decorated the catacombs (the hiding place of the early Christians and martyrs) and the later tradition of Catholic art, particularly Raphael.<sup>52</sup> Other Russian writers had frequently sought to associate Catholicism with the might of Imperial Rome, not the Christian martyrs.<sup>53</sup> Rozanov's view once again underlined the importance the writer placed on blood, family ties, and a sense of place and culture.

Rozanov was enthralled by the Byzantine-era murals in the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedino, the cathedral of San Marco in Venice, and the duomo of San Matteo in Salerno.<sup>54</sup> In Salerno he was impressed by the mosaics, commenting, 'Мне кажется, что без мозаики нет культуры; до мозаики – не культура, после мозаики – культура.'<sup>55</sup> Mosaics were used to decorate churches before the Schism across the Christian world, from Italy to St Sophia in Kiev. Despite this fact, Rozanov lamented the lack of similar mosaics in Russia. He concluded that he loved the church in Salerno because it is a house of God, but it is not made clear what about Salerno is so pleasing to Rozanov's spiritual aesthetic. He adored the cathedral of San Marco, apparently instinctively, observing: 'Все тут неразумно, не рассчитано.'<sup>56</sup> This runs counter to the idea of Catholicism as rational and legalistic. This rather mixed and ambivalent reaction to Catholic churches continued. In Florence, for example, he felt very unwelcome in the cathedral.<sup>57</sup> However, a visit to a Gothic church in Germany turned into a long eulogy, first on the genius of the Gothic, then to a more general discussion of genius, drawing comparisons between Pushkin, Dante and the Gothic.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the fact that Rozanov did not always react well to his visits to Catholic churches, they made a deep impression on him and caused him to reconsider what Christian churches should be like. There is an evident connection in his mind between the structure and fabric of the churches themselves and the way the believer reacts to their environment; the connection between aesthetics and spirituality is also found in

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<sup>52</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 52.

<sup>53</sup> See Kalb, *Russia's Rome*.

<sup>54</sup> Averintsev argues that the Byzantine legacy in Italy charmed Russians, noting the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedino in this regard. Averintsev, 'Tsvetiki milye brattsia Frantsiska.'

<sup>55</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-34.

Gogol's writing. Experiences of Catholic churches seem to inform these writers' ideas about Catholicism more generally, their openness towards churches tying into an openness towards the piety of believers, and generating common bonds of prayer and faith. The implication of some of Rozanov's writing is that Russian church architecture could learn from the Catholic example. At other times, he reacted against his experiences, and his visits to Catholic churches helped him appreciate aspects of the Orthodox style of worship.

There is no doubt, firstly, that Rozanov's writings emphasize that the Catholic Church has nourished talent, from Dante to Michelangelo. He noted of Catholicism, 'это другое Монако Европы. Туда текут деньги. Сюда – таланты.'<sup>59</sup> This identifies the Catholic world as a fertile soil for the birth of new talent, a place to which other talent might move and settle. (Although most of Russia's writers were primarily trained in Russia, many painters and architects moved to Italy for long periods of time.) Secondly, Rozanov's experience of culture, especially churches, in the Catholic world, helped to illuminate and change his image of Catholicism. Thirdly, his admiration of Catholicism's strength and ability to nourish genius brought him to the conclusion that Russia needed to undergo a similar cultural revival:

Родники жизни, бытия, восхищения – ими богат католицизмом ... Мы должны воздвигнуть такую же и равную, но противоположную поэзию, и мысль, и вдохновения, но имеющую окраскою своею радость религиозную, а не отчаяние о всем земном, и опирающуюся на факт и чувство воскресшего Христа, и не распинаемого, истерзанного Христа...<sup>60</sup>

The word 'rodniki', identifies the ethnic, native, familial element that was so important to Rozanov's thought and to his understanding of religion and its influence. The use of the verb 'vozdvignut'' is significant because it evokes precisely the image of a building, the building of a church. Rozanov saw in Catholicism and its culture the victory of the risen Christ (*Christus vincit*) rather than the sufferings of the dying Christ, which he identified with Orthodoxy.<sup>61</sup>

Churches are not simply buildings, objects of culture or society, but symbolize and embody the Church; as such, writing on them can inform the reader of a writer's ecclesiology and theological ideas. Likewise, culture is not a by-product of religion but a part of it; a religion can be measured by its culture, and vice versa. Rozanov's

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 132-33.

<sup>61</sup> See Ure, 'Rozanov, the Creation, and the Rejection of Eschatology', p. 229.

approach, examining the details of culture, by moving from impressions to wider ideas, engages his readers. It helps break down prejudices and assumptions. Not only does the reader see the paintings and churches described with fresh eyes, but Rozanov's writings begin to illuminate larger questions about religion and culture and their interaction. Overall, his impressions of Catholicism in these texts articulate a mixture of fear, envy and admiration, but come together to form a fruitful image of the Catholic Church and its influence which is creative and designed as a critical tool to change Russia from within.

### *Catholic practice, Catholic 'byt' and Catholic piety*

The relationship between tangible and visible objects of culture and faith, rather than theology in a scholastic sense, therefore emerges as a theme in Rozanov's writings of this period. Catholic belief, practice and encounters with everyday Catholicism (Catholic 'byt') become core themes in his image of Catholicism. He writes about his encounters with Catholic buildings, services, priests and believers – with everyday Catholicism.

Shortly after his arrival in Rome, like Gogol' before him, Rozanov went to the Easter service at St Peter's and observed that the hands of the prelate were shaking as he held the chalice or ciborium containing the Eucharist:

Он верует, – подумал я – О, какие пустяки, что они все не веруют, безбожники, служат сатане, а не Богу (идея Достоевского в Легенде об Инквизиторе) и т.п. Кто так взирает на Тело и Кровь Господню, – верует в причастие. А если он в причастие верует, – он и во всё верует, т.е. во всё христианство...<sup>62</sup>

This is a key example of the shift from the image of Catholic hierarchy, power and authority evoked by Dostoevskii to the more nuanced understanding of Catholicism presented by Rozanov. The fact that the prelate is not the Grand Inquisitor, but is portrayed as a servant of God, marks a clear step away from Rozanov's discussion of Catholicism in his book on Dostoevskii (and from Dostoevskii himself). He moved from a simple observation of a part of Catholic practice – the Sacrament of the Eucharist – to an empathy with the idea that Catholicism is as valid a form of faith, as Orthodoxy. Faith for Rozanov is therefore not defined by ideological polemics, but revealed through practice. As Ure argues, Rozanov's work elsewhere shows an

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<sup>62</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 32.

emphasis on praxis in Christianity, rather than on the contemplative principle or theological studies distanced from practical realities.<sup>63</sup>

Like Gogol', Rozanov found the clothes of Catholic clergy effeminate.<sup>64</sup> A fascination with the feminine aspect of Catholicism pervaded his impressions of Italy. On entering the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedino, his eye was caught by a statue of a saint holding Christ in his arms. Rozanov mistakenly identifies the statue as St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). However, it was almost certainly St Anthony of Padua (1195-1231).<sup>65</sup> He described in some detail the monastic habit of the friar and noted that the order of St Francis is 'democratic,' by which he presumably means that they are known for poverty and assistance to those in need in society. He characterized the statue as a 'мужская мадонна,' commenting that one would not expect to find an Orthodox priest holding a child. This is a good example of his evocation of Catholic piety (of the common people). Moreover, he underlines the idea of Catholicism as maternal and caring in comparison with Orthodoxy.

Rozanov was aware that the Catholic clergy were celibate. He imagines arguing with the Pope in the Vatican library about the fact that he promotes marriage and children whilst remaining celibate.<sup>66</sup> Even on this controversial difference with Orthodox clergy, he still found a way to applaud this aspect of Catholicism over Orthodoxy: 'Безбрачие там есть удобство, а не идея; условие подвига, и не цель жизни'.<sup>67</sup> He argued that celibacy is a matter of practice – a pragmatic meeting between religious ideals and everyday life. His encounters with lively, happy, purposeful Catholics who have taken religious vows gave him a much more positive picture of life in the Catholic Church. These impressions included seeing seminarians playing a ball game with children and nuns taking children to school: 'У них тот же решительный шаг, как у семинаристов, лицо открытое и совершенно счастливое.'<sup>68</sup> Apparently, one does not meet such happy-looking nuns in Russia. In both these cases Rozanov comments on the purposefulness of Catholicism. The image of Catholicism witnessed in the image of St Anthony as holding or caring for a child represents Catholicism as

<sup>63</sup> A. Ure, 'Germanevtika nachala: Vasilii Rozanov i otritsanie apokalipsisa,' *Mysl'*, April 2013 (no page numbers given).

<sup>64</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 21.

<sup>65</sup> St Anthony was a Franciscan friar, and would therefore be dressed in a similar habit. However, like St Joseph, St Anthony is depicted holding the Christ Child in his arms and lilies, whereas St Francis is shown with birds or animals, commonly a dove. E. Mornin, L. Mornin (eds.), *Saints: A Visual Guide*, London: Frances Lincoln, pp. 214-15, 218-19.

<sup>66</sup> Rozanov, 'Nebesnoe i zemnoe,' p. 169. See also a criticism of the Catholic Church's attitude to family and marriage in 'Lev XIII i katolichestvo', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, p. 351.

<sup>67</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 42.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

fertile and family-like, not barren. In his visit to the cathedral of San Marco's in Venice, the writer likens his experience to that of drinking a mother's milk.<sup>69</sup> This view of the Catholic Church as maternal, life-giving and certainly nourishing, serves to counter the severe, terrifying and mock-paternal Catholicism of Dostoevskii's Grand Inquisitor. But what does it say about the writer's view of the Russian Orthodox Church?

Rozanov's impressions of the practices of Lent and Holy Week in Catholicism were mixed. Initially, he lamented the lack of a 'proper' fast in Lent. However, upon further consideration, he remarked that fasting in Orthodox practice can become automatic, with the real meaning of the fast becoming distanced from the theory in people's minds.<sup>70</sup> Thus, he used the difference between the two Churches' practices to highlight a weakness in the Orthodox practice of some believers (though not in the Church as a whole). He found the tradition of removing the Eucharist from the Tabernacle on the evening of Holy Thursday (symbolising Christ's arrest, crucifixion, death and descent to Hell) to be fitting, 'Это обдуманно в католицизме и обдуманно верно.' However, he was appalled by the fact that the Easter service is held in the morning, not a Paschal Vigil on Saturday night (as in Catholic practice nowadays): 'Ну, католики совсем забыли Бога.'<sup>71</sup>

In Rozanov's thought Catholic piety and practice are identical with the tangible and visible world, the environment of the Christian believer. He was fascinated by light and its effects, with candles and lamps.<sup>72</sup> He was absorbed by the change in how a person experiences religious services when sitting, rather than standing. Sitting promotes intimacy with God. He commented on the fact that churches in Italy are not just places where services are held, because individual prayer sometimes continues after the Mass.<sup>73</sup> There is a place for personal contemplation and silence in churches in Rome. He stumbled across what he thought was a *messa tacita*, when a church is filled with believers praying without any sound.<sup>74</sup> He argues from this experience that silence promotes private contemplative prayer. The Orthodox tradition, especially hesychasm, has historically encouraged contemplative prayer, leading to mystical experience.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 30. The Paschal Vigil (on the evening before Easter Sunday) returned to the Catholic Church in the 1950s and although attending morning Mass is entirely permitted, the emphasis of the Easter liturgies is on the Vigil Mass.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> The *messa tacita* was a type of Mass in Catholicism before the Second Vatican Council where the priest said a Mass, but the responses were all *sotto voce* by anyone attending. It is possible that what Rozanov actually saw was the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which was becoming popular by the period at which he was writing. This was silent and might look similar to a Mass to a non-Catholic.



Finding this type of mysticism in Catholicism opens another door, revealing Catholics as believers close to the Orthodox. However, Rozanov did not make this comparison, choosing instead to lament the lack of silence during Orthodox services.<sup>75</sup>

Travelling away from Rome, Rozanov described seeing a statue of the Madonna in a niche and addressing a prayer to it, and comments on the practice of placing wayside shrines to Our Lady along the roads, seen as evidence of Catholic piety among the laity rather than religiosity imposed from above.<sup>76</sup> Belief is understood as something popular, personal, mystical, displayed through practices and traditions. It appears that for Rozanov the only true measure of faith is in how it is experienced. Where evidence of true practice is found, there true faith can be found as well. In allowing himself to observe Catholic practices, especially examples of everyday piety, Rozanov allowed himself to see Catholics as believers, like himself, in a loving God. The fact that he referred to the Russian Catholics of St Catherine's Parish, Nevskii Prospekt (one of Russia's few long-established Catholic churches) provides further evidence for his acknowledgement of the right of Catholics to practice their faith – even Catholics in Russia.<sup>77</sup> As a whole, his oeuvre is unparalleled in this period for its careful recording of Catholic practice and piety and its attempt to bring these details to a Russian readership, highlighting its positive aspects, particularly dynamism and vivacity, and contrasting these with Russian Orthodoxy.

### ***Unity and Ecumenical Dialogue***

Rozanov was interested in church history and in the activities of the Orthodox Church in the present day. He was acquainted with and took part in contemporary debates on the Christian Church. Discussion about Church unity is a logical corollary of this. In his essay on Leo XIII, he touched on conciliarity and criticized Orthodox thinkers (citing Khomiakov as an example) for accusing Catholicism of not having councils. Referring to the argument that the Catholic Church had neglected to invite the Orthodox Church to its councils, he compared some critics to distant relatives complaining of not being invited to someone's name-day party.<sup>78</sup> Pointing to the shallow, almost childish attitudes of some Russian commentators and polemicists implies the need for a new kind of debate.

<sup>75</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>77</sup> 'Lev XII XIII i katolichestvo,' p. 350. St Catherine's had been a Catholic Church in St Petersburg on Nevsky Prospect since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>78</sup> 'Lev XIII i katolichestvo,' pp. 349-50.

Rozanov argued that the Catholic Church was completely different from the Orthodox Church, and was therefore not in favour of the idea that the Churches should be re-united.<sup>79</sup> Despite his criticisms of Russian Orthodoxy, he remained broadly loyal to Orthodox Christianity. Moreover, he found the idea of a Russian converting to Catholicism absurd because a person's religion was tied to their native land and biological roots. He wrote 'Нет, «Аще не войти в чрево матери и не родится снова» – не стать православному католиком.'<sup>80</sup> He defended the Catholic world (as he had seen it) against attack from others. For example, when Fomenko argued that the fall of the campanile of San Marco must be a sign that it was the Tower of Babylon, Rozanov took him to task. Not only was he an admirer of the architecture of the church in Venice, he also generally disagreed with the type of anti-Catholic prejudice displayed by Fomenko.<sup>81</sup>

Rozanov's ecumenism was substantially different from that of writers such as Chaadaev or Solov'ev. It was personal rather than institutional:

Видоизменения церквей, в целях соединения их – не нужно. Пусть останутся они каждая на своем месте и в своем виде. И это нисколько не должно препятствовать нам соединиться в одной молитве, в одних таинствах.<sup>82</sup>

It appears from this quotation that the writer did not subscribe to the idea of a formal, institutional unity between the Christian Churches, but instead preferred a sense of each church acting within its own remit, a difference that did not preclude an individual experience of spiritual unity or 'peaceful coexistence':

И таким образом, «разделение» это напоминает собою забор, со страшными шипами на нем, с угрожающими на нем надписями, между дворами двух соседей, давно мирно пьющих по вечерам чай вместе. Все имеет вид якобы отделения «волков» от «овец», когда по обе стороны «разделения» пасутся равно мирные коровы... Золото – это любовь и мир христианского мира.<sup>83</sup>

In Rozanov's writings, while division exists, it is immaterial to the condition of peaceful coexistence. Unity is not an abstract aim to be pursued, based purely on theological agreement or a change in rites, rather, unity is based on inner feeling. It

<sup>79</sup> Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 27.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-24.

<sup>82</sup> 'Russko-katolicheskie otnosheniia,' p. 230.

<sup>83</sup> Rozanov, 'O "Sobornom" nachale v tserkvi i o primirenii tserkvi,' p. 369.

entails an acceptance of difference and of similarity. Thus ecumenism is, as so often in Rozanov's writings, best conveyed through a metaphor which creates an image of something both tangible and everyday: two neighbours drinking tea.

### Conclusion

Rozanov's departure point for his exploration of Catholicism was his reading of other writers. He started with the work of Dostoevskii, underlining its anti-Catholicism. Some of his works recycle existing ideas about Catholicism, particularly his views on the Jesuits, which closely resemble those of Pascal, Tiutchev, Samarin and Dostoevskii. By the turn of the century, his writing showed signs of a greater openness towards Catholicism. His trip to Italy and Germany allowed him to explore the reality of Catholicism for himself. Although this reality was still filtered through his subjective perceptions and inherited prejudices, his approach to Catholicism, especially his ability to view the Catholic world with fresh eyes, conveyed to his readers many new facts, details and ideas about that world. The fact that the writer used Catholicism as a point of comparison to criticize Orthodoxy and to suggest changes in Russia aligned him with pro-Catholic thinkers. However, Rozanov believed that Orthodoxy should respond to Catholicism, not simply emulate it.

After the publication of *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia* the author commented that many (including Aleksandr Kireev) had accused him of becoming 'infected with Catholicism'.<sup>84</sup> The fear that he was following Solov'ev and others in advocating Russian Catholicism was unfounded, as Rozanov explained to his readers. He admitted that his trip made him aware of Christianity beyond the bounds of Russia:

Италия ... «отворила двери» моего религиозного сознания, но только отворила, а не повлекла куда-нибудь... затем я поклонился преспокойно мощам апостолов Петра, Матфея, Павла и ничего ни к кому враждебного не чувствовал. Но родную берёзку в сердце носил, т.е. не забывал, что я русский и что каждый человек имеет одну родину. Вообще «разделения церквей про Фотии» я не чувствовал, но и нового синтеза не производил... я свободный христианин, и мне везде просторно.<sup>85</sup>

Rozanov's sense of having only one homeland might be contradicted by other writers, including Ivanov. However, his idea of being a 'free Christian' is equally important.

<sup>84</sup> 'Kto zaderzhivaet obnovlenie Tserkvi?', p. 310 [this is Rozanov's phrase].

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

The fact that many accused Rozanov of being attracted to Catholicism because he showed an interest in it and because he used comparisons with it to criticize aspects of Orthodoxy, suggests that attitudes had not substantially changed since the days of Gogol'. The writer had been called on to defend himself, just as Gogol' had been. Rozanov did so by underlining the connection he felt to the native soil of his land. The relationship between native religion and native soil and his love for the Orthodox Church should not be underestimated in Rozanov. Yet he was able to criticize the Orthodox Church far more openly than many writers of the nineteenth century, and his image of Catholicism was integral to informing this process. Despite the fact that the image of Catholicism performed this critical function in his work, he presents it in such an innovative way that the reader can make his or her own judgements about the Catholic Church.

Rozanov's perceptions of Catholic *byt* and Catholic practice mark a radical departure from that of any nineteenth-century writer. The main consistency in his works is that he reacts in a fresh and individual way to the things he sees and hears. His writings have a unique ability to encourage the reader to reconsider Catholicism in a new way. Rozanov's subjective point of view, conveyed in his works, can paradoxically help readers appreciate that Catholics could have their own beliefs and piety, as did Orthodox Russians. Scholars have pointed to the *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia* as important in Rozanov's development of a newer, more literary style.<sup>86</sup> Changes in the way Russians wrote about Catholicism, particularly genre and style (including the everyday imagery of tea-drinking) shifted the focus of debate from the public sphere to the personal one, from the institutional to the individual, from polemical conflict to peaceful co-existence.

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<sup>86</sup> Commentary to Rozanov, *Ital'ianskie vpechatleniia*, p. 427.

## Chapter 9: Dmitrii Merezhkovskii, 1890-1909

Dmitrii Merezhkovskii (1865-1941) worked closely with Vasilii Rozanov in setting up the Religious-Philosophical Meetings at the beginning of the twentieth century. Like Solov'ev he was a poet, but he also wrote many historical novels and biographies (as well as essays), and most of these prose works were historical in nature. Merezhkovskii asked what lessons could be learnt from the effect of religion on the history of Western Europe and Russia to help Russia's present. He was particularly preoccupied with the history and culture of the classical world, the Italian Renaissance and Petrine Russia.

During the 1880s and 1890s Merezhkovskii's interest in Catholicism and the Catholic world can already be traced. A couple of his poems touched on themes from Dante and Petrarch including 'Francheska da Rimini' (1885), and 'Iz Petrarkhi' (1893). Other poems such as 'Mikel' Andzhelo' (1892) and 'Leonardo da Vinchi' (1894) reveal the writer's preoccupation with Renaissance art. Among other aspects of Catholic culture in Merezhkovskii's poems, St Francis of Assisi was the subject of a *poema*, discussed later in this chapter.<sup>1</sup> However, it is his trilogy of novels, *Khristos i Antikhris* (1895-1905), particularly the middle novel, *Voskresshie bogi: Leonardo da Vinchi* (1901) that forms his major contribution to the image of Catholicism. This novel offers a striking treatment of the role of the artist in relation to culture and faith. It created a new reality in fiction that had the potential to be very persuasive. However, before looking at the role of art more closely, the socio-political aspects of Merezhkovskii's view of Catholicism will first be considered.

### **Rome and Third Rome**

*Khristos i Antikhris* is a large work, with disparate threads of narrative, setting and characters. Merezhkovskii uses many echoes and leitmotifs that help to connect the narrative and hold the trilogy together. The trilogy represents the history of European culture as a palimpsest.<sup>2</sup> Another important feature of the writer's work is his use of binary oppositions to explore the existence of a middle ground between extremes, or to point to a 'third way', which is suggested as a future possibility. For example, he makes

<sup>1</sup> 'Francheska da Rimini' (1885), in D. S. Merezhkovskii, *Sobranie stikhotvoreniiii*, St Petersburg: Folio-Progress, 2000, pp. 97-98, 'Frantsisk assizskii' (1890-91), in *ibid.*, pp. 431-53, 'Mikel' Andzhelo' (1892), in *ibid.*, pp. 278-81, 'Leonardo da Vinchi' (1894), in *ibid.*, p. 240, 'Dies Irae' (1894), in *ibid.*, p. 217, 'Iz Petrarkhi' (1893), in *ibid.*, p. 599.

<sup>2</sup> D. S. Merezhkovskii, *Voskresshie bogi (Leonardo da Vinchi)* (2 vols.), Moscow: Kniga, 1990, I: 14-15. (This edition is a facsimile reprint of the 1914 collected works.)

repeated references to the ideal of a Third Rome. His trilogy of historical novels, enacts this ideal through its tripartite structure: Ancient Rome, Roman Catholicism in Renaissance Italy, and Russia's current or future potential to become the Third Rome (explored through in the setting of Petrine Russia).<sup>3</sup> The concept of the Third Rome hinged on proving that the First Rome and the Second Rome (Roman Catholicism in Merezhkovskii's conception) had fallen.

### *Ancient Rome*

Merezhkovskii's poem 'Budushchii Rim' (1891) draws a direct comparison between the fall of Imperial Rome and the fall of Christianity as exemplified by Roman Catholicism:

... и во имя Всевышнего Бога  
 В храме великом Петра весь человеческий род  
 Церковь хотела собрать. Но вслед за языческим  
 Римом, Рим христианский погиб: вера потухла в сердцах.<sup>4</sup>

The poem directs the reader to the failure of the mission and to the poet's desire to see Russia as a Third Rome in the future. It underlines that Catholicism had ceased to be a true form of Christianity.

In *Khristos i Antikhris*t, especially in the first part which is set in Ancient Rome, the narrator at times appears infatuated with pagan religion and disdainful of the early Christians.<sup>5</sup> In the second part, *Voskresshie bogi*, those associated with the pagan past and not so closely linked to Christianity, frequently seem stronger and capable of more extraordinary, certainly more vital activities. The character Giovanni is caught between these two extremes.

Merezhkovskii's novel represents an attempt to resolve the tension between clashing pagan and Christian (here, Catholic) values. The writer depicts Leonardo da Vinci's role as a mediator between the secular and religious, the pagan classical past and the present. Leonardo epitomizes the power of Renaissance humanism, and is therefore key to understanding Merezhkovskii's trilogy. Leonardo is the link connecting contemporary Christianity (in the novel, Catholicism), faith in God, faith in human achievements, and the triumphs of the pagan past. His synthesis of pagan and Christian values is not the final point in the story, rather he is a forerunner for modern Russia: a possible figure to be emulated.

<sup>3</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, p. 35. For more on Russia and the Third Rome, see Duncan, *Russian Messianism* and Zernov, *Moscow the Third Rome*.

<sup>4</sup> Merezhkovskii, *Sobranie stikhotvoreniiii*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, p. 41.

### ***The Second Rome: Catholicism***

The Third Rome theme relates to the relationship between Church and State, presented from a historical perspective in Merezhkovskii's novel. In the Italy depicted in *Voskresshie bogi*, State and Church were closely entwined. Among the secular characters at the court of Milan, prayer is often connected with sinful activities (such as adultery and murder).<sup>6</sup> The state or secular individuals are the financial patrons of the creation of religious art and architecture, such as Milan's Duomo.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the Catholic Church is often represented as secular and sinful. A cardinal has a concubine.<sup>8</sup> The Borgia family was an extreme example of the dangerous intermingling of secular and spiritual power. The Borgia Pope Alexander VI has a daughter by his mistress, and wishes to give this daughter expensive jewels. What makes this character seem even more distasteful is that the narrative hints that he may harbour an incestuous attraction to his daughter.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Pope has a son, Cesare Borgia.<sup>10</sup> Cesare was an ex-priest and a soldier who is rewarded by the Pope for his military successes. The symbolism of this ceremony of reward draws overtly on the significance of his name: Cesare was crowned as a Caesar; the Pope crowns his own son as a Man-god.

Да здравствует Цезарь! – кричала романьольская гвардия на дворе Бельведера.

Герцог вышел к войску на балкон.

Под голубыми небесами, в блеске утреннего солнца, в пурпуре и золоте царственных одежд, с жемчужинным голубем Духа Святого над головою, с таинственной розой в руках – радостью обоих Иерусалимов – казался он толпе не человеком, а богом.<sup>11</sup>

This passage and others like it highlight the similarities between Ancient and Catholic Rome by use of certain topoi (the Belvedere court) and symbolism (imperial purple/porphyry).<sup>12</sup> The crowning ceremony described above is then linked in the

<sup>6</sup> Merezhkovskii, *Voskresshie bogi*, I: 100-1, 115, 203.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., I: 136.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., II: 101.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., II: 169-70.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., II: 25.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., I: 155.

<sup>12</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, p. 53.

narration with the Beast of the Apocalypse, which underlines the association between Caesar, Pope and the Antichrist made by previous writers.<sup>13</sup>

Merezhkovskii's Pope Alexander uses the image of the sword as a symbol of the authority both of the Caesars and of the Popes:

Два было Рима. Первый собрал племена и народы земные под властью меча. *Но взявший меч от меча погибнет.* И Рим погиб. Не стало в мире власти единой, и рассеялись народы, как овцы без пастыря. Но миру нельзя быть без Рима. И новый Рим хотел собрать языки под властью Духа, и не пошли к нему, ибо сказано: будешь пасти их жезлом железным. Единый же духовный жезл над миром власти не имеет. Я, первый из пап, дал церкви Господней сей меч, сей жезл железный, коим пасутся народы и собираются в стадо единое. Цезарь – мой меч. И се, оба Рима, оба меча соединяются, да будет папа кесарем и кесарь папою, царство духа – на царстве Меча в последнем вечном Риме!<sup>14</sup>

The way that Pope Alexander evokes the idea of the Third Rome is actually based on caesaropapism in its most literal sense. The result is a corruption of theocracy and abuse of power, which would result in the earth being ruled as one kingdom by force of violence. Dostoevskii and Tiutchev had already used such imagery in their work, particularly the trope of the sword; Merezhkovskii quotes the same saying 'he who takes the sword, dies by the sword' (derived from Jesus's words to Peter in Gethsemane) that Tiutchev had used in his poem 'Encyclica' (1864). Merezhkovskii, by making the Pope a character in the novel, illustrates the historical embodiment of concepts such as the Pope, Caesar and the sword of authority. Unlike Tiutchev or Dostoevskii, he is able to place these words in the Pope's mouth. Literary representation of a character in fiction is more persuasive than the polemical capabilities of poems. His depiction of the Catholic Church as an institution and its influence on secular society in the Renaissance, as read through the synecdoche of Pope Alexander and the Borgias, is terrifying indeed.

If we examine only the socio-political view of Catholicism in the novel, then it appears negative and follows a typical Russian anti-Catholic stereotype. The Papacy is linked with power, and the Catholic Church and its clergy with corruption. However, while Merezhkovskii was hugely indebted to the novelistic and anti-Catholic tradition represented by Dostoevskii's work, he was in some senses a successor of Solov'ev and a contemporary of Rozanov. Like Rozanov, he was attracted to some aspects of Catholic

<sup>13</sup> Merezhkovskii, *Voskresshie bogi*, I: p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78 [my italics].



culture. Merezhkovskii, too, thought that the Orthodox Church should be reformed, and that the relationship between the avant-garde of Russian culture and Russian society should change. In his novel, the focal point is art (and its scientific counterpart, invention), not politics.

### ***Third Rome***

In *Voskresshie bogi* the idea of the Third Rome is made explicit by the scene at the end of the novel, where one of the Muscovites reads about Babylon and the story of the White Cowl.<sup>15</sup> Straight after this reading, Evtikhii has a dream that contains a vision of Divine Wisdom.<sup>16</sup> The vision of Holy Sophia inspires Evtikhii in his work as an icon painter, and the ending of the novel points forward in time, and towards Russia. However, the reader is made aware that the Third Rome (if understood as the Kingdom of God), was not yet established in Russia, which had its own struggles over the balance of power between Church and State. Emphasis is placed on the artist figure.

After the completion of *Voskresshie bogi* and the rest of the trilogy, its author wrote an essay where he returned to the subject of theocracy.<sup>17</sup> 'Revoliutsiia i religiia' (1910) initially outlined how the Catholic Church had attempted to grasp power and create a historical theocracy in Europe (as presented in the novel). In Western Europe, according to Merezhkovskii, the Church became the State, whereas in the East, the State had taken over the Church.<sup>18</sup> He moved on to examine the concept of the Kingdom of God in Russian thought, understood in social and cultural terms. A renewal of religion would lead to a renewal of the spiritual in society, where religion would be enmeshed with society and culture.

Merezhkovskii did not outline a concrete programme for revolution in this essay, and the revolution he refers to is cultural rather than political, and certainly not socialist. In his thought, as is frequently the case in Russia, cultural figures and their artistic works could influence society. He began with Petr Chaadaev, whom he called the 'bednyi rytsar'' of the Russian revolution, citing Pushkin's poem 'Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...'.<sup>19</sup> Merezhkovskii was not alone in linking knights with Catholicism.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., II: 384-86.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., II: 386-87.

<sup>17</sup> D. Merezhkovskii, 'Revoliutsiia i religiia,' in D. S. Merezhkovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii D. S. Merezhkovskogo*, St Petersburg, Moscow: M. O. Vol'f, 1911, X: 33-92. My thanks to Ruth Coates for drawing my attention to the relevance of this essay to my thesis in response to a paper I gave at the University of Sheffield, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Merezhkovskii, 'Revoliutsiia i religiia,' pp. 34-37.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

Blok called Solov'ev a 'rytsar'-monakh' in his 1910 essay of the same title.<sup>20</sup> The image of the knight in 'Revoliutsiia i religiia' is used to signify Chaadaev's missionary zeal, alongside his straying from the true path. The essay then discusses many of the Russian writers whose works are analyzed in this research, such as Gogol', Dostoevskii, Solov'ev and Rozanov.

Merezhkovskii uses the epigraph of Chaadaev's 'Lettre première' (*Adveniat regnum tuum*) as a refrain throughout the essay in order to link his overall theme and the writers he discusses. He argued that none of these writers had found success in their attempts to create the Kingdom of God in Russia, although they failed for different reasons. For example, 'Самодержавие погубило в Чаадаеве великого русского мыслителя; православие в Гоголе великого русского художника.'<sup>21</sup> The implication of this comment is arguably that Gogol' could have benefited from his proximity to Catholicism, and certainly that his art suffered from his renewed zeal for the Orthodox Church at the end of his life. Merezhkovskii's essay is highly critical of Solov'ev's vision for theocracy based on the medieval Catholic model:

Соловьев возвращается к ложной теократии средних веков, к неразрешимому спору меча духовного с мечом железным, римского папы или византийского патриарха с римским или византийским кесарем, т.е. утверждает в конце то, что отрицал в начале – кошунственное смешение государства с церковью.<sup>22</sup>

This criticism of Solov'ev's theocracy is couched in the same language that Pope Alexander used in the novel.<sup>23</sup> This recycling of imagery underlines how in Merezhkovskii's writing the Catholic aspect of theocracy is entwined with theocracy's corruption and failure; in this respect, his work echoes Dostoevskii's 'Legenda'. Moving on to a discussion of his contemporaries, Merezhkovskii accuses Rozanov of being more 'anti-Christian' than Nietzsche. It is possibly significant that Merezhkovskii compares Rozanov to the Grand Inquisitor, although Merezhkovskii does not discuss Rozanov's attitude to Catholicism in this essay.

Merezhkovskii sees a tension or struggle between religion and revolution in Russian thought, arguing that autocracy and the Orthodox Church are interconnected.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> A. Blok, 'Rytsar'-monakh' in *Kniga o Vladimire Solov'evе*, pp. 329-35.

<sup>21</sup> Merezhkovskii, 'Revoliutsiia i religiia,' p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

He believes that religion and politics should somehow be merged together in a new way.<sup>25</sup> In his attempt to establish a thread of continuity throughout the history of Russian thought, he sets himself up as the last in a line of intellectuals to take up Russia's social and spiritual welfare as his mission. His criticisms of other writers seem primarily to be designed to emphasize the positive ideas behind his literary endeavours and his own work at the Religious-Philosophical Meetings.<sup>26</sup> He ascribed value to previous attempts, even if they failed: 'Соединение церкви с миром не удалось; но всё-таки сделан был опыт, который никогда ещё не делался и никогда не забудется.'<sup>27</sup> Although he makes no real arguments about how the revolution should be brought about, he places a positive emphasis on the literary undertakings of the 'Decadent' (i.e. Symbolist) poets, Sologub, Briusov, and his own wife, Zinaida Gippius, arguing that they are the true heirs to Pushkin and Tiutchev.<sup>28</sup> The essay's ending, thanks to its chronological structure, necessarily points towards the future, even if the future, as so often in Russian culture, is not clearly planned out.

According to Merezhkovskii's essay, Catholicism could provide, and perhaps had provided, an alternative model for the interaction of the state, church and intellectuals, since so many of the writers he chooses to discuss were either pro-Catholic or heavily influenced by their reaction against Catholicism. However, his analysis of pro-Catholic writers such as Chaadaev and Solov'ev, as well as his criticism of historical Catholicism (in his novel), suggested that he did not believe that the way the Church and State had functioned in Western Christianity was always a helpful pattern from a socio-political perspective (rather than a cultural one). This view is corroborated by the way his novel describes the influence of the Church on secular matters.

The essay, like his novel *Voskresshie bogi*, advances the artist as a figure who could perhaps make more progress than philosophers towards the Kingdom of God. Merezhkovskii uses the image of Catholicism as a key element to analyse what the work of several writers had to say about what an ideal theocracy might look like. Historical visions of theocracy are condemned, but writers and artists are privileged with better visions. Merezhkovskii thus placed more emphasis on analysis of the spiritual and cultural aspects of Catholicism's influence than on its socio-political aspects.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-89.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

## Saint and Sinner

### *Art and Religion in the Renaissance*

The introduction of a vision of Sophia in the final pages of *Voskresshie bogi* recalls the image of the Virgin Mary at the very end of Solov'ev's 'Kratkaia povest' ob Antikhriste'. The description of the vision can be compared from a literary perspective with the repeated descriptions of works of art in the novel (*ekphrasis*). One of Solov'ev's important legacies was mystic visions and his evocation of them in his literature. The novel repeatedly attempts to represent a series of subjective, sometimes mystical, perceptions (experiences of art, visions, hallucinations and dreams).

The theme of mysticism and artistic inspiration in the novel is sometimes obscured by the novelist's erudition and use of the empirical historical method. The painstaking research that went into *Voskresshie bogi* took several years, and is revealed in the level of detail with which the author describes Leonardo's paintings, notebooks, studios, and other objects that demonstrated his artistic and scientific talents.<sup>29</sup> The book describes other great figures of the Italian Renaissance, including the Duke of Milan, Machiavelli and artists such as Raphael and Michelangelo, and a number of minor poets. It underlines that Leonardo's work was both secular and religious, varying from notebooks on anatomy, dams, and flying machines to religious art and architecture.

The novel begins with the excavation of a statue of a pagan goddess, confronting the reader immediately with the tension between concepts of art as man-made, divine or demonic, and the reactions of Christians to these conflicting perceptions.<sup>30</sup> Giovanni's agonies over the purpose of art point to his underlying tension over human sexuality and sinfulness, symbolized in his attraction to Mona Cassandra and eventual demise. These ideas about sin and holiness are explored through Giovanni's eyes when the narrative point of view is close to his; when he takes on the role of narrator, he observes Leonardo from this same moral perspective. Giovanni's observations about the artist inform the reader about the distant, enigmatic figure of the 'Renaissance Man'.

Leonardo is not simply the novel's main character, but also the main representative of Catholicism in Merezhkovskii's trilogy. He is not described in a straightforward way, but depicted through mirror images and binary oppositions. Catholicism can be seen to hold up a mirror to the Orthodox Church in a similar way.

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<sup>29</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, p. 52.

<sup>30</sup> See Davidson, 'Divine Service or Idol Worship?', pp. 125-64.

The use of mirror images and binary oppositions, although complex, is informative. According to the novel, both God and the Devil could be found in Leonardo's works; therefore he somehow represented both sides of human nature. Leonardo is alternately represented in Merezhkovskii's narrative as a Janus figure or Christ-Antichrist; he also is compared to some saints: St Francis of Assisi, St Thomas the Apostle (known as Doubting Thomas), and St John the Baptist, the subject of his last major painting.

Leonardo is marked out as unproductive; he has no children and appears to be incapable of relationships with either women or men. His pupils, who are surrogate children for him, suffer unpleasant fates or leave him, apart from his last pupil Francesco. Many of his own works were unfinished or destroyed either at the hands of others or as a result of his own incompetence.<sup>31</sup> However, each of the major works referred to by the narrators deserves lengthy descriptions and causes amazement in the eyes of their observers.

Although the reader is made aware of the proximity of religious art to classical art and secular themes, and of the potential for art to corrupt, *Voskresshie bogi* does not conclude that this necessarily makes Western (i.e. Catholic) art evil. In fact, Leonardo is represented as a forerunner of the Russian artists represented in the novel.<sup>32</sup> The word 'forerunner' is itself significant, since Leonardo's last painting is of John the Baptist, known as 'Иоанн Предтеча' in Russian. Like the 'Mona Lisa', Leonardo is said to have portrayed himself in this painting.

Despite the artist's evident foibles, Leonardo's artistic works cannot be viewed as anything other than works of a genius, although he is not portrayed as the *final* genius in world culture. At one point, a painting of his is actually referred to as an *ikona*.<sup>33</sup> As well as implying that some Catholic art can be subsumed into the Orthodox heritage, this also suggests that Catholic art, like icons, can serve as a form of religious revelation. This was precisely the goal that the religious symbolist poets sought to achieve through their works, a goal attributed retrospectively to the figure of Leonardo, represented as Forerunner to the literature of Merezhkovskii and his contemporaries. Leonardo, a Catholic artist, can thus be seen as a universal artist and a model for how Merezhkovskii saw himself and the ideal contemporary artist. He therefore plays a similar role to that which Pushkin performed for Dostoevskii. In an essay on Solov'ev Merezhkovskii argued (as Dostoevskii had done) for the unique capacity of Russian

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II: 30-31.

<sup>32</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, pp. 55-59.

<sup>33</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, I: 100.

thinkers and artists to embody the universal, yet in his novel, Leonardo, a Catholic, is made to fulfil this very same function.<sup>34</sup> This represents a striking departure from Dostoevskii's work. Merezhkovskii chose Leonardo as an ideal rather than, for example, Andrei Rublev, because he thought that the Renaissance Man had succeeded in synthesizing the riches of the classical past with Christianity in art.

### *Catholic Mysticism*

Although the novel refers to scholasticism in several places, it foregrounds Catholic mysticism.<sup>35</sup> For example, the *stigmata* of the mystics St Francis and St Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) are compared in surprisingly detailed fashion.<sup>36</sup> Giovanni is depicted as desiring the mystical visionary faith of Savonarola and being carried away by mystical experience during a church service:

Дай мне болью ран упиться,  
Крестной мукой насладиться –  
Мукой Сына Твоего!

пели монахи, и Джиованни хотелось, чтобы с ним повторилось чудо, о котором говорил Савонарола, – чтобы огненные лучи, выйдя из чаши со святыми Дарами, выжгли в теле его, как раскаленное железо, крестные раны.

Gèsu, Gèsu, amore!  
вздыхал он, изнемогая от неги.<sup>37</sup>

However, this mystical faith does not save the apprentice. The type of ecstatic religious experience, described by the narrator in relation to Giovanni, became a popular theme in Symbolist poetry during the early twentieth century, where it became connected to a sort of religious eroticism. Catholic mystic poetry abounds in examples of religious eroticism (where love for Christ is likened to erotic love). In addition, in the character of Giovanni, religious ecstasy is mirrored by his carnal desire for Mona Cassandra, to which he eventually succumbs. The quotation in the above extract 'Дай мне болью ран упиться...' comes from Merezhkovskii's translation of *Stabat mater*

<sup>34</sup> Merezhkovskii, 'Rech' skazannaia,' pp. 472-74.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., I: 301.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 134. *Stigmata* is the term used to describe bodily marks or wounds which replicate those of the crucified Christ. According to Catholic tradition, the first and most famous recipient of stigmata was St Francis, although many other figures have been said to receive them. St Catherine's stigmata are referred to also on pp. 213-4.

<sup>37</sup> Voskresshie bogi, I: 213-4.

*dolorosa*, which is cited in full later in the novel. His decision to translate it into Russian verse reflects his thorough investigation of the Catholic liturgical tradition.

На Голгофе, Матерь Божья,  
Ты стояла у подножья  
Древа Крестного, где был  
Распят Сын Твой, и, разящий,  
5 Душу Матери скорбящей  
Смертной муки меч пронзил.  
Как Он умер, Сын Твой нежный,  
Одинокий, безнадежный,  
Очи видели Твои...

\* \* \*

10 Не отринь меня, о Дева!  
Дай и мне стоять у Древа,  
Обагреного в крови,  
Ибо видишь — сердце жаждет  
Пострадать, как Сын Твой страждет.  
15 Дева дев, родник любви,  
Дай мне болью ран упиться,  
Крестной мукой насладиться,  
Мукой Сына Твоего;  
Чтоб, огнем любви сгорая,  
20 И томясь, и умирая,  
Мне увидеть славу рая  
В смерти Бога моего!<sup>38</sup>

The Latin hymn *Stabat mater* is one of the best-known hymns of its type addressed to the Virgin Mary. Merezhkovskii translation of the original is not exact, but takes its spirit from the original. He has preserved the trochaic metre (approximately) and the rhyme scheme (aab, tercets) but not the structure of the stanzas. His version is shorter than the original, he omits the middle stanzas (5-9 in the Latin) and merges the end stanzas together in order to create a new poem in Russian, which is nevertheless entitled *Stabat mater dolorosa* in the novel.

The purpose of the *Stabat mater* was to encourage mystical devotion to Christ by directing the believer to the experience of the Virgin Mary and praying for her intercession. It suggests a way of overcoming pain through religiosity and the hope for a new life in heaven. The reference to Christ's wounds evokes the stigmata. According to Ware, the attention paid to the physical sufferings of Christ's passion is something alien

<sup>38</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, II: 184-85 [ellipsis in original text]. As far as I can establish, this translation was first published in the novel, and only later appears in collections of his verse.

to Orthodoxy. He argues that Catholicism concentrates too much on the suffering Christ, rather than the risen Christ, citing as an example the *Stabat mater*.<sup>39</sup> The poem is therefore alien to the Russian religious tradition, and by including this poem in his work, Merezhkovskii is introducing a Catholic text into Russian literature.

In the novel the poem is introduced in a scene set at the deathbed of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI, whose dying words are the same as Line 10. The emphasis in the poem is not on judgement (the relevant stanza gets removed) but on the Virgin's intercession. The use of the poem is ambivalent: on the one hand, Merezhkovskii chose to translate and present a Catholic hymn in his novel, which opens up the doors to seeing Catholicism as a mystical faith like Orthodoxy. However, the poem's positioning in the text undermines this, as its content seems to jar with the sinful behaviour of the Borgia Pope. Catholic mysticism as seen through the eyes of Giovanni or at the Pope's bedside is therefore of interest to the novelist, but positioned ambivalently within the novel. This leads the reader to question how genuine the invocation of such mystic texts is.

The *Stabat mater* is Franciscan in its mysticism, and the reference to stigmata evokes St Francis. Merezhkovskii was apparently intrigued by this saint, one of the most well-known Catholic mystics. He wrote a *poema* 'Frantsisk assizskii' (1890-91), narrating the saint's life, from his background through his choice of an ascetic lifestyle, and his receiving of the stigmata to the founding of the Franciscan order and beyond. The poem reports the Pope's initial wariness, then cynical acceptance of the new order.

The poet emphasizes the saint's yearning for peace amongst men. He explains how St Francis hoped for peace during the Crusades. St Francis's asceticism and mysticism make him similar to the Russian monastic holy men known as *starsy*. This familiarity allows his story to be assimilated more readily into Russian culture. Merezhkovskii underlines St Francis's relationship with the natural world and the way he used to talk to birds. He includes his own translation of St Francis's *Canticle of the Sun*, originally written in Italian – enabling Merezhkovskii to present St Francis to be presented as a poet as well as mystic. This represents an important part of a strand stretching back to Solov'ev (and forwards to the poetry examined in the following chapters). Merezhkovskii adds to the tradition of poet-prophet in Russian culture by introducing this figure of the poet-saint-mystic. His choice of this Catholic role model

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<sup>39</sup> Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 228-29.



for his own work is significant, reflecting his ideas about the fruitfulness of Catholic culture and Solov'ev's example.

Merezhkovskii's interest in St Francis was not confined purely to this poem. In *Voskresshie bogi*, Giovanni writes in his diary (which forms the narrative for part of the first volume of *Voskresshie bogi*) that he is reading *The Little Flowers of St Francis*, and compares Leonardo to the saint, particularly for his skills of observation and love of the natural world.<sup>40</sup> This comparison is strengthened in the text by Leonardo's love of birds and nature, and by his peaceful attitude to those who disagree with him or try to provoke him. Merezhkovskii's *poema* refers to the way St Francis loved to free and bless birds.<sup>41</sup> It is explained in *Voskresshie bogi* that Leonardo had a habit of buying and releasing captive birds. In one of the most powerful scenes of the novel, the artist is pictured on a hilltop with his last faithful follower, sitting watching the birds he has freed fly away.<sup>42</sup> Despite his understandable struggle to depict Christ in his *Last Supper*, Leonardo has an apparently strong faith in a Creator God, to whom he refers on numerous occasions throughout the novel. In the narration, the reader occasionally hears the artist's thoughts, his inner life of prayer, and through this, can begin to see that his stigmata are not literal wounds, but the result of genius struggling to accomplish great works. His genius seems to be a sign of God working in him, yet he sees only his failure and does not always find recognition.

Overall, the poem and the figure of St Francis in the novel represent an accurate account of the saint's life, and an attempt to convey a positive image of this life to a Russian audience. After his emigration, Merezhkovskii was to write a series of short books about Catholic mystics, including one on St Francis.<sup>43</sup> This fascination with translating, describing and evoking Catholic mysticism was to be a popular and flowering tendency in this period. Although the *Stabat mater*'s meaning was presented in an ambivalent fashion in his novel, the figure of St Francis tells a much more positive story. The association of St Francis in *Voskresshie bogi* with the novel's main character provides evidence for the fact that the writer had assimilated St Francis into his discussion of religion, culture and the artist, and that he considered Francis to be a positive example of the interplay between these three elements. We can conclude that

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<sup>40</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, I: 195-96.

<sup>41</sup> *Sobranie stikhotvorenii*, p. 444.

<sup>42</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, I: 309-11.

<sup>43</sup> D. S. Merezhkovskii, *Ispanskii mistiki: Sv. Tereza Avil'skaia, Sv. Ioann Kresta, Malen'kaia Tereza*.

Merezhkovskii was intrigued by the figure of St Francis and saw him as a role-model mystic, poet and saint.

Comparing Leonardo to St Francis can at first sight make Leonardo seem a saintly, perfect figure, perhaps too far removed from ordinary humanity. He can appear a *iurodivyi*, a naïve Holy Fool, but thanks to the novel's use of literary techniques to bring out his ambivalence, he emerges not as a saint or a devil, but as a human able to see the bad in people (and sometimes turning a blind eye to sin) and able to create bad things as well as good. Although at certain points he seems to be sinful, in the end, the novel relates the story of his genius, humility, love of humanity (and its foibles). His habit of drawing ugly, freakish looking people as well as great beauties may remind the reader of God's unconditional love for humanity. Man is made in God's image, and Leonardo is neither Christ nor Antichrist; he is a man, albeit an exceptional one. *Voskresshie bogi* suggests that his faith is revealed through his works, especially through his ability to find God's wonders in the world, and in this he is an outstanding representative of Renaissance humanism.

Leonardo is not depicted as a man of unquestioning belief. In fact, he is likened to St Thomas (Doubting Thomas).<sup>44</sup> The image of St Thomas in the novel derives from a sculpture by Verocchio (Leonardo's master) in which the saint is depicted putting his fingers in Christ's wounds in order to see whether he had suffered and was not just a ghost (John 20: 24-29). However, Leonardo's end underlines his Catholic faith. He gives money for Masses to be said, and follows all the other Catholic traditions of the times in which he lived: seemingly he made his peace with God and the world as best he could.<sup>45</sup> Merezhkovskii's recording of these facts seems to underline his own reconciliation with religion's place in a man's life and its place in the society in which he lived. Despite the fact that the novel's ending points towards Russia (the location of the next volume of the trilogy), the influence of Leonardo and his example on other artists is seen positively.

Binary oppositions inform the basic structure of the whole trilogy, hence its title. Giovanni is a crucial character because he absorbs and mirrors the ideas of other characters. He represents humanity trying to find a path between extremes, but he despairs and dies. Leonardo himself steers a careful course between the competing demands of secular and religious powers and his own desire to create. The idea of

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<sup>44</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, I: 298, II: 81.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, II : 372-75.

finding a middle ground between extremes implied by binary oppositions is relevant to the theme of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. If the two churches are seen as antitheses, as is so often the case in Russian culture, they are mutually destructive. Merezhkovskii aims for something more syncretic.

The leitmotif of mirror images arises in several places. Leonardo's mirror images include Mona Lisa (both the picture and the woman) and his painting of St John the Baptist, but Merezhkovskii underlines the theme of mirrors by pointing out that the artist was ambidexterous (and wrote in mirror hand).<sup>46</sup> Leonardo is an ambivalent, sometimes uncanny, figure, as his last painting 'St John the Baptist' emphasizes. Yet this uncanny quality is part of his genius. The use of mirrors is connected to the use of Catholicism in Merezhkovskii's work and the inspiration and wisdom that can be gained from looking at a reflection. This process of getting to know the self, through examining the Other, is best represented by Leonardo's relationship with Mona Lisa, which helps him to get to know himself. Similarly, Merezhkovskii's exploration of Catholicism in Italy, like Rozanov's, helped inform his idea of what Russian culture should be.

### **Conclusion**

Catholicism, like Leonardo da Vinci, plays a complex and sometimes ambivalent role in Merezhkovskii's works. He reflects Dostoevskii's view that the Catholic Church had established a corrupted theocracy, but his essay 'Religiia i revoliutsiia' suggested through its appraisal of pro-Catholic thinkers that Catholicism served as a mirror image which could be instructive for Russia. Even if this example should not necessarily be followed, it had served as a crucial stimulus for Russian thought. Merezhkovskii was one of the first writers to underline the important part that Catholicism had already played in Russia's intellectual history and could still play in the future.

Merezhkovskii's love of the Renaissance led to a desire to represent art and artists of this historical period in his novels and poems. His writings translated Catholic hymns and poems and described Catholic art and architecture to a hitherto unprecedented extent in Russian letters, as well as revealed how important a patron of the arts the Catholic Church was. Although he discusses the negative aspects of the Church (interference in public life, hypocrisy, and the sinfulness of the clergy)

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<sup>46</sup> *Voskresshie bogi*, II: 360.

highlighted, one could argue that Merezhkovskii was using this theme as a mirror to make guarded criticisms of the role of the Orthodox Church.

His texts revealed how the religious experience of an artist, poet or scientist could have an effect on their works, and how these works not only formed the fabric of culture *per se*, but had a transformative effect on others – on society around them and on their nation as a whole. This viewpoint, inspired by Catholic culture, indicated a model for the relationship of individual Russians, especially Russian artists, towards religion, culture and the society around them. Merezhkovskii helped open the door for other poets to describe their faith and religious experience by translating poems about mystical experiences, by depicting the inner religious life of characters, and by describing the awe inspired by religious art. He constructed the model of the universal mystic-artist, drawing on Catholic tradition. Other poets such as Ellis and Ivanov would continue to develop this model.

Merezhkovskii's work thus serves to open up a window of dialogue with the Catholic world through the individual and personal, so that a person's life journey and faith could be viewed independently from their religious affiliation. Catholicism was not merely a backdrop to the writer's oeuvre but rather, an internal driving force active in his characters. Through the artist's work (St Francis, Leonardo da Vinci), Catholicism became a creative force; its rhythms drove the societies in which they lived, and shaped the cultural heritage of Western Europe. This meditation on Catholicism, as he saw it, would contribute to the renaissance of Russian religion, culture and society that he so desired.

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## Part IV: 1910-1949

‘Один,  
На золоте круглится синий Купол.’  
(Viacheslav Ivanov)<sup>1</sup>

### **Catholicism and Russian History, 1910-1949**

The final part of this thesis discusses the image of Catholicism in Symbolist poetry and thought in the period leading up to and following the Revolution. The first chapter explores some main themes and tendencies in the poetry of two minor Symbolist poets, Lev Kobylinskii-Ellis (1879-1947) and Elizaveta Dmitrieva (1887-1928), by contrasting their different stories and concentrates on the period 1909-1912. The last chapter focuses on the more prominent and senior poet, Viacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949) who took his Symbolist poetry and work overseas in the post-Revolutionary decades.

The last years of the Tsarist regime created an atmosphere of religious pluralism, which was reflected in, and evoked by, the literature of the time. It was a time of comparative tolerance for the Catholics of the Russian Empire, as demonstrated by the establishment of a Russian Catholic Church in 1906, although in institutional terms this Church had little time before it was cut off, only to return to life again (apart from its sojourn overseas) in the years after the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The new regime, particularly in its earlier years, was fundamentally anti-religious and it is therefore not surprising that many Russian Catholics became victims of Communism, some perishing in the Gulag.<sup>3</sup>

The history of Russian literature and Catholicism became more entwined than ever before, since several writers in this period were or became Catholics. As well as Viacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949, converted 1926), the Symbolist poet, Iurgas Bal'trushaitis (1873-1944), a Lithuanian by birth, was a cradle Catholic. Another poet, Lev Kobylinskii (1879-1947), pseudonym Ellis, emigrated and converted (probably in the 1930s). Sergei Solov'ev (1885-1942), the nephew of Vladimir Solov'ev, converted after the Revolution and became a Catholic priest and was arrested for his involvement in the Russian Catholic community in the 1930s. Seemingly, the open atmosphere of the pre-Revolutionary years had somehow given rise to a sense for these writers that

<sup>1</sup> Ivanov, 'Monte Pincio' from *Rimskii dnevnik*, Ivanov, *SS*, III: 582.

<sup>2</sup> On the early Russian Catholic Church, see Dunn, *The Catholic Church*, p. 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> See J. Zatko, *Descent into Darkness: The Destruction of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, 1917-1923*, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1965; C. Zugger, *The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Empire from Lenin through Stalin*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001; I. Osipova, 'V iazvakh svoikh sokroi menia': *Goneniia na Katolicheskuuiu tserkov' v SSSR, po materialam sledstvennykh i lagernykh del*, Moscow: Serebriannye niti, 1996.

conversion was no longer an act of apostasy. The work of writers who became Catholic explored Catholic themes before their conversion, which suggests that the development of Catholic themes in literature reflected and encouraged a growing attraction to the religion.

Intellectuals, philosophers, theologians and other writers had greater freedom to write and publish in the last days of the Tsars, including on religion.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the 1917 Revolution, poetry enjoyed an unprecedented flowering known as the Silver Age. Symbolist poets were still active and some new movements in poetry, Acmeism and Futurism, began to develop as offshoots. The First World War (1914-1918) was followed by an extended time of unrest, revolution, Civil War, and the Stalinist Terror. Despite the turbulence, many of Russia's finest novels, poems and films were produced in this era. Yet within Russia, conditions for poets and writers became so difficult that many perished in the years after the Revolution, Vasiliï Rozanov, Lev Gumilev, Aleksandr Blok among others. Those who survived were subject to repression and censorship in the years that followed 1917 unless they left the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet period, overt discussion of religion and use of religious themes and images in literature was restricted. The political regime's attitude to religion as a whole so significantly changed the climate of discussion that the theme of Catholicism in Soviet literature deserves separate study. In contrast, those who left the country had greater freedom to write about religion than they would have had in Russia. The final chapter of this thesis examines how the image of Catholicism was developed in Russian letters overseas after the Revolution. The estrangement of émigrés from their native land and its troubles and tragedy, and the contact of these writers with cultural life in Western Europe, gave the image of Catholicism in their work an entirely new dimension.

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<sup>4</sup> See J. Delaney Grossman, 'The Rise and Decline of the "Literary" Journal: 1880-1917,' in D. Martinsen, *Literary Journals*, pp. 171-196 and W. E. Harkins, 'The Literary Content of the World of Art,' in *ibid.*, pp. 197-206. See also A. Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, which integrates the history of journals into a broader history.

## **Chapter 10: Russian Symbolist Poetry and Catholicism**

In the years 1909-1912, several poets published collections of poetry and essays in which Catholicism overtly played a central thematic and stylistic role.<sup>1</sup> The present chapter focuses on comparing the Catholic poetry of Kobylinskii-Ellis and Elizaveta Dmitrieva. Their contrasting reasons for using the image of Catholicism and the way they evoked Catholicism in their work are of special interest. The age and gender divide between Ellis and Dmitrieva was marked, as were their religious differences – Ellis became a Catholic, while Dmitrieva remained loyal to Russian Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the themes of their poetry overlap.

The Silver Age poets were a divided camp, full of disagreements and, indeed, numerous love triangles. (The dispute leading to a duel between the Acmeist Gumilev and Voloshin over Dmitrieva is just one example of divisions in this period.) Symbolist verse underwent influences from a variety of sources, from classical antiquity, medieval and Renaissance culture, to Nietzsche and Occultism. However, certain interests and influences brought the Symbolist poets together. The continuum between religion and culture in a broad sense, and the conjunction between this continuum and the work of artists, formed the core purpose of the later so-called religious Symbolists: Aleksandr Blok, Andrei Belyi, Viacheslav Ivanov, and others. In particular, as disciples of Solov'ev the Symbolists believed that art had a transformative, theurgic power, which entailed that the artist had a special role in society. Their treatment of religion in poetry was often broad and syncretic. The influence of European culture on Symbolism was profound, and a key aspect of their mission lay in assimilating the Western cultural heritage into Russian literature.

The poets of this period moved in similar circles, and their ideas and works were closely interwoven. For example, Andrei Belyi knew the Solov'ev family from his teens, and Sergei Solov'ev was particularly close to Belyi in their youth. Later, Blok and Belyi would correspond, become closely acquainted and fall in love with the same woman.

One of the most important influences on all the religious Symbolist poets was the work and life of Vladimir Solov'ev. As Pyman explains:

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 15-16.

To the second generation [of Symbolists] he was a benevolent ancestor to be sanctified, a visionary, a fallen warrior in the struggle for spiritual renewal, misunderstood and despised (just as they felt themselves to be) by a complacent society.<sup>2</sup>

Solov'ev's search for unity, his syncretic approach, and his writings on the spiritual dimension of romantic love, provided inspiration to this poetic movement. Part of the legacy of Solov'ev's life and work was an interest in mysticism and in Sophia (in her various manifestations) and the Virgin Mary. His view of the artist as a theurgic force in culture dominated his literature, theology and his ecumenical project. His ability to use texts drawn from Catholic culture in his work was imitated and developed further by Symbolist poets.

Dante exerted an important influence on the work of several poets, especially, as Pyman points out, through the theme of pilgrimage or spiritual journey.<sup>3</sup> The trope of life as journey, according to Davidson, may have been especially significant in view of Dante's example as a pilgrim and a poet, whose art and life were closely interconnected. This was one of the chief tenets of Symbolism.<sup>4</sup> Many key poetic themes such as romantic love, search for the ideal feminine figure, and religious faith were filtered through the prism of Dante's oeuvre. This connection had already been made by Solov'ev but was greatly expanded by the Symbolists.

Spanish Catholic mysticism of the Counter-Reformation, works by St Theresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, among others, read or translated from Spanish in the early twentieth century, began to feed into Russian poetry as it was developing.<sup>5</sup> French medieval romances provided another source of literary inspiration as well as images drawn from the time of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, and its offshoots, such as Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. These were sometimes filtered through literary texts such as Cervantes *Don Quixote* or Scott's *Ivanhoe*. The revival of interest in mysticism and the theme of knighthood forges a strong link with the early nineteenth-century era of Pushkin and Chaadaev.

Lev Kobylinskii-Ellis was acquainted with Belyi and Briusov and worked on the Symbolist journal *Vesy* with the latter. He was the first of his generation to write a book

<sup>2</sup> Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, p. 228. See also, Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 53-99.

<sup>3</sup> Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, p. 285. See also, Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, M. Kh. Sedano S'erra, V. E. Bagno, 'Viacheslav Ivanov i San Khuan de la Krus,' in *Viacheslav Ivanov-Peterburg-mirovaia kul'tura*, ed. by V. Bagno, Tomsk, Moscow: Vodolei, 2003, pp. 52-60.



about the Russian Symbolists, *Russkie simvolisty* (1910), in which he defined and drew the movement together. Like Belyi, Ellis was interested in the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner. Pithily described by Pyman as ‘brilliant but unbalanced’, his prolific but generally poor poetry was saturated with Catholic themes.<sup>6</sup> His best-known collection was *Stigmata* (1911), the title of which already highlighted Catholic influence. He wrote two other collections: *Argo* (1915), and the unpublished *Krest i Lira* (completed by 1938). As Poliakov notes,

Ретроспективно обозначенный поэтический триптих преследует цель воссоздания «на родной, русской почве [...] основных религиозно-поэтических мотивов и сюжетов западного мира, единого, вселенского царства Христова, преимущественно в эпоху первохристианства и классического средневековья.<sup>7</sup>

On leaving Russia, Ellis lived in Locarno, Switzerland, where he became a Catholic in the 1930s and continued his work on Russian literature.<sup>8</sup>

Ellis’s essays help illuminate his ideas on Catholicism. Like Vladimir Solov’ev and Viacheslav Ivanov, he translated and wrote extensively about Dante. As so often, interest in Dante could lead to an interest in Catholicism. In his essay ‘Venets Dante’ (1906), Ellis wrote that *La Divina Comedia* was a unique work of exceptional genius and its third part, *Paradiso*, was the closest world literature had ever got to describing the indescribable.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in another essay ‘Uchitel’ very’ (1914), he went further, describing it as a theological work or ‘Thomas Aquinas in terzinas’.<sup>10</sup> Unsurprisingly, some of Dante’s central themes, as defined by Ellis, can be found in the Russian poet’s work. The theme of death and judgement, viewed through a Catholic lens by Dante, resurfaces in some of Ellis’s poems such as ‘Dies Irae’ and ‘Requiem.’<sup>11</sup> He noted that Dante had depicted the Eternal (ideal) Feminine in the figure of Beatrice, expressing an ideal also evoked by Goethe and Solov’ev.<sup>12</sup> His discussion of Dante’s work emphasized the Italian poet’s search for the ideal feminine; traces of this same search can be found in his poetic works which are linked with Catholicism. His poetry focused on the image

<sup>6</sup> Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, p. 209.

<sup>7</sup> F. Poliakov, ‘Neizvestnyi sbornik stikhotvorenii Ellisa,’ *Simvol*, 28, 1992, p. 281.

<sup>8</sup> For a fuller biographical overview, see Heide Willich, *Lev L. Kobylinskij-Ellis. Vom Symbolismus zur ars sacra: Eine Studie über Leben und Werk*, München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1996, pp. 22-34, 179-90.

<sup>9</sup> Ellis, ‘Venets Dante,’ in Ellis, *Neizdannoe i nesobranoe*, Tomsk: Vodolei, 2000, pp. 3-4, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ellis, ‘Uchitel’ very,’ in *ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>11</sup> Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, pp. 33-34, *ibid.*, pp. 38-39. (All the poems quoted are from *Stigmata* or *Argo* unless otherwise specified.)

<sup>12</sup> Ellis, ‘Venets Dante,’ p. 17.

of the Mystic Rose as a symbol, and the figure of the Virgin Mary. His contention in these essays that Dante had achieved a pinnacle in the literary expression of mystical faith in God, even if the writer had been unable to grasp earthly realities, was echoed in his own mystical poetry.

Ellis's long essay-pamphlet 'Vigilemus!' (1913) is not a polemical discussion of Catholicism. It does not argue directly for Russian culture to imitate Catholicism, but there is an implication of this. Neither is the essay about Russian Orthodoxy. Rather, it attempts to address religious questions from an almost universal point of view, he centres on religion in Europe. It is particularly interesting for its very broad, inclusive and integrated treatment of religion, not treated in institutional terms; esoteric movements as well as mainstream Christianity are discussed. However, many of his examples refer to Roman Catholicism, including Dante, St Francis, St Theresa of Avila, St Thomas Aquinas, St Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>13</sup> The poet tends to give examples from Catholic mystics, but considers the idea of dogma and scholasticism, which he refers to as 'the Gothic of religious thought'.<sup>14</sup>

However, Ellis's essay is disappointing in its lack of references to Russia or Russian culture. One of the only Russian writers to receive a mention is Vladimir Solov'ev. The essay argues that true Christian art existed in Europe in the past, and has only just begun to be revived in Russia by the Symbolists. It suggests that the culture of Catholic Europe was more closely aligned to Christian art than any form of Russian art, including icons. In any case, Russian culture ends up comparatively neglected, while Symbolism and its adherents are part of the riches of the European cultural heritage. The essay therefore represents the best and the worst of Symbolism at once. The core of religiosity gave the movement purpose, vigour and a dynamic of movement towards the future. Much of its inspiration came from European culture and this, too, could be positive. Ellis seems unable to integrate Russian culture into European culture, Russian native religiosity is disregarded. His poetry to some extent reflects this same problematic.

Elizaveta Dmitrieva's story is different. She suffered from illness as a young woman, but studied French and Spanish and became involved in the poetic circles of her day. She was closely acquainted with Gumilev and Voloshin in particular. Although she continued to write later in her life, most of her published poetry was printed in 1909-

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<sup>13</sup> Ellis, 'Vigilemus,' in *ibid.*, pp. 244-323, especially p. 260.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

1910. Unlike Ellis, or indeed Ivanov, she did not leave a body of essays or theoretical work explaining her writing; in fact she left a clearer explanation of her short-lived personal relationship with Gumilev (and Voloshin) than on her own work.<sup>15</sup> She did, however, write a short autobiographical sketch in the 1920s. Both of these pieces of writing, like all memoirs, should be treated with considerable caution. She refers to her childhood illness and desire to become a saint, which is significant given her later interest in Catholic saints. She writes ‘от детства я сохранила облик «Рыцаря Печального Образа» – самого прекрасного рыцаря для меня – Дон Кихот [...] С детства он мой любимый герой.»<sup>16</sup> This knight figure was to prove significant in the poetry of this period. Dmitrieva claimed that she adhered to Russian Orthodoxy and to Russian culture:

Дороже всего для меня Флоренский, как большая поэма, точно Дантов «Рай».

В нашей стране я очень, очень люблю русское, и все себя таким чувствую, несмотря на то, что от Запада так много брала, несмотря на то, что я Черубина.<sup>17</sup>

Dmitrieva felt indebted to Western Europe but not seduced by it, remaining loyal to her Russian roots. She studied French medieval literature and Spanish literature before her poetic debut. It is therefore unsurprising that her first published poem was a translation from Spanish published in 1909 under a pseudonym.<sup>18</sup> Following her discovery of the riches of Spanish culture as a source for her inspiration and under the guidance of her friend, mentor and fellow poet Maksimilian Voloshin, she created the pseudonym and persona of Cherubina de Gabriak.<sup>19</sup> She then published in 1909-1910 under this name. According to one of her critics, an important basis for this persona was St Theresa of Avila.<sup>20</sup> Part of the reason for this was her knowledge of Spanish culture, including her reading of the Spanish mystic. Furthermore, the figure of a strong woman-poet-mystic-saint, a role model previously lacking in Russian culture with its different tradition of secular poetry and comparatively impoverished status for women writers, was very attractive.

<sup>15</sup> See Elizaveta Dmitrieva, ‘Ispoved’’, Cherubina de Gabriak, *Ispoved’*, Moscow: Agraf, 1998, pp. 273-76.

<sup>16</sup> Dmitrieva, ‘Avtobiografiia’, in *ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> M. Landa, ‘Mif i sud’ba,’ in *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> See L. Ageeva, *Nerazgadannaia Cherubina*, Moscow: Dom-Muzei Mariny Tsvetaevoi, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Landa, ‘Mif i sud’ba,’ p. 22.

‘Cherubina de Gabriak’ purported to be a Catholic with European Catholic origins who wrote in Russian; Dmitrieva herself used this mask to write her own lyrics. Apparently, Voloshin felt that her physical appearance, that of a modest, plain woman who was lame, would hinder her from being published; this view has been repeated in scholarship.<sup>21</sup> Her later autobiographical notes suggest that Cherubina had come to represent a side of a troubled personality, who, she writes, continued to exist after Dmitrieva had stopped publishing under the pseudonym.<sup>22</sup> Cherubina was not just a pseudonym, she became a lyric double who helped inform the content of the poet’s work.

The chapter will trace the path of both poets from their own poetic personae as knight-pilgrims, through the use of intercessor figures of various types, especially the Virgin Mary as a type of poetic muse, to their approach to the divine in the person of Christ, and examine how this journey as a whole shaped their poetry and the way it was received.

### **Non nobis, Domine!**

Russian culture had two potential alternatives to the European knights: the warrior folk-heroes (bogatyri) and the somewhat less idealized Cossacks.<sup>23</sup> However, these do not generally feature prominently in Symbolist poetry, which in this instance tends to rather neglect native Russian culture. Writers such as Pushkin and Gogol’ used the theme of knighthood in their works, under the influence of Freemasonry, Walter Scott (not so much the eponymous hero of *Ivanhoe* as Brian de Bois-Guilbert), and other Western texts such as Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (as Dmitrieva’s autobiographical note quoted above testifies). This novel is particularly relevant, since Cervantes’s knight is generally considered to be mad. The idea of a ‘mad (Catholic) knight’ (or at least one whose choices are hardly rational) first occurs in Pushkin’s poem ‘Zhil na svete rytsar’ bednyi...’ and appears again in Dostoevskii’s *Idiot*, where Pushkin’s poem is primarily used in a parodic sense to suggest Myshkin’s irrational decision-making in relation to the female characters in the novel. ‘Zhil na svete...’ has been cited by other writers, such as Merezhkovskii, who compared Chaadaev to the poor knight. Chaadaev was therefore painted as another mad man (or fou), drawn away from the rational path by

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-15.

<sup>22</sup> Dmitrieva, ‘Avtobiografiia’, in *ibid.*, pp. 270-72.

<sup>23</sup> For an overview of the image of the Cossack in Russian literature, see Kornblatt, [The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature](#).

Catholicism. Blok called Solov'ev a rytsar'-monakh whose mission was to free the World Soul from earthly captivity.<sup>24</sup> Berdiaev also referred to Solov'ev as a knight.<sup>25</sup> Apart from the fact that the Symbolists were well versed in European culture, the most likely explanation for their interest in Western knights is that there was a much larger body of medieval literature and literature about the medieval world in Western Europe, than in Russia.

Romantic love for a rather distant, somewhat idealized female, such as Blok's Prekrasnaia dama, was a very important focus of Symbolist poetry. The idea of chivalric love as exported to Russia from Western literature (Grail romances, Scott's Ivanhoe), art, and music (such as Wagner's Parsifal) was therefore a very attractive and helpful mechanism for formulating the Symbolists' ideas. The mixing of religious and esoteric ideas around the fin de siècle and afterwards, based on Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, also influenced the poets. The knight could therefore be understood as a symbol of chivalry and romantic devotion to a woman, often to a female figure who might inspire great acts of bravery. It would, however, become something deeper for some writers.

Sproge argues that Pushkin's 'Zhil na svete...' is the text underlying all of Ellis's collection, *Argo*.<sup>26</sup> In Ellis's earlier collection *Stigmata* (1911) many of the poems draw on the theme of the knight, who in most of the poems apparently represents the poet himself. Two poems from *Argo* specifically reference the Crusades: 'Sviatoi Georgii' quotes the Latin hymn 'Non nobis domine', used during the Crusades, while another poem, *Richard pred Ierusalimom* refers to Richard I (The Lionheart).<sup>27</sup> Ellis sees no contradiction between medieval European Catholic knights and his persona as a twentieth-century Russian poet.

Following Chaadaev's case the artists of the Silver Age were trying to create a religious and artistic revival for Russia. A universal spiritual mission, rather than a national or historical one, united knights and poets. Like Pushkin's knight, the knights of Ellis's poems are Catholic. They are depicted not simply as military men but as members of a special religious order, who are devoted to the Virgin Mary and to the figure of Christ.

<sup>24</sup> A. Blok, 'Rytsar' monakh,' in *Kniga o Solov'eva*, pp. 329-35, especially p. 334.

<sup>25</sup> N. Berdiaev, 'Problema Vostoka i Zapada v religioznom soznanii VI. Solov'eva', in *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>26</sup> L. V. Sproge, 'Motiv "Rytsaria bednogo" v poezii simvolistov (Organizatsiia khudozhestvennogo edinstva knigi stikhov Ellisa "Argo")', in *Pushkin i russkaia literatura: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov*, ed. by Iu. Lotman, L. Sidiakov et al., Riga: LGU im. P. Stuchki, 1986, pp. 102-109.

<sup>27</sup> Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, pp. 165-66.

In one of the first poems of *Stigmata* ‘Rytsar’ dvoinoi zvezdy’, the ideal knight is addressed as Christ. In this poem there are two knights (black and white) who fight. The choice of ‘chernyi’ and ‘belyi’ knights in the poems doubtless relates back to Grail romances or *Ivanhoe* (in which the ‘Black Knight’ is Richard I). In another poem, ‘Chernyi rytsar’, Ellis posits himself as the Black Knight.<sup>28</sup> He adds further to this picture in the poem ‘Belyi rytsar’ when he calls on support from a fellow knight:

Рыцарь, Рыцарь, будь мне братом!  
Опусти свой щит тяжелый,  
Подними свое забрало  
И сойди с коня на землю!<sup>29</sup>

The inclusion of good and bad knights in some of these poems could be linked to Ellis’s struggle between good and evil. St Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises*, with which the poet was almost certainly acquainted, posited the idea of Christ as king, and the faithful as worthy knights who follow the king and fight for him, taking up his standard. Ignatius also depicts the idea of good and bad ‘spirits’ which ultimately lead the Christian towards God or Satan. Christians must discern between these ‘spirits’.<sup>30</sup> Ellis evokes the idea of this moral struggle in his poems by using the metaphor of the knight. A knight’s combat with serpents and dragons has always symbolized the struggle against the Devil. The battle is therefore not with Saracens or serpents, but with sin and his aspiration to be a worthy knight for God.

The other knights of the poems can be identified with fellow poets, for example, Belyi or Sergei Solov’ev. The poem ‘Brat’iam rytsariam’ suggests a league of knights. Their mission is clearly religious, but represented in mythical poetic terminology which links Ellis’s ideas with those of his fellow Symbolists, Blok and Belyi, and their conception of Sophia, the Eternal Feminine, and the World Soul:

В сердце суровый обет пилигрима,  
Крест на щите, на мече, на груди,  
Сзади пустыня, но там, впереди  
Стены Иерусалима!

Белую Розу и пасти Дракона

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 47-48.

<sup>30</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, trans. by A. Mottola, New York: Image Books, p. 67, pp. 75-77. According to Belyi, Ellis took St Ignatius as his role model. See N. Valentinov, ‘Briusov i Ellis,’ in *Vospominaniia o serebrianom veke*, Moscow: Respublika, 1993, [online, no page refs.], [http://az.lib.ru/b/brjusow\\_w\\_j/text\\_0620.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/b/brjusow_w_j/text_0620.shtml) accessed 24/08/2012.

Вырвем средь звона мечей!  
 Рыцарю дар – золотая корона  
 Вся из лучей!<sup>31</sup>

However, Ellis's devotion is to the Virgin Mary, and not, as in the case of Blok, to a woman he knew or an imagined ideal feminine.

Ellis's knight poems are best be read in the context of the rest of the collections's Catholic tone, evident throughout *Stigmata* from its title poem onwards. When most of the lyrics were being written, the poet was immersed in absorbing Catholic tradition; later, he carried his literary enthusiasm further and became a Catholic. Reading his work as a corpus reveals that the knight's journey is a spiritual path, like that of Dante, but more closely aligned to the story of St Ignatius of Loyola. According to Belyi, Ellis took this saint as his main model.<sup>32</sup> The Jesuits, who were generally seen as extremists and often hated, became for Ellis (as had been the case for Gagarin) a positive example of Christians who carried out Christ's mission. The theme of knighthood is a vehicle for Ellis's spiritual journey towards Christ, and Catholicism is not a backdrop, but the road and the goal of that journey.

Dmitrieva refers to Don Quixote and Dulcinea in the poem 'Kantsona' (1910).<sup>33</sup> Another poem, 'Konets', of the same period also evokes the subject of knights.<sup>34</sup> In a slightly later, untitled poem, she describes the journey of a faithful pilgrim on a journey to Jerusalem. Here, however, the pilgrim, though perhaps linked with medieval Christianity, is a metaphor, and is not given other knightly attributes.<sup>35</sup> The link between Catholicism and knights is, however, made clearer in other poems by Dmitrieva. She referenced Pushkin's 'Zhil na svete...' in her poem of 1909 'Ierikhonskaia roza tsvetet tol'ko raz...' quoting the line '*lumen coeli, sancta rosa!*' as an epigraph.<sup>36</sup>

Dmitrieva was also interested in knights. Her poem 'Sv. Ignatiiu' begins by referring to the medieval legend of the Holy Grail. St Ignatius of Loyola is described as a knight with sword and helm, as a paladin of the Virgin Mary. He was indeed a knight, though of the Counter-Reformation, many years after the last Crusades. The poem therefore has a slightly syncretic, imaginative if anachronistic, approach to history, mixing St Ignatius's story with the medieval legend of the Holy Grail. However, the

<sup>31</sup> Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 66.

<sup>32</sup> Valentinov, 'Briusov i Ellis'.

<sup>33</sup> Cherubina de Gabriak, *Ispoved'*, p. 63.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>35</sup> 'Blagochestivym piligrimom...' (1916), in *ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

saint's search for the Grail is intended to be figurative, and represents the quest for Christ. The poet concentrates not on the military image of knights or crusades, but on an image of personal faith and piety:

Ты, обогривший кровью меч,  
Склонил смиренно перья шлема  
Перед сияньем тонких свеч  
В дверях пещеры Вифлеема.<sup>37</sup>

Dmitrieva may have been attracted to St Ignatius's Spanish origins. However, the fact that the Jesuits had hitherto been riled in Russian literary history marks out this poem (alongside Ellis's) as ground-breaking. St Ignatius is presented as a model of faith, based on his devotion to the Virgin Mary and Christ Himself. The saint is a muse and role model for the poet's work. The only knights of real interest to Dmitrieva are those knights who became saintly figures and who are integral to her verse because they set an example through their mystical faith in God. When mystical faith is being evoked, polemical discussion and attitudes are discarded.

### **Ave Maria!**

Although the cult of the Virgin Mary is an important focus for Christian ecumenism, the different ways the cult has developed distinguish the approaches of Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Saints, too, are viewed as helpful examples to the faithful and as intercessors, but their cults reflect a more marked difference between Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism, as not all those who were canonized in the years after the Schism are venerated in both traditions.

In the poem 'Sviatoi Tereze' from *Stigmata* Ellis looks to the Spanish mystic, St Theresa of Avila, for her intercession on his behalf so that he may become a knight of Christ. The poem is a prayer in which the poet addresses the saint as both muse and intercessor:

Ты в наши дни — лишь имя, лишь преданье,  
но памятни для сердца все рыданья,  
все лепестки Твоих девичьих грез,  
растоптанных Тобой без состраданья,  
и язвы все, что ведал лишь Христос!<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>38</sup> Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 91.



St Theresa therefore functions in a similar way to the Virgin Mary in Solov'ev's imitation of Petrarch: she is a poetic muse, the addressee of the poem, and he is praying for her intercession. One difference from Solov'ev's poem is that St Theresa is a Catholic saint, not revered in Russian Orthodoxy, nor well-known in Russia. The writer mentions her wounds, echoed in the title of *Stigmata*. Ellis extends Solov'ev's interest in mystic figures to bring a Catholic mystic into Russian literature.

The Virgin Mary functions as a muse and intercessor in numerous poems by Ellis. The fact that he was inspired by Dante is emphasized in his 'Molitva Sv. Bernarda Deve Marii (Iz Dante Alig'eri)'.<sup>39</sup> However, the impact of Dante and Solov'ev is only a starting point. Ellis's poetic output is heavily marked by the Catholic cult of the Virgin Mary. This is revealed in his use of Latin, as in poems entitled 'Maris Stella', 'Rosa mystica,' 'Moei Madonne', 'Ave Maria', 'Stabat Mater Dolorosa' 'Ave Maris Stella'.<sup>40</sup> However, the Catholicism of the poems is not just in their titles. 'Maris Stella' describes the popular piety of sailors' wives who pray to the Virgin to intercede for the safe return of their husbands, and refers to the sound of the bell ringing, calling the faithful to the Angelus (a prayer dedicated to the Virgin Mary traditionally said three times a day in the Catholic Church). 'Ave Maris Stella' is a translation of the prayer recited at Vespers (attributed to St Bernard of Clairvaux among others), ending on a 'Glory be'.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, the poem 'Stabat Mater Dolorosa' is a translation of the Stabat Mater hymn, addressed to the Virgin Mary as an intercessor figure who, like the saints, accompanies the Christian believer in the journey towards God. The poem 'Ave Maria' which quotes the 'Hail Mary' in Latin is a litany, praising and asking for intercession. On the one hand, it is simply a powerful evocation of the meaning of the cult of the Virgin Mary within Catholicism. On the other hand, Ellis weaves together prayer, liturgy and poetry in an innovative (if not always successful) way, as though seeking to move his readers. This is in line with the idea of the artist as a theurgic figure, so important to the Symbolists.

The mission of the Jesuits to serve the Virgin Mary and Christ led to the martyrdom of many members of the Society. The blending of these themes of the Jesuits, their mission and the role of the Virgin Mary can be found in another poem from *Stigmata*, 'Sviatoi Luidzhi.' This poem retells the life of St Aloysius Gonzaga

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-94. This is an imitation of part of *Paradiso* XXXIII, quoted in Ellis's essay 'Venets Dante,' pp. 23-24.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-92, 94-98.

<sup>41</sup> *Dictionary of Mary*, ed. by Alphonse Bossard et al., Totowa, N.J.: St Pauls, 2010, p. 301.

(1568-1591), a Jesuit who died at a young age, having caught the plague while carrying out missionary work. Unlike some of Ellis's other Catholic verse, the poem is not cast in the form of a prayer addressed to the saint. The choice of the first-person narrative to tell the life of St Aloysius enables the poet to enter into Aloysius's personal feelings directly.

Так в юности не знал я искушений,  
 моим щитом был Девы светлый лик.  
 [...]

Толпою дам придворных окружен,  
 ни разу я, как строгого забрала,

ресниц не поднял на прелестных жен,  
 страшась прочесть в их взорах знаки Ада,  
 к Тебе святою ревностью сожжен.

The poem ends on the triumphant words:

когда собор поет и зацветает,  
 и в каждом сердце снова дышит май;  
 мой взор простая надпись умиляет:

«Заступнику, святому Луиджи, в Рай!»<sup>42</sup>

The Jesuits are no longer represented as manipulative villains, but as heroes, saints and martyrs. Catholic veneration of the Virgin Mary is not described in parodic or alien terms. Ellis's verse suggests that he had internalized Catholicism's cult of the Virgin Mary to a great extent. His use of Latin and Catholic prayers and overwhelmingly positive attitude to the Jesuits may have distanced some Russian readers, making him appear somehow less Russian.

The poetic cult of the Eternal Feminine, Sophia and the Beautiful Lady were more extensively developed by male writers. In Dmitrieva's work not so many poems are addressed to the Virgin Mary, and where Mary is mentioned, she seems somewhat less 'Catholic.' Instead, the persona of the poems, herself a woman, has a more prominent role. In the poem 'Blagoveshchenie' the narrator describes reading illuminated manuscripts and seeing the words about the Annunciation 'Blessed are you amongst women', but the heart of the poem concerns the narrator's insomnia and her perceptions of her surroundings, not the figure of the Virgin. Beyond a certain colouring, Catholicism is not of importance. Another poem also involves the Virgin Mary and Catholicism in its subject:

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. pp. 82-83.

Ищу защиты в преддверьи храма  
 Пред Богоматерью Всех Сокровищ,  
 Пусть орифламма  
 Твоя укроет от всех чудовищ...

Я прибежала из улиц шумных,  
 Где бьют во мраке слепые крылья,  
 Где ждут безумных  
 Соблазны мира и вся Севилья.

Но я слагаю Тебе к подножью  
 Кинжал и веер, цветы, камеи  
 Во славу Божью...  
 O Mater Dei, memento mei!<sup>43</sup>

The incident described is fictional, rather than based on the poet's own experience or that of a Catholic saint. There is no 'Mother of God of Treasures.' Dmitrieva uses Latin to invest the poem with the form of a Catholic prayer. However, use of the first person, sense of reminiscence and intimacy in Dmitrieva's poetry as a whole means that it differs from much of Ellis's Catholic verse. As a woman writing about the Virgin Mary, she is closer to female Catholic piety, although she mixes this with the worldliness of her persona, who carries such exotic and quintessentially Spanish items as a fan and a dagger. In this instance, she goes beyond translations and assimilating the spirit of Catholic prayers and poems to create a new imaginative text.

The role of feminine figures in the works of both these poets (as well as others of the Symbolist movement) is significant. The Catholic traditions of female saints provide an example to believers. Similarly, the importance of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Catholicism, and the stories of saints and their works, provide inspiration of spirit and form to Russian poets. In particular, the Virgin's role as intermediary is very critical to the work of poets seeking ideal, universal muse figures, like Dante's Beatrice. In Dmitrieva's poems, the Virgin seems closer to her and evokes the example of female mystics such as St Theresa. The poet's aspiration towards goodness directed through these intermediary figures and shaped by them brings the readers closer to a perception of mystical belief in Christ and God that could include Catholic tradition.

### **Anima Christi**

Catholic and Orthodox Christians have different ways of depicting and describing Christ, but although the external forms of the Christian religion are varied, ultimately

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<sup>43</sup> Cherubina de Gabriak, *Isповед'*, p. 74.

the spiritual centre of the faith remains the same. Some of Ellis's poems are translations, like the *Stabat Mater* poem. He translated a sonnet, originally written in Spanish by St Francis Xavier (one of the first companions of St Ignatius). The translation, 'Iz sviatogo Frantsiska Ksaveriia', underlines once again Ellis's interest in the Jesuits, their faith, and their part in the mystical tradition. It describes Christ's Passion and love of Christ. Although the text does not refer to specific Catholic traditions or practices, Ellis makes the Catholic – in fact, Jesuit – origin, of the poem clear from its title. This unabashed referencing of Catholic tradition seems to underline the positive way in which the poet viewed Catholicism, but also the importance he attached to its role in augmenting, or even motivating, his art, and that art's power to persuade.

In his poem 'Videniie Serdtsa Iisusova Blazhennoi Margarite Alakviiskoi' Ellis also describes a Catholic devotion, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through the vision of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque rendered in a first person narrative.<sup>44</sup> The lyric voice and the saint's point of view suggest a strong level of assimilation or empathy with the piety behind this story. More importantly, Ellis clearly has a need to convey the importance of this Catholic devotion to his Russian readers. The Sacred Heart devotion combines the symbolism of pain and sorrows of Christ for humanity with God's love for humanity. Both Dmitrieva and Ellis carved out a place in Russian poetry for the sufferings of Christ, drew on the Catholic tradition of evoking it and illustrating it to inform their own verse. The depictions of pain and suffering undergone as a sacrifice for others or for art's sake was assimilated by poets into their sense of artistic mission.

In 'Videniie Serdtsa Iisusova...' and in some other poems, Ellis represents Christ as bridegroom, following the examples of St Theresa of Avila and St John of the Cross.<sup>45</sup> The image of Christ as bridegroom is present in the Bible and although not necessarily lacking in Russian Orthodoxy, is more fully developed in Catholic mysticism. The Church (and the individual believer) are the Bride. Ellis's attraction to this form of representation is yet another sign of the connection between Catholicism, faith in Christ and the representation of this idea in his poetry.

Ellis went far beyond translation or even imitation of Catholic poems in his work. *Stigmata* was a carefully chosen title for his collection, the theme runs through his poems. Stigmata symbolize the wounds of Christ and the fact that believers can, by empathizing with and contemplating Christ's sufferings, overcome their own

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>45</sup> 'Zhenikh,' in Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, pp. 9-10, 'Videniia sviatoi Terezy,' in *ibid.*, pp. 85-87, 'O kreste sviatoi Terezy,' in *ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

weaknesses, bear their own sufferings with grace, and fight for good with charitable works and acts of self-sacrifice. Stigmata and St Francis (bearer of the stigmata) are mentioned by the poet in several poems.<sup>46</sup> St Theresa of Avila also witnessed an apparition of Christ and felt the lance pierce her side, as described in Ellis's poem 'Videniia sviatoi Terezy.' Acts of sacrifice, good works and mystical union with Christ are described in the poet's works, making Ellis's creative activity figuratively his own *stigmata*. The image of the poet as a Christ figure, linked to saints who are closely associated with Christ's Passion, ties into the Russian tradition of poets as prophets and martyrs, since many prophets undergo great trials in order to communicate God's message. The idea of the poet-mystic, heavily influenced by the Catholic tradition, is therefore central to Ellis's self-definition through his work.

As already observed, Dmitrieva was heavily influenced by her reading of St Theresa, whose mystical poems and prayers reflect a close spiritual relationship with Christ. One of her first published poems 'Shchastlivo serdtse, liubov' ū goriashchee...' (1909) was a translation from Spanish of the Octave of St Theresa, an eight-line prayer about the importance of faith in God.<sup>47</sup> Later, she also drew on an important prayer called *Anima Christi*, generally attributed to St Ignatius of Loyola. Her epigraph quotes the prayer in French, followed by St Ignatius as the author. Her poem is not a direct translation; instead she quotes lines from the prayer in her own poem, ending each stanza is a Russian translation of part of the *Anima Christi*.

*Sang de Jesus-Christ,*  
*enivrez moi!*  
St. Ignace de Loyola

Мечтою близка я гордыни,  
Во мне есть соблазны греха,  
Не ведаю чистой святыни...  
*Плоть Христова, освяти меня!*

Как дева угасшей лампы,  
Отвергшая зов Жениха,  
Стою у небесной ограды...  
*Боль Христова, исцели меня!*

И дерзкое будит раздумье

<sup>46</sup> 'Stigmata,' in Ellis, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 2, 'Zhenikh,' in *ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 'V Assizi,' in *ibid.*, p. 7, 'Zhenikh,' in *ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 'Ave Maria,' in *ibid.*, pp. 94-95, 'V Assizi,' in *ibid.*, pp. 153-55.

<sup>47</sup> 'Shchastlivo serdtse, liubov' ū goriashchee...', Cherubina de Gabriak, *Isproved'*, p. 197. Based on 'Dichoso el corazón enamorado...' by Theresa of Avila.

Для павших безгласная дверь:  
 Что, если за нею безумье?..  
*Страсть Христова, укрепи меня!*

Объятая трепетной дрожью, —  
 Понять не хочу я теперь,  
 Что мудрость считала я ложью..  
*Кровь Христова, опьяни меня!*<sup>48</sup>

The use of Catholic prayer to support the lyric voice emphasizes the meaning of the prayer, while the use of the prayer underlines the poem's intention. The two blend together to create an innovative piece of art influenced by the aesthetics of Catholicism. The contrast between the narrator's piety and the worldliness of her experiences is intriguing to the reader, and helpful in providing a socio-cultural context to the position of piety and prayer within Catholicism. The mystical approach to the figure of Christ (alluded to as Bridegroom in this poem) represented in works of Catholic mystic poets was intended to help the believer in times of trouble, and one that poets found equally useful in their own verse.

## Conclusion

The end of Dmitrieva's use of the persona of Cherubina is inextricably entwined in literary history with the feud between Voloshin and Gumilev, which resulted in a duel.<sup>49</sup> As Landa points out, the formal end of Cherubina did not mark the demise of the persona in the mind of the poet.<sup>50</sup> Dmitrieva, having used the persona she had created, dropped the persona's confessionality, while retaining the style and much of the thematic content of her poetry. However, by 1926 she herself noted great difficulties in writing poetry after the duel and her marriage.<sup>51</sup>

The image of the Catholic Church or the Papacy as an institution, or the Jesuits as archetypal villains, did not figure in Dmitrieva's poetry. In turn, Catholicism gained a new function of form. Dmitrieva's poetic image of Catholicism lent Catholicism an intriguing exotic, 'occidental' aspect, especially by linking it with sin, erotic anguish, Seville (the setting of Pushkin's *Kamennyi gost'* [1830] and Dostoevskii's 'Legenda velikogo inkvizitora' [1881]). This all made Catholicism attractive in literary terms, but did not necessarily bring it home to a wider Russian readership.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 73 [my italics]. (The spelling of 'gordyni' in the first line is probably a variant spelling to fit the rhyme scheme.)

<sup>49</sup> Landa, 'Mif i sud'ba,' in Cherubina de Gabriak, *Ispoved'*, pp. 33-36. See Dmitrieva, 'Ispoved'', pp. 273-76.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 35. Dmitrieva, 'Avtobiografiia,' p. 271.

<sup>51</sup> Dmitrieva, 'Ispoved'', p.

Yet Dmitrieva successfully used Catholicism to create a model of a new phenomenon in Russian verse, that of the female poet, a poet with a mystical, religious voice which had a poetic confidence equal with that of her male peers. Her treatment of Catholicism was not a matter of style, her poems also created a space for empathising with the sense of spirituality and piety at the heart of Catholicism. The example of Catholic mysticism (particularly St Theresa of Avila) shines through her work. Russian readers found themselves nearer to understanding Catholicism as a personal belief rather than as an external institution.

In the years that followed the publication of his collection *Stigmata* (1911), Ellis emigrated to Germany, lived in Switzerland, and became a Catholic, probably in the early 1930s.<sup>52</sup> (The German scholar Willich states that he has found no evidence that Ellis became a Jesuit, although this claim has been made<sup>53</sup>.) Unlike Dmitrieva, Ellis increasingly aspired to *become* the persona that he had explored in his poetry. The fact that Catholicism seems somewhat undigested in his verse is most likely a result of the fact that he was not a particularly skilled poet. This also contributed to his being treated as marginal by his contemporaries and later critics.

However, the poems painstakingly record the piety and passion of Catholicism and can allow readers some insight into what had drawn the poet to the Catholic Church. He often depicts Catholicism in cultural terms as the Dantesque intertexts suggest. He had a heightened awareness of liturgy and popular piety, as translations of Latin prayers and poems about devotions underline. However, since he also depicts Catholicism as a faith, expressed through passionate piety and mysticism, he combines inner (mystical) religious faith with literary endeavour. This generation was able to build on the work of previous writers who had struggled for such openness in literary culture. Poetry appeared to provide the ultimate forum for a creative and free discussion of Catholicism as a focus for addressing universal themes.

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<sup>52</sup> Willich, *Lev L. Kobylinskij-Ellis*, pp. 180-81.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

## **Chapter 11: Viacheslav Ivanov**

This chapter considers Ivanov's work as a high point in the development of the image of Catholicism in Russian literature and explores some key ways in which the image of Catholicism functioned within his work. Ivanov is the perfect writer with whom to conclude this thesis, because he brought together into a coherent whole so much of the tradition of a century of ideas about Catholicism and expressed these in his artistic work.

Poetry is the main focus in this chapter because, as Davidson writes:

Although Ivanov's approach to spiritual questions was often couched in scholarly, historical language, it was essentially an artistic and intuitive one. Ivanov was a poet, not a theologian, and he was quite prepared to reconcile doctrines which were incompatible on a theoretical or theological level on an altogether different plane of generalised poetic truth.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of Ivanov, one noted again by Davidson in her study of the poet, is the 'inner coherence and unity' of his work.<sup>2</sup> He attempted to persuade that the certain continuities and underlying unities had informed culture throughout time – in search of universal themes. The poet tried to convey this sense of unity and faith to others in his work. Poetry, as he suggested in his 1944 poem 'I poet chemu-to uchit'...', did not serve a didactic purpose, but encouraged recollection.<sup>3</sup> The way the poet related to memory and tradition form an important theme in his works. For him, Catholicism forged a link with the past and with eternity.

The chapter will trace Ivanov's absorption of literary and cultural traditions, consider how his image of Catholicism was shaped by his time in Italy and look at his conversion. It will show how Ivanov's work, life and faith represent a journey or pilgrimage – a winding road, with many stumbling blocks, but also signposts, which led him towards his home within the Catholic Church.

### **Ivanov's Italy: Catholic Culture (1890-1924)**

#### ***The Pilot Stars of Catholic Culture***

Ivanov travelled extensively through Europe and mastered several European languages, but it was Italy that won his heart. It was in Italy where he fell in love with his second

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Viacheslav Ivanov, 11 February from *Rimskii Dnevnik*, *SS*, III: 592.



wife, Lidiia, who was a muse for his work. This passion for the country's culture is evoked throughout his work, particularly in his translations of and allusions to Dante and Petrarch, and in his poems on the Italian Renaissance.

Poems such as 'Vecher'ia Leonardo', 'Il Gigante', "'Magnificat" Botichelli', 'La stanza della disputa', 'Sikstinskaia kapella' from the 'Ital'ianskie sonety' section of *Kormchie zvezdy* all deal with the great artists of the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> However, Ivanov was not only interested in aesthetic considerations. His commentaries on works of art reveal that he saw paintings from a religious perspective (as did Rozanov). He even tentatively injected religious insight into his poetic commentary on Botticelli's 'Magnificat'.<sup>5</sup> The poem refers to the swords which symbolically pierced the Virgin Mary when her son was crucified, as prophesied by Simeon in Luke 2:35. This is not pictured in the painting of the poem's title.<sup>6</sup> Indeed the Biblical quotation in the stanza also refers to the Annunciation, not the Magnificat itself. Looking at the painting, the poet is moved to a reflection on the figure of the Virgin Mary; so beloved a subject of Renaissance painters and so important to Dante and Petrarch, she proved to be an important Catholic inspiration or muse for Ivanov's poetry.

For Ivanov, the Italian Renaissance formed a bridge between classical and modern culture, a crossroads at which, art was still Christian (Catholic). Art in the Renaissance can be viewed as the highpoint in Christian art in Western Europe, prior to the changes in the relationship between art and religion after the Reformation. As for Merezhkovskii, for Ivanov Renaissance painters held a special fascination, reinforced by firsthand acquaintance during his travels in Italy.

Ivanov argued that Renaissance art was universal; like Merezhkovskii he saw the Renaissance artist as a model for the universal artist. One of the key aspirations of Russian Symbolism was to create a form of universal art. As Bobilewicz-Bryś notes, 'В целом, Леонардо для Иванова это символ человеческой универсальности'.<sup>7</sup> Writers such as Merezhkovskii and Ivanov looked to the influence of Catholic religion on art for inspiration in their own worldview, and this in turn opened up the Catholic tradition to a deeper understanding.

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<sup>4</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, I: 615-6, 621-22.

<sup>5</sup> "'Magnificat" Botichelli,' in *ibid.*, 616.

<sup>6</sup> See Ivanov's own commentary to the poem, *ibid.* 860, see also Grażyna Bobilewicz-Bryś, 'Zhivopis' masterov ital'ianskogo Vozrozhdeniia v tvorchestve Viacheslava Ivanova,' *Cahiers du Monde russe*, Vol. 35, No 1-2, Jan-Jun 1994, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> Bobilewicz-Bryś, 'Zhivopis' masterov,' p. 220.

The title of Ivanov's first major collection of poems, *Kormchie zvezdy*, alludes to *La Divina Commedia* and is followed by an epigraph from *Purgatorio*.<sup>8</sup> Some of Ivanov's early Dantesque poems contain themes relating to the image of Catholicism that would be developed in his later lyrics. For example, the poem 'Transcende te ipsum' from *Prozrachnost'* alludes to Dante's use of the story of Rachel and Leah to explain the difference between the active and contemplative principles. Its title refers to St Augustine's idea of transcendence.<sup>9</sup>

Два жала есть у царственного змия;  
У ангела Порывов — два крыла  
К распутию душа твоя пришла:  
Вождь сей тропы — Рахиль; и оной — Лия.

Как двум вожжам послушны удила,  
Так ей — дела, а той — мечты благие.  
Ей Отречение имя, — чьи дела;  
Той — Отрешенье. Вечная София —

Обеим свет. Одна зовет:  
«Прейди Себя, — себя объемля в беспредельном».  
Рахиль: «Себя прежди — в себя сойди».

И любит отчужденного в Одном,  
А Лия — отчужденного в Раздельном.  
И обе склонены над темным дном.<sup>10</sup>

This poem is based on concepts from the Catholic theology of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas, as received through a Catholic poet's work, but Ivanov adds to these the image of Sophia casting her light on the contemplative and active principles and bringing them together. Solov'ev's *Smysl liubvi* (1892-1893) used the idea of passive and active principles (the feminine and the masculine respectively) to inform his idea of romantic love. The ideas of St Augustine are adapted to fit the context of Ivanov's poetry.

Ivanov's understanding of Eros, like Solov'ev's, was derived from his religious ideas. In Russian literary culture, the active and passive principles had frequently been used in reference to the Western and Eastern churches. Thus, the poem could be an allusion to Solov'ev's 'Kratkaia povest'' about church unity. Russian texts about the Church have often referred to Mary and Martha in order to prove the primacy of the

<sup>8</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, I: 513.

<sup>9</sup> Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 94-96. See also, D. Dudek, 'Idei bl. Avgustina v poeticheskom vospriiatii Viach. Ivanova,' *Europa Orientalis*, 21, 2002, p. 359.

<sup>10</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, I: 782-83.

contemplative over the active, and therefore of Orthodoxy over Catholicism. Yet Ivanov's poem attempts to unify these two principles under the mantle of Sophia. He therefore absorbs Catholic ideas to the Russian Sophiological tradition, and uses his poetry to unify and reconcile elements traditionally viewed as mutually exclusive.

Evidence for the inspiration of Catholicism and its mysticism can be found in some of his poems from the cycle 'Ital'ianskie sonety'. On his visit to Italy, Ivanov went to the monastery of Subiaco founded by St Benedict and wrote two poems about this experience. The first poem treats the place from a classical perspective with reference to the god Pan, whereas the second alludes to Subiaco's Christian heritage:

... Ведут во мглу подземную ступени;  
Вот жертвенник: над ним — пещерный свод.

Вот вертоград: нависли скал угрозы;  
Их будит гром незримых дольних вод;  
А вокруг горят мистические розы.<sup>11</sup>

The poem depicts a mystical experience in the cave monastery in which St Benedict lived and prayed. However, it is clear from two further poems about Subiaco which later came to form part of his collection *Cor Ardens* (1911) that Ivanov was not only impressed by St Benedict, but also by St Francis, who stayed in the same cave monastery. The two poems are linked by the title 'Rozy v Subiako' which connects them, in turn, both to his previous poems on Subiaco, and to the poems in the 'Rosarium' cycle of *Cor Ardens*.<sup>12</sup> The second poem also contains an epigraph attributed to St Francis.

*Noli eos esse meliores.* (Franciscus)

Коль, вестник мира, ты войдешь в покои,  
Где прежние твои пируют други,  
И нищего прогонят в шею слуги  
И нанесут убогому побои:

5 Возвеселись, и не ропщи, что знои  
Должны палить и стужей веять вьюги;  
Благослови на воинах кольчуги,  
На пардах — пятна, и на соснах — хвои.

Мятежных сил не пожелай иными:  
10 Иль Ковача ты мнишь умерить горны?

<sup>11</sup> 'Monastyr' v Subiako,' in Ivanov, *SS*, I: 620.

<sup>12</sup> 'Rozy v Subiako,' in Ivanov, *SS*, II: 497-98.

Всем разный путь и подвиг, свой и близкий.

Иль бросился в колючки брат Ассизский,  
Чтоб укротить пронзительные терны?  
Но стали терны — розами родными.<sup>13</sup>

In his later essay ‘Lik i lichiny Rossii’ (1917) Ivanov wrote that the humility of St Francis made him particularly attractive figure for Russian.<sup>14</sup> As already noted, Merezhkovskii admired St Francis. However, the figure depicted in his work is a man of legend and a distant historical figure. In contrast, Rozanov represented St Francis (whom he confused with St Anthony) a democratic ‘man of the people’ with a maternal aspect, able to care for a child. In Ivanov’s sonnet St Francis becomes a lively, revolutionary figure, capable of overturning the status quo of the society in which he lived, but he is shown as a man of peace. Some of the poem’s violent images are offset by references to the natural world. These writers all bring St Francis into Russian literary tradition. St Francis is not merely a man of contemplation, a hermit, but also, through his Catholic religiosity, a mystic and a man of action.

These early poems demonstrate how Ivanov turned to Catholic culture and sought to weave it into Russian literary tradition. His poetry already held the seeds of Catholic theology and mysticism, which were to grow and blossom in the decades that followed.

### **Cor Ardens: *Christian Faith and Catholic Devotion***

Ivanov began his journey of faith in the Orthodox Church, and in his view, never left it. He tried to build a Universal Church by combining themes from Catholic and Orthodox tradition in his most ambitious collection, *Cor Ardens*.<sup>15</sup> The title of this work is in the Latin of the Catholic Church, rather than in Russian. Its symbolism is highlighted by the frontispiece by the Russian artist Konstantin Somov, which evokes the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus or Mary. Jesus’s heart is aflame with love for His people. The heart of Mary is flaming with love for God and for Jesus her son, and is often depicted pierced by swords representing the sorrow of watching her son suffer and die. Although the theology behind these images is theoretically the same in Catholicism and Orthodoxy, the form that these devotions take, depicted in pictures or statues, is alien to most

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Lik i lichiny Rossii’, in Ivanov, *SS*, IV: 464.

<sup>15</sup> For some of the poems about days from the Orthodox calendar, from *Cor Ardens*, see Ivanov, *SS*, II: 316-7, 317-8.

Russian Orthodox. Ivanov's poetry contains a unique mixture of Catholic and Orthodox influence. Another possible influence on Ivanov's choice of illustration, which we will return to below, is the fact that the heart aflame is also a symbol of St Augustine of Hippo.<sup>16</sup>

*Cor Ardens* is a complicated work in its themes and structure, and it can be difficult to find unity within it. The merging of Ivanov's themes – erotic love, the art of poetry and mysticism, Christianity – together with the influence of the classical heritage, French poetry, Dante and Petrarch, makes for a heady cocktail. It is, however, the structure of *Cor Ardens* as well as its final book 'Rosarium', which gives the best insight into Ivanov's debt to Catholic piety at this stage in his life. Rosaries can seem a meaningless chain of beads to someone who does not understand how the devotion works, while in actual fact the rosary provides a structure for the believer's prayer, and coincidentally performs a similar function to litanies. Each bead is identified with a mystery of Christ's life, and so praying the rosary allows the believer to share the journey of Christ's life. Just as the rosary has five decades, *Cor Ardens* has five books. This framework aids the believer to overcome natural distractions and the tendency for the mind to wander, and to meditate on faith; in the same way this work of great creative and emotional intensity helped the writer bring a pattern of order and significance to his experience of love and death.

Overcoming death and the cycle of death and rebirth were important elements of Ivanov's understanding Dionysus and on Christianity, and especially given the premature death of two of his wives, he derived much comfort from the Christian story of the Resurrection. The central Christian theme of the Resurrection is particularly clear in two poems dedicated to Sergii Bulgakov under the title of 'Paskhal'nye svechi'.<sup>17</sup> The same theme informs the poem addressed to Merezhkovskii, 'Litso'.<sup>18</sup> Ivanov devoted a whole poem to the Emmaus story, the last line of which is 'И сердце — дышит и горит...'.<sup>19</sup> Ivanov therefore links this poetic account of the Resurrection, the heart of his collection, to the 'Catholic' title of *Cor Ardens*.

Similarly, the theme of overcoming death through creativity is evident in poems written after the death of Lidiia, such as 'Venok sonetov', which sought to echo Petrarch's *Sonetti e canzoni in morte di Laura*. The concept of a garland of sonnets can

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<sup>16</sup> See H. and J. Cornwell, *Saints, Signs and Symbols*, London: SPCK, 2009, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, SS, II: 265-66.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

be seen to represent a garland of roses or a rosary. The poet moved from an expression of personal grief, in the section ‘Liubov’ i smert’ to a more general, religious and artistic vision in ‘Rosarium.’ The purpose of art was not just to retell the story of life overcoming death, but to overcome the finality of death through art. Catholicism, while not providing the impetus for these poems, helped provide Ivanov with the imagery and in some cases the framework for this vision.

### **‘Rosarium’: the Cult of the Virgin Mary**

In drawing on the Catholic image of the Virgin Mary, Ivanov followed the tradition already set out by Dante, Petrarch, and assimilated by Vladimir Solov’ev and the other Symbolist poets into Russian literature. In his earlier collection *Kormchie zvezdy*, the poem ‘Madonna’ shows the influence of Petrarch and of Solov’ev’s free translation of Petrarch.<sup>20</sup> The Madonna of this poem is a Sophia-like muse, and the poem, like Solov’ev’s work, contains images of pearls, whirlpools and the star of the sea. This latter epithet (Stella Maris), also used by Ellis in his poetry, serves as the title of another of Ivanov’s poems in the same collection.

#### **Maris Stella**

У гордых берегов полуденной земли,  
Когда звезда любви сияла с небосклона,  
Тебе, царица волн, небесная Диона,  
Звучало кормчего хвалебное «Внемли!» —

Где из туманных бездн и меркнувшей дали,  
Чрез лунные бразды сафирового лона,  
Горя средь новых звезд, звезда морей Мадонна —  
К отрадной пристани приводит корабли.

И в час, когда валы в вечерней блещут славе,  
С утесов голубых ее встречает «Ave»,  
И сходит влажный гимн на тень небесных роз.

И, угадав сквозь сон восход ее заветный,  
Я внемлю, с пенем волн, из кущ лилейных грез,  
Как Angelus парит в лазури предрассветной.<sup>21</sup>

The overall idea of the poem, which contains a classical reference, suggests a theme more ancient than Christianity, the primordial power of the sea and man’s fear of it. The Madonna is thus likened to a quasi-pagan goddess who protects sailors from the

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 588.

<sup>21</sup> From *Kormchie zvezdy*, Ivanov, *SS*, I: 616-17.

ocean's power. However, the power of the sea can be read as a metaphor for the chaos of our experience of the Creation. Mary, as a vessel and as a guide, can bring us safely though that 'sea.' The idea of the Virgin Mary as protectress forms a strong strand in Orthodox and Catholic belief, but the poem reflects a preponderance of Catholic motifs. Following traditional Catholic symbolism, the Virgin Mary is linked with lilies and roses. As well as the title 'Maris Stella', the Virgin Mary is greeted with the 'Ave Maria' and the Angelus prayer.

Ivanov was extremely knowledgeable about the classical past; moreover, his academic specialism related to religion in the ancient world. The poem uses the pagan world as an analogy for Catholicism's approach to the Virgin Mary. Such syncretic poems are not only interesting, even dramatic, but also persuasive in their evocation of the Virgin Mary.

The titles of the Virgin Mary like Stella Maris form an important inspiration for writers including Solov'ev, Ellis and Ivanov. Most of these titles are found in the medieval litany to the Virgin Mary.<sup>22</sup> Such litanies were a way of providing the everyday Christian with some theology, because each of the phrases in a litany conveys some aspect of the role of Mary. In the last book of *Cor Ardens* Ivanov wrote a poem based on this litany, entitled 'Turrus Eburnea'.<sup>23</sup> The title is the epithet of Mary 'Tower of Ivory' (Song of Solomon 7:4) which is used as a refrain in the poem (every alternate line ends on the phrase '...из слоновой кости Башня!'). Ivanov evoked the Virgin Mary as a muse for his poetic and intellectual pursuits. He was inspired by Catholic liturgical poetry and the imagery of these litanies fitted his own poetry perfectly.

As well as symbolizing the feminine and romantic love, the rose is a symbol of the Virgin Mary ('Mystic Rose' is one of her titles) and mystical religious experience. The garland of roses, 'rosarium' is the title of the fifth and final book of *Cor Ardens*. The first poem, 'Ad Rosam', serves as a poetic introduction to the rest of the cycle; it refers to figures as diverse as St Francis, Dante, and Orpheus. A number of poems such as 'Crux Amoris' and 'Rosa in Cruce' contain elements related to the Virgin Mary and Sophia, and are influenced by the image of Mary in Catholicism. The rose therefore became the subject of a cycle of poems in which Ivanov unified pagan and Christian elements within the Catholic tradition.

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<sup>22</sup> Dictionary of Mary, pp. 257-58.

<sup>23</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, II: 457-58.

Ivanov's poems, like the work of Dante and Petrarch, enabled him to transcend the meaning of Eros by relating it to the essence of love itself, that is Christ. The figure of the Virgin Mary plays a pivotal role in bridging this divide between the love of heaven and the love of earth. By 1920, when Ivanov was writing *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov*, he wrote to Gershenzon:

Правда, каждое благоговение, переходя в любовь, открывает зорким взглядом любви внутреннюю трагедию и вину трагическую во всем, отлучившемся от источников бытия и в себе обособившемся: под каждой розою жизни вырисовывается крест, из которого она процвела. Но это уже тоска по Боге — влечение бабочки-души к огненной смерти.<sup>24</sup>

The images of this extract, poetic in their beauty if not their form, underline the comfort that Ivanov found in his religious faith, but not only comfort, as this correspondence with Gershenzon reveals, but also great purpose and inspiration. Ivanov's poetry before his conversion is filled with references to Catholic culture Catholic mysticism, and it is clear that Catholicism resonated with his own ideas on art, love and religion.

### **Ivanov in Rome: Conversion as Homecoming (1924-1949)**

#### ***'Vernyi pilgrim': Ivanov's Conversion***

Ivanov had written about the story of Aeneas and a sense of homecoming in Italy as far back as 1892 in his poem 'Laeta', included in *Kormchie zvezdy*.<sup>25</sup> In his 'Rosarium' cycle in *Cor Ardens*, he included a poem called 'Italiia' where he refers back to the happiness he had experienced in that land. Although the collection was only published in 1912, and Ivanov did not move to Italy until 1924, the poem foreshadowed his final years in Italy:

Туда, туда, где умереть просторней,  
Где сердца сны — и вздох струны — эфирней,  
Несу я посох, луч лова вечерний.  
И суверней странник, и покорней —  
Проходит опустелюю кумирней,  
Минувших роз ища меж новых терний.<sup>26</sup>

The past, the sense of sadness, loss, memory and nostalgia associated with it, are entwined with the need to look forward in this poem. The image of the poet as a

<sup>24</sup> *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov*, in Ivanov, *SS*, III: 386.

<sup>25</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, I: 636-38.

<sup>26</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, II: 496-97.



‘strannik’, which appears elsewhere in Ivanov’s work, symbolizes his cultural and spiritual wanderings, while the staff in his hand can be identified with the direction provided to him by faith.

After several years in which Ivanov produced fewer poems, he returned to Italy in 1924. The poet’s decision to make Italy (and particularly Rome) his final home was part of a longer process, not a sudden decision. His return to Rome inspired one of his best and most coherent cycles of poems, the *Rimskie sonety* (1924).<sup>27</sup> The cycle’s first and last poems give some insights into his ideas about his life and faith. The first poem begins with the following lines:

Вновь арок древних верный пилигрим,  
В мой поздний час вечерним ‘Ave Roma’  
Приветствую как свод родного дома,  
Тебя, скитаний пристань, вечный Рим.<sup>28</sup>

As Judith Kalb explains, Ivanov’s *Rimskie sonety* allude to, and play on, the stories of Aeneas, St Augustine and Dante.<sup>29</sup> These are interwoven with the poet’s own experiences of Rome. The sense of relief experienced by the imagined pilgrim on entering Rome is palpable (and perhaps not surprising, given the Russia that Ivanov had left). Kalb argues that throughout the sonnets, Rome and Russia merge, and Rome is constructed through the specifics of Russian culture, through allusions and through language itself. This is therefore the creation of a new kind of literary *sobornost’*.<sup>30</sup> The poet’s tendency to refer to Rome as a second home indicates that Rome’s religion does not seem alien to him. He refers to Gogol’ in one of the sonnets, a reminder to his reader of the respect he owed to his literary predecessors.<sup>31</sup>

The last sonnet is, however, of particular significance to the theme of Catholicism:

***Monte Pincio***

Пью медленно медвяный солнца свет,  
Густеющий, как долу звон прощальный;  
И светел дух печалью беспечальной,  
Весь полнота, какой названья нет.

5 Не медом ли воскресших полных лет  
Он напоен, сей кубок Дня венчальный?

<sup>27</sup> See, V. Ivanov, *Ave Roma: Rimskie sonety*, ed. by A. Shishkin, St Petersburg: Kalamos, 2011; Kalb, *Russia’s Rome*, pp. 129-61 and J. Kalb, ‘Lodestars on the Via Appia: Vjaceslav Ivanov’s “Roman Sonnets” in context,’ *Die Welt der Slaven* XLVIII, 2003, pp. 23-52.

<sup>28</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 578.

<sup>29</sup> Kalb, *Russia’s Rome*, pp. 129-61.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-51, 159.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Dvustvorku na khvostakh klubok del’ finii...,’ in Ivanov, *SS*, III: 580.

Не Вечность ли свой перстень обручальный  
Простерла Дню за гранью зримых мет?

10      Зеркальному подобна морю слава  
Огнистого небесного расплава,  
Где тает диск и тонет исполин.

Ослепшими перстами луч ощупал  
Верх пинии, и глаз потух. Один,  
На золоте круглится синий Купол.<sup>32</sup>

As Ivanov did not choose to describe the Vatican or other Roman churches in any of the sonnets, it is fitting that the cycle's final line should refer to the dome of St Peter's. The name of the basilica is not given, and one can imagine the poet to be anywhere, in a beautiful moment. This reaching out for the universal via a particular moment is the essence of Ivanov's poetic vision, and surely of all poetry.

Yet a thoughtful reader will know exactly where the poet is, and the capitalisation of the K of 'Kupol' emphasizes that this is not a Dome but The Dome, a symbol, not just a landmark.<sup>33</sup> Gogol' too had seen the dome of St Peter's as a symbol of something unchanging through eternity.<sup>34</sup> Rome was more than a city for Ivanov; as for other Russian writers, it was a synecdoche for the Roman Empire and for Roman Catholicism. The dome of St Peter's is blue-grey in daylight, but Ivanov describes a vision of it at sunset when it appears to be azure. Kalb argues that gold and azure symbolize heavenly unity.<sup>35</sup> This poetic gesture suggests a unity beyond Rome itself, expressing a universal concept of God, the cosmos and all humanity united under the dome of the sky. As a symbol therefore, this Dome is both Catholic and ecumenical. The Dome and all it symbolized became in Ivanov's mind a rock of faith in changing times, and thus the fact he turns his gaze towards it can be identified with the fact he was turning towards Catholicism.

Before examining some of the poems Ivanov wrote after he became a Catholic, it is worth considering how he described his conversion in other places. His 'Lettre à Charles du Bos' (1930) includes the fullest account. He acknowledges the influence of Solov'ev, and, perhaps inspired by the metaphor of the ship in Solov'ev's *La Russie*, writes, 'D'ores et déjà mes yeux de croyant voyaient clair que la barque du Pêcheur

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 582.

<sup>33</sup> The capital K is also distinct in the handwritten manuscript. See Ivanov, *Ave Roma: Rimskie sonety*, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> N.V. Gogol' to M. P. Balabina, letter of April 1838, in Gogol', *PSS*, XI: 141.

<sup>35</sup> Kalb, *Russia's Rome*, p. 160.

était la seule arche de salut au milieu du déluge qui avait submergé mon pays natal et menaçait d'engloutir la chrétienté percluse.<sup>36</sup>

Ivanov was aware that his conversion could be seen as an act of betrayal and apostasy.<sup>37</sup> However, he did not feel he was turning away from Russian Orthodoxy, particularly since he embraced the Eastern Rite forms of the Russian Catholic Church, as well as the Latin Rite heritage.<sup>38</sup> He was returning to the Universal Church; embracing Catholic tradition where it differed from Orthodox tradition did not mean rejecting Russian Orthodoxy (or Russianness).<sup>39</sup>

En prononçant (le 17 mars 1926, jour de fête de S. Venceslas en Russie) le *Credo* [...] je me sentais pour la première fois orthodoxe dans la plénitude de l'acception de ce mot en pleine possession du trésor sacré qui était le mien dès mon baptême, mais dont la jouissance n'avait pas été depuis des années libre d'un sentiment de gêne, devenue peu à peu souffrance, d'être sevré de l'autre moitié de ce trésor vivant de sainteté et de grâce et de ne respirer, pour ainsi dire, à l'égal d'un poitrinaire, que d'un seul poumon.<sup>40</sup>

Dmitrii Ivanov recalls that his father did not publicize his conversion, partly out of fear of a backlash in émigré circles, and did not even make it an event even within his family circle (he did not tell his son and daughter until afterwards).<sup>41</sup> Ivanov's conversion was a private, personal matter for him. When Dmitrii decided to convert at the age of fifteen, a year after his father, Viacheslav wrote to his son, telling him to think twice, urging him 'Прежде тем замышлять переход в католичество, попытайся стать истинно православным.' However, when Dmitrii remained firm in his decision, his father supported his son's choice.<sup>42</sup>

The fact that Ivanov was sensitive to his son's experience of faith is underlined by his own use of the metaphor of tuberculosis (from which Dmitrii had suffered prior to his conversion) when referring in 1830 to Catholicism in his letter to Du Bos cited above. Ivanov uses several metaphors in his writing about faith in his letters, but the metaphor of breathing emphasizes that faith is essential to the human condition, and that unity is paramount to this vital breath. He intended not to impoverish his nation by 'leaving' Russia and Russian Orthodoxy, but on the contrary, to enrich Russia by

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<sup>36</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 424.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 426. See also Dmitrii Ivanov in Rafael Ober, Urs Gfeller, *Besedy s Dmitriem Viacheslavichem Ivanovym*, translated from the French by Elena Baevskaia, Saint-Petersburg: Ivan Limbakh, 1999, p. 74.

<sup>38</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 426-28, see also, Dmitrii Ivanov in Ober and Gfeller, *Besedy*, p. 74.

<sup>39</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 424-26, Dmitrii Ivanov in Ober and Gfeller, *Besedy*, p. 74.

<sup>40</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 426.

<sup>41</sup> Dmitrii Ivanov in Ober and Gfeller, *Besedy*, p. 77.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-81.

joining one small part of Russian Orthodoxy to Catholicism, thereby entering the Universal Church of which Solov'ev had written.

***Catholic Faith, Time and Poetic Creativity in Rimskii dnevnik***

There is no better place to explore Russian Catholicism than by reading Ivanov's 'Rimskii dnevnik 1944 goda'. Although less than ten percent of the poems relate to Catholicism, the whole cycle has many other poems which reflect on religion.<sup>43</sup> Ivanov wrote 116 poems during the year. While he did not write them in a schematic manner, they are carefully placed within months and given dates. Many of the poems are not given titles, so this adds to the significance of the dates. It was intended to be read as a lyric diary by its author. As Bird has noted, several levels of 'time' operate within the it.<sup>44</sup> Of these, this chapter places emphasis on the liturgical calendar. The cycle includes poems which refer the Epiphany, Presentation, the Annunciation, the Marian month of May, the Beheading of John the Baptist.<sup>45</sup> Ivanov also wrote poems relating to the feast of St Augustine and All Souls day.<sup>46</sup>

The calendar performs a similar function to litanies or the rosary in Catholicism. The cycle of liturgical time provides a sense of structure, certainty, continuity and renewal, underpinning the experience of linear time. Ivanov's reflections on his own past, including his sense of grief at the losses he has experienced, find comfort in by the sense of continuity and transcended meaning provided by the Catholic Church. His reflections on the Catholic seasons, and on aspects of his personal faith that had deepened over time, injected new inspiration into his poetic work.

One of the poems in from the 8<sup>th</sup> of January refers to the Catholic parish of St Saba in Rome where he lived:

В стенах, ограде римской славы,  
На Авентине, мой приход —  
Базилика игумна Саввы,  
Что Освященным Русь зовет.

5 Пришел с пустынных плоскогорий  
Сонм Саваитов, Сириян,  
С причастной Чашей для мирян;

<sup>43</sup> Bird argues that the *Dnevnik* represents the soul's journey. See Robert Bird, *The Russian Prospero: The Creative World of Vyacheslav Ivanov*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, pp. 250-62.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>46</sup> 'Kak drevnii rai pokryla skhima...' (January 6), in Ivanov, *SS*, III: 586; 'Mily sretenskie svechi...' (2 February), in *ibid.*, 591-92; 'Mart, kupel' moikh krestin...' (March 1), in *ibid.*, 598; 'V rozakh Mai tebe, Mariia...' (May 1), in *ibid.*, 609; 'Ia byl chado mnogikh slez...' (August 31), in *ibid.*, 628-29; 'Usopshikh den' vsekh dush pominki...' (November 2), in *ibid.*, 635-36.

Им церковь дал святой Григорий.

10 Сень подпирают кораблей  
Из капищ взятые колонны;  
Узорочьем цветных камней  
По мрамору пестрят амвоны;

15 В апсиде — агнцы... Мил убор  
Твоих, о Рим, святилищ дряхлых!  
Как бы меж кипарисов чахлых  
Он чрез века уводит взор

20 Тропой прямой, тропую тесной,  
Пройденной родом христиан, —  
И всё в дали тропы чудесной  
Идут Петр, Яков, Иоанн.<sup>47</sup>

This poem emphasises the theme of the unity of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, because St Saba is a saint in both traditions, as is St Gregory. In line 4, the poet refers to the fact that Orthodox revere him as St Savva, as though to make endear him to Russian readers. The description of the beauty of the church is matched by the sense of evident comfort the poet found in his locale. The ancient surroundings and strong sense of the history of Christianity provide a clear path for the poet. Other writers, such as Rozanov, had also visited Italy's ancient basilicas and venerated the relics of the apostles in Rome. For these Russian writers, Rome was not a city of heretics but an ancient city of martyrs, apostles and saints, which Russians should see, not just as a symbol of Catholicism, but also as a part of their common spiritual heritage.

However, it is a different poem from the 2nd of February that could well serve as an introduction to 'Rimskii dnevnik':

Милы сретенские свечи  
И Христы-младенцы в святки;  
Дух лаванды в ночь Предтечи,  
В праздник Агнии ягнятки;

5 Благодатной ожерелья —  
Нежных Аве розы-четки;  
В среду заговин, с похмелья,  
На главах золы щепотки...

10 Где бормочут по-латыни,  
Как-то верится беспечней,  
Чем в скитах родной святыни, —

<sup>47</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 587.

Простодушной, человечней.

Здесь креста поднять на плечи  
 Так покорно не умеют  
 15 Как пред Богом наши свечи  
 На востоке пламенеют.

Здесь не Чаша литургии  
 Всех зовет в триклиний неба:  
 С неба Дар Евхаристии  
 20 Сходит в мир под видом хлеба.

Пред святыней инославной  
 Сердце гордое смирилось,  
 Церкви целой, полнославной  
 Предвареньем озарилось...

25 То не гул волны хвалынской, –  
 Слышу гам: «Попал ты в лапы  
 Лестной ереси латинской,  
 В невода святого папы».<sup>48</sup>

This poem can be read as Ivanov's poetic apologia for his faith and a key to the rest of the cycle. It brings Catholicism into the Russian language and Russian literary tradition, following in the footsteps of Solov'ev.<sup>49</sup> Lines 1-4, 7-8 all refer to feasts in the Church calendar, Presentation (2<sup>nd</sup> February); Christmastide, the Eve of the Feast of St John the Baptist (24<sup>th</sup> June), St Agnes (22<sup>nd</sup> January) and Ash Wednesday (a moveable day marking the first day of Lent, and the day after the Shrove Tuesday, hence the 'hangover'). Each of these lines represents Ivanov's evocation of traditions which inform the structure, and therefore the forms, of everyday life for a pious Christian – Catholic *byt*. Ivanov's knowledge of the feasts underlines the degree to which he had become acquainted with the minor, as well as the major ways of marking the calendar, and how these days are symbolized. Line 5 and 6 bring to mind the prayers which might be performed on a daily, or regular basis.

The third, fourth and fifth stanzas relate to larger questions of ritual and theology, although these too are questions of practice as well as inner meaning.<sup>50</sup> These stanzas present a series of paradoxes apparent to the poet, who admits the subjectivity of his point of view, rather than a rational argument for his choice of Catholicism. Last of all, Ivanov explicitly refers to his own conversion in terms that evoke the poet's hope of

<sup>48</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 591-92.

<sup>49</sup> See A. Shishkin, '“Rossiia i Vselenskaia tserkov'” v formule VI Solov'eva i Viach. Ivanova,' in Bagno (ed.), *Viacheslav Ivanov. Peterburg. Mirovaia Kul'tura*, p. 168.

<sup>50</sup> See Bird, *The Russian Prospero*, pp. 242-50.

*sobornost'* for Christianity. The poem ends on the reaction that Ivanov both expected and received from contemporaries. It sweeps through some particular moments in a notion of time that is circular, repetitive, and evokes traditions carried out by many people through the ages. It moves on to some tensions between the subjective experiences of the poet and general distinctions between the two denominations, and ends on the very particular reaction to his conversion.

Some images are visual, while others are auditory (the rosary being said, the 'muttering' in Latin), olfactory (lavender, candles burning), and tactile sensations (ashes on the forehead, a hangover). This combination of different types of sensual imagery brings the poem to life. Overall, it gives a sense of the individual's place in the wider faith community, and of the poet's place in eternity. In the traditions and liturgies of Catholicism the poet, personally, finds comfort and certainty, but there was no expectation on his part that others would share this feeling. In this sense, he overturns the idea of Catholicism as linked with rational argument, scholasticism or syllogism, and the pro-Catholic tendency in Russian culture to persuade through argument. Rather, he indicates that this faith, as far as he is concerned, is more instinctive and intuitive. The beauty of the poem and its images in it contain the only real 'argument' for Catholicism in Ivanov's literary work: Catholicism is beautiful, comforting, inspires his personal faith. So, the rituals of the Catholic Church and its teachings have become the poet's pilot stars and inspiration.

As Bird has noted, Ivanov's diary of poems misses out Easter, which is somewhat surprising given the centrality of this festival to both branches of Christianity.<sup>51</sup> After Easter, in May the Church celebrates the month of Mary. The poem has the same sense of popular piety that Rozanov had referred to in his writing on Italy:

В розах Май Тебе, Мария,  
 Поселян сердца простые  
 Посвящают искони.  
 Радуйся, за всё творенье  
 5 Отвечавшая в смиренье:  
 Ессе Ancilla Domini.

В розах Май сиял печален, —  
 Как пустых опочивален  
 Похоронные огни  
 10 В доме суженой Товии, —  
 До согласия Марии:  
 Ессе Ancilla Domini.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

- 15 В розах Май, потупив очи,  
Слышал зов подземной Ночи:  
«Все венки сложив, усни...»  
Помирила Небо с долом  
Благодатная глаголом:  
Ессе Ancilla Domini.
- 20 Пресвятая, жар молений,—  
Дева, нищий дар хвалений —  
В час мой смертный помяни.<sup>52</sup>

This relatively simple poem recalls a prayer or hymn with all the stanzas ending on the line ‘Ессе Ancilla Domini’, words linked with the Annunciation (25<sup>th</sup> March). Unlike Ivanov’s earlier Marian poems, no reference is made to the Classical past, to Dante, or to Sophia. The ending neatly recalls, without citing, the words of the Hail Mary, ‘pray for us now, and in the hour of our death’. The use of the roses as symbols and the Marian month of Mary suggest the inspiration that Catholic imagery and practice gave the poet. The sense of humility is also significant, because Ivanov’s other poems in ‘Rimskii dnevnik’ contain the idea of a proud spirit, peacefully submitting to God’s will. For many Christians, the Virgin is the prime example of humility.

In August, Ivanov turned his attention to some saints. The poem ‘Todo Nada’ concerns St John of the Cross, a Catholic mystic.<sup>53</sup> This ties into the interest of Silver Age poets in Catholic mystics, and especially those who were also writers, already discussed in this research.<sup>54</sup> As scholars have suggested, Merezhkovskii’s interest in Spanish mystics in the 1930s may have encouraged Ivanov’s.<sup>55</sup> The poem combines translation from the writings of St John with Ivanov’s original verse.<sup>56</sup>

The idea of religious conversion became the subject of two poems, and in both cases, the overcoming of the sin of pride is entwined with conversion. These poems on St Augustine and St Paul, reflect on Ivanov’s own conversion. St Augustine has rarely been considered an important figure in Orthodoxy, and his works have been largely neglected, their influence mainly filtered through secondary sources.<sup>57</sup> As already observed, Ivanov drew upon the symbolism of the heart aflame which has sometimes been associated with the saint. Ivanov, as Dudek pointed out, read and meditated on St

<sup>52</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 609.

<sup>53</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 627-28.

<sup>54</sup> For more on this poem, see Sedano S’erra and Bagno, ‘Viacheslav Ivanov i San Khuan de la Krus,’ pp. 52-60.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>57</sup> See A. Nichols, ‘The Reception of St Augustine and his Work in the Byzantine-Slav Tradition’, *Angelicum*, 64 (1987), pp. 437-452.



Augustine's works.<sup>58</sup> The feast of St Monica, Augustine's mother, is 27<sup>th</sup> August, while Augustine's feast day falls on the following day. Ivanov's poem 'Ia byl chado mnogikh slez...' is dated 31<sup>st</sup> August, doubtless inspired by St Augustine's feast day.<sup>59</sup> The poem opens with two epigraphs in Russian from *Confession* and then retells the story of the saint's conversion.

St Augustine considered himself a great sinner. Some of the other poems in 'Rimskii dnevnik' also discuss the themes of sin and guilt and depict man's struggles with temptation.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Ivanov's powerful poem on St Paul, written in September, also pursues the idea of struggle with sin.<sup>61</sup> With both St Augustine and St Paul, the poet emphasizes their pride and their *metanoia* leading to conversion. He leaves his reader at exactly the pivotal moment when St Augustine turned to God (on hearing the words 'tolle, lege'), when his pride turned to humble submission to God's will. Ivanov's choice of subject and the way he frames the story with quotations from the saint's works bring the Catholic St Augustine, his writing and life, into mainstream Russian literary tradition. The personal dimension of these stories, especially when connected to Ivanov's own life, once again emphasizes the Catholic religion as a personal faith, accessible to any person.

'Rimskii dnevnik' is a record of current events and shaped by memories of his past. It is both introspective and outward-looking. It is perhaps unsurprising, given Ivanov's age and his experiences that, as well as describing the works of other saints, he also reflected on his own life and on death. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, the Catholic Church reserves a special day for remembering the Faithful Departed. In the poem 'Usopshikh den', vsekh dush pominki...' he describes the popular tradition of laying flowers on the graves of loved ones at this time.<sup>62</sup>

While some of the poems reveal the poet's thoughts about sin, particularly pride, other poems, such as this poem about remembrance, and others like 'Ia posokh moi doveril bogu...', while also acknowledging the difficulties of life, and the shadow that doubt casts on faith, express the deep-held certainty that religious faith provides.<sup>63</sup> Ivanov's survival and long life are evidence of his ability to adapt. However, it would be incorrect to suggest that he accepted Catholicism simply as a means of adapting to

<sup>58</sup> See Dudek, 'Idei blazhennogo Avgustina', pp. 353-65.

<sup>59</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 628.

<sup>60</sup> 'Vse bes nazoiliviy khlopochet..' (8 January), in Ivanov, *SS*, III: 587-8; 'Zhizn', greshnitsa sviataia...' (March 19), in *ibid.*, 600.

<sup>61</sup> 'Ty na puti k vratam Damaska...' (23 September), in Ivanov, *SS*, III: 631.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 635-36.

<sup>63</sup> Ivanov, *SS*, III: 597.

life in Italy. Catholicism became for him a reassuring rock in turbulent times. He thought that religion should inspire the individual and nourish a nation's culture, and likewise, his faith inspired his work. He took Catholicism to his creative heart, where it flourished.

The penultimate poem of 'Rimskii dnevnik' is dated December 29<sup>th</sup>, four days after Christmas, and yet the poem is more suitable for Eastertide, as it retells one of the appearances of the Risen Christ. The Resurrection transforms the sense of confusion, tragedy and disarray to normality and joy:

*Ев. от Иоанна, 21, 7—12.*

Порывистый, простосердечный,  
Ты мил мне, Петр! — Мечта иль явь?  
— «Он!» шепчет Иоанн. И вплавь  
Ты к берегу ринулся, беспечный.

Там Иисус уж разложил  
Костер, и ждет огонь улова.  
О том, что было с Ним, ни слова:  
Он жив, как прежде с ними жил.<sup>64</sup>

On further investigation, in the Catholic calendar the feast of St John the Evangelist falls on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December. Moreover, in the Roman Missal the reading for this day is the text which immediately precedes the events described in this poem, (John 21:1-6).<sup>65</sup> Although we cannot be certain exactly what prompted the poem, this may not be coincidental. The focus of the poem is not in fact St John, but Peter and his relationship with Christ, with Peter being addressed in the 'ty' form. The next part of St John's Gospel is one of the key texts cited to support the papal primacy (John 21:13-25). When Ivanov accepted Catholicism, he accepted the papal primacy. This poem reveals an affectionate attitude to St Peter, strikingly similar to Solov'ev's acknowledgement of the saint's impetuous nature in *La Russie*. Peter may not be perfect, but his faith, enthusiasm and dynamism in the face of difficulty provide an example to believers. Thus Ivanov also acknowledges, albeit subtly, that the Papacy is the rock of the Church. If his attitude to Peter in this poem is identified with his attitude to the Papacy, then this suggests that he was able to see that the Catholic Church was not simply the preserver of tradition, but also capable of action and moving forward.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 644.

<sup>65</sup> See the pre-Vatican II Roman Missal, *Missale Romanum*, (online PDF copy of 1962 text by Church Music Association of America). <http://www.sanctamissa.org/en/resources/books-1962/missale-romanum-1962.pdf> Last accessed 24/01/13.

It is surely significant that Ivanov's diary ends on a poem about St Peter. Although, as already noted, the cycle covers many subjects, Ivanov's Christian, specifically Catholic faith lay at the core of his being. Catholicism's feasts, prayers, saints and practices were woven into his everyday life. They had become an inspiration for his poetry, a way of remembering the example of faith set by the saints, a reminder of the Faithful Departed. If Catholicism entered into his life as one of many pilot stars, by the end of his life, it was truly the main guiding light, and had become the rock on which his life was built. 'Rimskii dnevnik' is not, therefore, merely a diary about Rome, it is also a diary about Ivanov's life as a Catholic. His poems often record moments in his individual life, yet he was certainly aware of the universal aspect of what he wrote about. His poems sought to touch readers and remind them of moments and feelings in their own lives. Consequently, the 'Rimskii dnevnik' becomes a diary of the life of all Christians as members of the Universal Church, and as such deserves wider recognition. It provides the fullest expression of a Russian Catholic's journey of faith in Russian literature to date.

### **Ivanov and Literary Tradition**

Although Ivanov's conversion and literary work relating to Catholicism can be seen as personal and artistic acts, they can also be seen as a culmination of a long tradition in Russian literary culture. Although he rarely mentions Chaadaev, the philosopher's influence on his Catholicism is undoubtedly present, filtered through other thinkers. Ivanov did not see Pushkin as a poet who was inclined to mysticism, nor as a writer who had greatly pondered on metaphysical questions.<sup>66</sup> In the essay 'Dva maiaka' (1937) he discusses some key issues in Pushkin's oeuvre, particularly his religious faith, alluding to 'Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...' (1829) Pushkin's ambiguous account of a knight's mystical vision. Ivanov argued that Pushkin was troubled by his own lack of faith and religious experience. Similarly, his reading of Pushkin's unfinished poem 'V nachale zhizni shkolu pomniu ia...' (1830) echoes a sense of the poet wandering and lost, looking for signposts:

В рафаэлевски-ясных терцинах фрагмента «В начале жизни школу помню я» он изображает душевную тревогу, порожденную этим противоречием в переходное время между христианским Средневековьем и оглянувшимся на язычество Возрождением. «Смирренная, одетая убого, но видом величавая жена» под монашеским покрывалом, с небесным светом очей и

<sup>66</sup> V. Ivanov, 'Dva maiaka', in *SS*, IV: 330-342, especially 342.

словами «полными святыни» на устах, есть олицетворение Теологии, «священной доктрины» схоластиков.<sup>67</sup>

He interprets the narrator's position as set in the context of European cultural history, where scholasticism and the Renaissance are important distinguishing landmarks. He even compares Pushkin to Raphael, alluding to Pushkin's poems 'Vozrozhdenie' (1819) and 'Madona' (1830), which in turn reference the Renaissance master. His picture of Pushkin is therefore that of a Russian poet seeking to find his bearings in relation to European literary tradition. Ivanov's approach to Pushkin develops Dostoevskii's Pushkin Speech and the idea of Russian universalism described in it. However, in Ivanov's reading, Pushkin seems significantly closer to the medieval and Renaissance Catholic world so valorized by Chaadaev and later by Ellis, Ivanov and other writers of the Silver Age. This interpretation of Pushkin allows Ivanov to 'develop' his predecessor's attitude to Christianity in a manner that anticipates the later development of the Catholic theme in Russian literature.

During the First World War, Berdiaev accused Ivanov of trying to revive Slavophilism. Ivanov's response to this attack, in the essay 'Zhivoe predanie' (1915), distinguishes between the beauty of Russian religiosity and nationhood, as he sees it, and the 'biological' nationalism that was sometimes present in Slavophile writing.<sup>68</sup> In his definition, 'Русский народ мыслится богоносцем так, как богоносец, по православному учению, и всякий человек, имеющий воскреснуть во Христе и неким таинственным образом обожествиться.'<sup>69</sup> He discarded the type of nationalism of which the Slavophiles and other Russian thinkers had been capable. However, in this essay he did not fully outline his own conceptualisation of Russian universalism.

The title of the essay 'Poet i chern'' (1904) is a response to Pushkin's 'Poet i tolpa' (1828).<sup>70</sup> Ivanov refers to classical writers, then to Pushkin, Lermontov and Tiutchev. In particular, he cites Tiutchev's 'Eti bednye seleniia...' (1855) to 'prove' the link between poetry and the common people. He ignores the anti-Catholic and imperialist aspect of Tiutchev's work in his writing, and instead focuses on the positive, non-polemical moments of Russian literary tradition. He considered Tiutchev to be one

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>68</sup> 'Zhivoe predaniie,' (1915) in *SS*, III: 343.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 341.

<sup>70</sup> Ivanov, 'Poet i chern'' in *SS*, I: 709-14.

of the precursors to the Symbolists.<sup>71</sup> In his late collection ‘Rimskii dnevnik’ he included a poem identifying his literary ‘ancestors’:

Таинник Ночи, Тютчев нежный,  
 Дух сладострастный и мятежный,  
 Чей так волшебен тусклый свет;  
 И задыхающийся Фет  
 Пред вечностью безнадежной,  
 В глушинах ландыш белоснежный,  
 Над оползнем расцветший цвет;  
 И духовидец, по безбрежной  
 Любви тоскующий поэт —  
 Владимир Соловьев: их трое,  
 В земном прозревших неземное  
 И нам преуказавших путь.  
 Как их созвездие родное  
 Мне во святых не помянуть?<sup>72</sup>

On the face of it, these are three quite disparate poets. Tiutchev and Solov’ev, as this thesis has demonstrated, held radically different views on Catholicism. Ivanov picked out the mystical approach to poetry as a common feature of these poets, as it emphasized the spiritual element in religion, which unified rather than divided. All three appear together here, not simply as poetic forefathers, but more as prophets, even as saintly figures, setting an example and due a special reverence.

As Davidson has argued, Ivanov saw Dostoevskii as a leading figure in the tradition of writer-prophets.<sup>73</sup> In his essay ‘Lik i lichiny Rossii’ (1917) Ivanov agrees with Dostoevskii’s vision of a Russian Christ, but lends a slightly different meaning to it:

Долгое пребывание мое на Западе не ослабило, а укрепило эту, быть может, ненужную для религиозного дела, но и не разделяющую людей уверенность, что богоявление Христа отдельным народам таинственно разнствует, как по-разному видели Его и ближайшие Его ученики. И если прав Достоевский, что наш народ — «богоносец», долженствующий «явить миру своего, русского Христа», — это не отнимает Христа у других народов, в свою очередь призываемых к богоносному служению; но выражает это определение, прежде и больше всего, веру в обручение русской души Христу навек.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Ivanov, ‘Zavety simbolizma,’ (1910) in *SS*, II: 588-90.

<sup>72</sup> *SS*, III: 633-34.

<sup>73</sup> Pamela Davidson, ‘Viacheslav Ivanov’s Ideal of the Artist as Prophet: From Theory to Practice,’ *Europa Orientalis*, 21, 2002, pp. 173-74.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Lik i lichiny Rossii (K issledovaniiu ideologii Dostoevskogo’ (1917), in *SS*, IV: 463-64.

For Ivanov (as for pro-Catholic thinkers such as Gagarin or Solov'ev) a special place for Russia in the world did not diminish the religiosity of other nations, whereas for Dostoevskii and the Slavophiles it did. Dostoevskii's ideas lent themselves to anti-Catholic views, Ivanov's – towards ecumenism and Catholicism. Likewise, Ivanov's idea of *sobornost'* is a pan-Christian, rather than strictly Orthodox, one.<sup>75</sup> Even though in this essay he chooses to criticize Merezhkovskii's presentation of Dostoevskii's ideas and refers to theocracy several times in his lengthy discussion of *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, he does not discuss the anti-Catholic elements (or the Grand Inquisitor) in Dostoevskii's thought. Like most Russian writers, he was capable of taking from another writer those aspects that he favoured, while bypassing those aspects that he did not agree with.

Ivanov's 'Russian idea', especially his understanding of the religious aspect of Russia, was, like Solov'ev's, far more outward-looking and all-embracing than Dostoevskii's. He did not reject Dostoevskii's legacy, but linked it to Solov'ev's ideas. As he argued in his essay 'Religioznoe delo V. Solov'eva' (1911):

Чрез Достоевского русский народ психически (т.е. в действии Мировой Души) осознал свою идею, как идею всечеловечества. Через Соловьева русский народ логически (т.е. действием Логоса) осознал свое призвание — до потери личной души своей служить началу Церкви вселенской. Когда приблизится чаемое царство, когда забрезжит заря Града Божьего, избранные и верные Града вспомнят о Соловьеве, как об одном из своих пророков.<sup>76</sup>

It would be possible to write at some length on how Solov'ev's ideas were developed by Ivanov's work.<sup>77</sup> Solov'ev encouraged Ivanov's concept of the theurgic artist and the way he linked art and mysticism.<sup>78</sup> Both Solov'ev and Ivanov made a particular effort to prioritize unity and the universal over the particular and the national. Yet both worked on the 'Russian idea' – Russia's place in the world as defined by Russian religiosity. Although Dmitrii Ivanov later stated that the problem of church unity had preoccupied his father before he met Solov'ev,<sup>79</sup> Catholicism and the Universal Church nevertheless form a particularly strong bond between the two writers:

Церковь не имеет тела, иначе как в таинстве. Ecclesia non habet corpus, nisi in mysterio. Эти слова не принадлежат Вл. Соловьеву. Но я не думаю,

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 466.

<sup>76</sup> Ivanov, 'Religioznoe delo V. Solov'eva' (1911), SS, III: 306.

<sup>77</sup> See Davidson, *The Poetic Imagination*, pp. 53-94, A. Shishkin, '“Rossiia i Vselenskaia tserkov'”', pp. 159-78.

<sup>78</sup> Davidson, 'Viacheslav Ivanov's Ideal of the Artist,' p. 161.

<sup>79</sup> *Besedy*, p. 72.

чтобы он стал по существу оспаривать эту формулу, если бы ее услышал [...].

Не занятия церковною историей привели Вл. Соловьева к его чистому католицизму, для которого нет разделения между Востоком и Западом, но полное постижение мистической истины о Церкви.<sup>80</sup>

The Universal Church is approached through its mystical core because this aspect allows the writer to overcome theological differences. Moreover, real ‘Catholicism’ brings East and West together, it is catholic, universal, ‘*sobornyi*’. Ivanov acutely shared his predecessor’s dislike of church-state relations in Tsarist Russia.<sup>81</sup>

The poet’s was conscious of his role as Solov’ev’s disciple, to whom he dedicated his collection *Kormchie zvezdy*. This adherence to the philosopher’s ideas found expression in the poem ‘Stikh o sviatoi gore’ from that collection. The author cites the philosopher’s last words ‘трудна работа Господня!’ in the epigraph. The poem features the Mother of God as ‘Tsaritsa nebesnaia’ [*Regina caeli*], which is reminiscent of how Solov’ev used the figure of Mary in several of his works. The main metaphor or narrative of the poem is the building of a Temple on a mountain. This appears to allude to the metaphor used by Solov’ev in *La Russie* discussed above in Chapter 7, and can be linked with the Temple of Jerusalem. The poem emphasizes that the Temple is built on Russian soil, through his use of archaisms and Slavicisms. However, the Temple being built is ‘*sobornyi*’ and although Ivanov had much in common with the Slavophiles and Dostoevskii, the epigraph emphasizes that his image of the Universal Church was much closer to Solov’ev’s idea than to that of any other thinker. Ivanov built on his predecessor’s foundations, not least by using the philosopher’s formula as a special addendum to the words with which he joined the Catholic Church.<sup>82</sup>

Ivanov therefore rooted his own work firmly in a tradition of Russian literature and thought. His own ‘tree’ of Russian Catholicism seemed to grow from a ‘mustard seed’ planted by Chaadaev and Pushkin, watered and tended by Solov’ev, and brought to fruition in his own work. This tradition lends coherence to his work, and allows his personal religious inclinations to blossom and give forth fruit in literature.

<sup>80</sup> Ivanov, ‘Religioznoe delo V. Solov’eva’ *SS*, III: 301-2

<sup>81</sup> Dmitrii Ivanov, in *Besedy*, p. 72.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Lettre à Charles Du Bos’, *SS*, IV: 424.

### Conclusion: ‘Serdtsse gordoe smirilos’

Unlike some of his Russian Catholic predecessors such as Gagarin, Ivanov did not seek to polemicize with his Orthodox brothers in Christ. Nevertheless, his conversion has a public dimension, made more prominent by the poetry which related to his faith, and by discussion in his letters. When in 1926 Ivanov pronounced the words that brought him into the Catholic Church, he took upon himself the millennium that had elapsed since the Great Schism and, in his own eyes, took a positive act towards ending that Schism. He was, in his own view, completing a task that Solov'ev had embarked on decades previously.<sup>83</sup> He returned to the Temple's foundations, and began to build.

In 1947 Ivanov sent two poems from *Rimskii dnevnik* to the philosopher and critic Semen Frank, then living in London, as part of a correspondence that also contained his written response to what he knew as inevitable puzzlement and occasional opposition from Russians about his conversion. He emphasized that he had retained as much as he could from the Eastern Rite, and supported the formation of clergy for the Russian Catholic Church.<sup>84</sup> But on the subject of what was ‘missing’ from Catholicism, he refused to budge:

Сознает ли католичество свою «ущербность» в сравнении с Востоком? Латинство, разумеется, знает, что оно только часть, а не целое; католичество же не имеет ни оснований, ни права признавать ущербным, ибо оно говорит своё Да всему положительному на Востоке и включает в свою полноту весь Восток. Напротив, религиозно-чувствительные русские не могут сознавать своей церковной ущербности, поскольку отмечают духовные сокровища Запада и его святых и видят православие низведенным стараниями государственной власти на уровень церкви национальной.<sup>85</sup>

He argues that Russian nationality and religiosity are weakened if they do not turn to Rome for enrichment, whereas Rome is capable of expanding its horizons and absorbing the strengths of other religious traditions. His views, coincidentally perhaps, did precede a new era in interfaith relations, particularly the Papacy of John Paul II, who attended a Symposium held in Rome in 1983 in Ivanov's honour.<sup>86</sup> He recalled having paraphrased the poet as an example of the ecumenical ideal in 1980, ‘Не возможно христианину, более того, католику дышать одним легким: нужно иметь

<sup>83</sup> ‘Lettre à Charles Du Bos,’ *SS*, IV: 424.

<sup>84</sup> See V. S. Frank, ‘Perepiska S. L. Franka s Viach. Ivanovym,’ *Mosty*, 10. 1963, p. 360. See also Dmitrii Ivanov in Ober and Gfeller, *Besedy*, p. 78.

<sup>85</sup> See Ivanov's letter to S. Frank, in ‘Perepiska S. L. Franka,’ p. 361.

<sup>86</sup> *SS*, IV: 699-703.



два легких – Восточное и Западное.<sup>87</sup> For Ivanov, Catholicism provided a shelter from the storm of Communism and Russian nationalism. Becoming a Russian Catholic was a step towards a true universalism and true unity of the human spirit that Ivanov, as a true Russian, longed for, and his path along this road was to a large extent prepared by his literary development of the image of Catholicism.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 702.

## Conclusion

‘Полемизирующие стороны, в жару спора, часто не видят самой очевидной истины, давно ставшей ясною для всех, кто смотрит на них со стороны.’ (Vasilii Rozanov, 1904)<sup>1</sup>

‘...хочется иногда сказать, что философы-прозаики, по несовершенству своего орудия, суть плотники-философы, а поэты суть тоже философы, но уже ювелиры, по тонкости и переливчатости своих средств.’  
(Vasilii Rozanov, 1900)<sup>2</sup>

This thesis has shown that the image of Catholicism in Russian literary tradition is made up of a complex tapestry of threads; without grasping the way these strands influenced and reacted to one another, the overall picture does not make sense. The first critics, scholars, and historians of Russian thought and literature were most often writers commenting on each other’s work in person, or in letters and essays. The contemporaries and successors of writers were therefore the first to construct the notion of a writer’s legacy. The government and the censor had a part to play as well. Had Chaadaev’s ‘Lettre première’ not been published in 1836, or had the government and his contemporaries not reacted in the way they did, subsequent Russian thought and literature might have taken a very different course. (We must not forget the likely effect of the *Teleskop* affair on Chaadaev’s friend Pushkin.) This story of reaction (not always negative) and counter-reaction repeats itself throughout a century and more of polemics, novels and poetry.

It is not always appropriate to speak about the image of Catholicism as ‘evolving’ in a simple linear fashion because there were continuities and connections between the image of Catholicism in various writers’ work that span a century or more. For example, the work of Pushkin and the Symbolists was linked by more than simply their chosen medium. Their texts were connected by certain images, such as the figure of the knight. They came under the influence of esoteric movements and Freemasonry. While Dante was read in Italian in the 1820s and 1830s by a handful of writers such as Pushkin and Gogol’, by the Silver Age he was being translated into Russian, alluded to extensively in verse, and referred to in critical essays. Another connection between these two eras is their open, artistic approach to religious questions, an approach not often found in the intervening period between the 1840s and 1880s in Russian prose, dominated by the heavier medium of polemics and novels rather than the more open

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<sup>1</sup> Rozanov, ‘Ob odnoi osobennoi zaslugе Vl. S. Solov’eva,’ in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> Rozanov, ‘Pamiati Vl. Solov’eva,’ in *O pisatel’stve i pisateliakh*, p. 66.

medium of poetry. Different writers emphasized different versions of the image of Catholicism, but there are certain uniting tendencies and themes, such as a critique of the papal primacy.

Chapter 1 argued that Chaadaev laid the foundations for attitudes to Catholicism (both positive and negative) in the succeeding decades. The philosopher claimed that the Catholic Church provided unity and was a dynamic force that had pushed Europe forward. His emphasis on its active nature in history carried the implication that the Orthodox Church was contemplative or passive. He used the construct of Catholicism to ask questions of Russian culture and its relationship to Europe and the part religion had to play in the life of a nation. His view of Catholicism tended to be political and social, linked with his conceptualisation of theocracy, rather than a matter of inner faith. Despite his interest in culture, his work looks only at the broader effect of Catholicism on the culture of Europe, not at the details, and he does not refer a great deal to Russian literature in his main texts. Reactions to Chaadaev showed Russian society's wariness towards Catholic influence and how his audience was not yet prepared for the challenge that his ideas presented.

Turning to the image of Catholicism in the literary sphere, Chapter 1 then explored the appearance of Catholic themes in Pushkin's work. Catholicism coloured the backdrop to his poem 'Zhil na svete rytsar' bednyi...' (1829), and may at the same time have helped to inform his understanding of how religious experience could change a person. The idea that the poem is loosely based on his encounters with several converts and pro-Catholics of his day, especially his friendship with Chaadaev, lends a new reading to this well-known poem. The lack of overt references to the Catholic Church in Pushkin's other verse may be due to the contentious nature of the subject in the period in which he was writing; but instead he wrote poems which alluded to Catholic culture more subtly, such as 'V nachale zhizni shkolu pomniu ia...' (1830). The poet chose to focus on other aspects of Russian nationality. Where Catholicism does appear in his work it introduces colour, contrast and ambivalence, rather than striking a polemical note. By contrast, in Khomiakov's drama (but not in his poetry) Catholicism served as a foil highlighting Russia's strengths. The young Slavophile played on the image of the Jesuit as a Machiavellian schemer in league with the Devil. This latter use of Catholicism might have worked better in more skilled hands, but Khomiakov's drama is lacking in subtlety and does not sustain the reader's or audience's interest. Thus this era embraced Chaadaev's provocative questioning,

Pushkin's allusions to Catholicism through the creative medium of poetry and drama, and the polemical use of Catholicism as a negative other in Khomiakov's work. All of these approaches continued to develop and interact in the hundred years that followed.

Chapter 2 examined the way in which, against a background of greater conservatism in the reign of Nicholas I, the Slavophiles used the image of Catholicism to help construct their version of Russian identity. In their essays this device worked better than in Khomiakov's play. Kireevskii and Khomiakov, who saw Catholicism as the successor to the Roman Empire, pointed to it as the root of all Europe's problems. Responding to Chaadaev, they argued that Catholicism provided unity at the cost of freedom. They contrasted the supposed rigid 'unity' of Catholicism to the free *sobornost'* of Russian Orthodoxy, which was not enshrined in doctrine or hierarchy but native to Russian religiosity. The Slavophiles argued that as an 'active' Church, Catholicism had meddled in European affairs and this had led to historical iniquities (such as the Inquisition). Throughout their work, they juxtaposed the historical Catholic Church with an idealized version of the Orthodox Church, making it easier to criticize one without these criticisms applying to the other. However, this use of the image of Catholicism as a mould to define Russia tended to make the Orthodox Church into an abstract concept. This in turn had the effect in the longer term of contributing to a sense that Russia and the Orthodox Church needed to reform in order to compete with the Catholic Church which they themselves had styled as active and dynamic.

Tiutchev's essays have many similarities with Slavophile thought. However, he was writing with a political intent, and his experience as a diplomat in Europe meant he had a more direct interest in European affairs. He also emphasized the similarities between the ancient Roman Empire and Roman Catholicism, highlighting the element of violence that this entailed. His hopes for Russian religion and society placed less emphasis on *sobornost'* and more on the power of the Tsar, who he hoped would lead a Pan-Slavist theocracy. Whereas the Slavophiles had initially only made passing references to the Jesuits, Tiutchev devoted more attention to them. His essay 'La question romaine' (1850) was a forerunner of the polemics of the 1850s and 1860s, and in fact provoked one of the polemical essays to which Khomiakov in turn responded. This heavier, more polemical and political tone is his key contribution to the image of Catholicism. Tiutchev's adoption of the mantle of political polemicist gave his voice a bolstered 'prophetic' authority.

Chapter 3 assessed the development of ‘literary Slavophilism’. The poetry of Khomiakov contains a surprising lack of references to the Catholic Church, compared with his essays. The writer Gogol’ was better known for his fervent adherence to Russian Orthodoxy and for the Russian nationalism in his novella, *Taras Bul’ba*, and during his long period of residence in Rome he got to know Catholicism at first hand. Evidence from his letters suggests that he came to admire some aspects of the Catholic Church and could understand Catholicism as a faith as well as an institution. As a Christian, he felt spiritually at home in Rome. This spiritual view of Catholicism can also be found in *Taras Bul’ba*. Equally, he borrowed from the Catholic tradition in writing *Mertvye dushi*. When he returned to Russia he became increasingly Orthodox and conservative in his views, and attempted to assert them in his didactic work *Vybrannye mesta*, but was nevertheless accused of becoming pro-Catholic. The suggestion that he had been ‘infected’ by Catholicism was particularly strange, given the fact that his return to Russia had coincided with his increasing dislike of the efforts of Zinaida Volkonskaia to convert his close friend Viel’gorskii. However, the reactions to Gogol’'s alleged pro-Catholicism reveal a great deal about the image of Catholicism in this era. Russians tended to see Catholics as proselytizing, and this emphasis on their influence over others was connected to the fear of Catholic power seen as a threat to passive Orthodoxy. Gogol’'s effort to change this view and bolster Orthodoxy only served to emphasize the idea of threat. Moreover, censorship, and indeed the censure of others, were still so strict that writers could not necessarily write what they thought, even in private letters; when they did, they could still be deeply misunderstood. Gogol’'s major contribution to the image of Catholicism was his evocation of religious faith as personal, but Russian society was still largely unprepared to see Catholicism in this way.

The polemics that are the subject of Chapter 4 developed themes that Chaadaev, the Slavophiles and Tiutchev had already raised: unity and the idea that unity came at the cost of freedom, especially since Catholics were subject to the Papacy. The debate intensified in tone as a result of the Crimean War as well as nationalist movements in Russian society at this time. The question of universality came to the forefront, with an intense discussion about the different translations of the word ‘catholic’ in the Creed and the implications of this for ecclesiology. The polemic with Gagarin and other members of the Catholic clergy allowed Khomiakov a further opportunity to explain his idea of *sobornost’*. Without these polemics, the important concept of *sobornost’* might

not have taken the form it did. However, as Sergei Khoruzhii argues, the concept of *sobornost'* is 'very fragmentary'.<sup>3</sup> Despite the frequently insubstantial nature of their definitions, the Slavophiles were adamant that Orthodoxy represented true universality, whereas the Russian Jesuits argued that the Russian Orthodox Church was too national. While professing to be patriots, the Jesuits wanted the Russian Church to become part of the Catholic Church and saw no contradiction in the concept of a Russian Catholic Church. The Slavophiles also used the history of the Society of Jesus in order to explain what was wrong with Roman Catholicism, suggesting that the worst of the perceived historical iniquities perpetrated by the Jesuits represented the whole Catholic Church. They did not apply the same logic to the Russian Orthodox Church, or seek to examine its problems. Another aspect of these polemics lay in each side accusing their opponents of falsehood. Samarin, in particular, used the image of the Jesuit as a crude way of representing Catholicism as Russia's historical archenemy.

The polarized images of Catholicism forged through these polemics show exactly how misunderstandings and the tendency to generalize and oversimplify religious questions could deepen into prejudices and xenophobia in some cases. The polemics were a war of words that did nothing to solve the questions posed by the Slavophiles and Jesuits. However, they represent an intense period in the discussion about Catholicism and as such served an important role in pushing the debate into the centre of literary culture.

The poetry of Fedor Tiutchev mainly deals with universal poetic themes, but he also wrote a significant proportion of political poems, which are generally overlooked. Chapter 5 looked at some of these poems, and explored how they attempted to replicate the anti-Catholic polemic in poetic form. Like his essays, Tiutchev's poems comment on specific events more than the Slavophiles do, using poetic device and language to underscore his arguments. However, the voice of Tiutchev the lyric poet injects a note of ambivalence and uncertainty into these views, and the reader is left uncertain as to where true faith and authority lie, as the poet does little to define true Russian Orthodoxy in positive terms. The image of Catholicism in Tiutchev's poetry and essays is broadly similar, but comparing the two shows how the attempt at assuming a prophetic voice is also complicated by the ambivalence of the personal lyric voice.

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<sup>3</sup> S. Khoruzhii, 'Slavophiles, Westernizers and the birth of Russian Philosophical Humanism,' trans. by P. Michelson, in Hamburg and Poole (eds.), *A History of Russian Philosophy*, p. 49.

Chapter 6 showed how Dostoevskii was able to use his literary prowess in order to bolster the image of the Jesuit as an enemy of Russian Orthodoxy (following the example set by Tiutchev and Samarin). At the same time, his novels reveal the ambiguities and complexities of the polemical form represented by the discussions between characters. Dostoevskii's views on Catholicism were heavily influenced by the Slavophiles and the *pochvenniki*, but like Tiutchev he commented on world events, and therefore his writing appears to have more contemporary relevance to the society of his day. He brought together the previously disparate worlds of literature, polemical essays and journalism. His texts argued for Catholicism's negative influence on Europe, emphasized the Catholic Church's iniquities in history, especially the Inquisition. The figure of the Pope and papal authority are very important in his writing, and although the Grand Inquisitor is not the Pope, the similarity between the way he represents the popes and the Inquisitor underlines the anti-Catholic aspect of *Brat'ia Karamazovy*. The importance of the image of Catholicism in his work is that it is a negative foil helping to define his idea of Russia but at the same time also stands as an example of the writer giving space to many voices.

Dostoevskii's representation of alternatives or responses to Catholicism, like those of the Slavophiles, were vague. He posited the idea of an active Church and of kenotic love in his novels, but this vision was never fully realized in his work. However, he ignored his anti-Catholic thematic when he turned his full attention to the Russian idea in his Pushkin Speech, which he used to construct the concept of Russian universalism in literature. It is not the anti-Catholic component of his work that is his lasting testament, but his literary achievement that reaches towards a concept of human solidarity and a universal idea of beauty and love. It is undoubtedly this aspect of the Russian writer's work which recently caused Pope Francis to exhort Catholics to 'read and re-read' Dostoevskii.<sup>4</sup> The contradiction in Dostoevskii's work between the two extremes of his representation of *sobornost'* and his anti-Catholic, polemical output created a space in which a different kind of discussion and evocation of Catholicism could develop. His acquaintance with Solov'ev proved crucial in this respect.

The period prior to 1881 represents the point of most intense anti-Catholicism. After Dostoevskii, writers began to reassess the image of Catholicism with a view to reform within Russia (including the Orthodox Church). This new wave of interest in the

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<sup>4</sup> Transcript and translation of an interview with journalists, see <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=23070> accessed 8/08/13.

interaction between religion and culture began with Solov'ev, discussed in Chapter 7. Representing himself as the legitimate successor to both Pushkin and Dostoevskii and as a poet-prophet, he used this platform to present his views and to redefine the image of Catholicism among his contemporaries and successors. He built his own work on the idea of Russian universalism already outlined by Dostoevskii. Drawing on the ideas of the Slavophiles, Tiutchev and Dostoevskii, he turned them on their head. The active nature of the Catholic Church in society was now seen as a positive. Solov'ev prized unity among people and the universal above all else, and thus believed strongly in uniting the Catholic Church with the Orthodox Church. He did not dismiss the idea of *sobornost'* but understood it not as a universal Christian ideal, not something exclusively Russian. Finally, he (like Chaadaev and Gagarin) argued that the Pope was an important and necessary figure of unity in the Christian world.

Solov'ev's literary work extended his approach in a more fluid, literary manner. Instead of arguing for Catholicism, his verse absorbed some of the merits of Catholic culture and assimilated them into Russian literary tradition. He thus created a literary space where Russian culture and Catholicism could fruitfully merge. In particular, his role as a mystic-poet, following the model of Catholic mystic poets, saints and visionaries, was emulated by later poets. He was crucial in unifying the forms of polemical, philosophical strands in Russian literary culture with the creative, literary poetic, and personal and this was his principal legacy to the Silver Age.

Moving on to an examination of one of Solov'ev's polemical opponents in his lifetime, Chapter 8 examined the writing of Rozanov. Although initially influenced by the ideas of the Slavophiles and Dostoevskii, and despite his views on ethnicity, Rozanov's approach, based on the collation of impressions and exploration, enabled him to represent Catholicism differently. The image of Catholicism that appears in his works is fresh and different from that of other writers. He adheres to the view held by Tiutchev and the Slavophiles of the connection between ancient Rome and Roman Catholicism, but presents this more positively, arguing that the Roman Empire was a powerful, dynamic force. He criticizes the tendency towards oversimplification in anti-Catholic polemics, particularly with regard to papal infallibility. He emphasized the fruitful effect of Catholicism on the culture of Europe; representing the Catholic Church as a mother to European culture. He also wrote more about Catholic practice and piety than almost any other thinker of his time, including Solov'ev. Although he did not think that Russians should convert to Catholicism, his openness towards the Catholic Church



suggests a toleration of other faiths and an understanding (like that of Gogol') of the unity of Christians and the common bonds that they share.

Rozanov's contemporary, Merezhkovskii (discussed in Chapter 9), adhered to the idea of the Third Rome and believed that Russia had a special place in the world. To this end, he emphasized the connections between ancient Rome and Roman Catholicism. His literary work did describe Catholicism's wrongdoings (in particular, the blending of secular and religious power); however, he also showed the positive influence of religion on the art and architecture of the Renaissance. He followed Solov'ev in portraying the mystical aspect of the Catholic faith and his artistic work shows a fascination with the mystic poetry of Catholicism, especially the Spanish mystics. He saw the influence of Catholicism on Renaissance Italy as a model for the ideal interplay of religion, art and society in contemporary Russia, and hoped for reform in Russia. His novels reflect the heritage of Dostoevskii's novels in their anti-Catholic themes, but also reveal the legacy of Solov'ev in their approach to Catholic culture as a more positive model for Russia.

The penultimate chapter of the thesis showed how the minor poets of the early twentieth century found inspiration in Catholic poetry and mysticism. They did not just translate or imitate Catholic poetry and themes, but assimilated them into their own verse, and therefore into Russian literary tradition. Although Dmitrieva and Ellis had different backgrounds and approaches, both used the image of Catholicism in new ways to construct their own poetic personae. In their writing, following in the footsteps of Solov'ev and Merezhkovskii, they opened up a space for Russians to see Catholicism as a faith, at least equal, if not superior, to Russian Orthodoxy. In their work the inner spirit, rather than the external form of Catholicism found expression.

Lastly, Chapter 11 focused on the work of Viacheslav Ivanov. The image of Catholicism plays a different role in his work in comparison with that of many writers (with the exception of Ellis), because of its complex relationship with his conversion. Initially, like contemporaries such as Merezhkovskii, Ivanov's attraction to Catholicism was primarily cultural and aesthetic. Like his predecessors, he was drawn to the mystical aspect of Catholicism as well as to the medieval cult of the Virgin Mary through his interest in the Renaissance and close knowledge of poets such as Dante and Petrarch. Unlike Gagarin (or even Solov'ev) he chose not to write essays or polemics about the Catholic Church, but initially wrote poems as a cultural and artistic endeavour, and later as an expression of his personal faith. His work sought universal

themes through individual experience, and emphasised and created unities and bridges between diverse cultures, including links between Catholic Italy and Orthodox Russia. Like Rozanov and Gogol', he felt spiritually at home in Rome, even though it was not his native country. His poetry is the fullest demonstration of the meeting of two cultures and faiths in a body of Russian literary work. As such it is a remarkable example of the adoption of Catholicism did not mean discarding Orthodoxy but could contribute to the universal principle striven after by so many Russian writers.

Russian attitudes to Catholicism, if plotted into a graph, would resemble something like an inverted bell-curve (tracing the highpoints of positive attitudes to Catholicism). The middle period, before the Crimean War until around 1881, represents a low-point, when polemics and polarisation took over as the main form of discourse in defining the image of Catholicism. Even Dostoevskii's novels, although taking a more open-ended form, reflect something of the tone and language of these polemical debates. On the whole, after the death of Dostoevskii and following the seminal contribution of Solov'ev, attitudes shifted towards the positive. However, as we have seen, this general picture also contains great variety and marked contrasts. Although the core themes remained relatively consistent, different writers emphasized different elements and often turned well-established points of view on their head. Essays and polemics promoted debate, and should not be under-rated, but they also encouraged argument, leaving little space for any true dialogue. Overwhelmingly, more fluid literary genres such as poetry, Rozanov's travel impressions and Gogol''s private letters from Rome were the most successful at fostering an ecumenical spirit, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to share and understand each other's experiences. In essays (whether pro- or anti-Catholic) the Catholic Church seen as an institution, and Catholicism as a dogmatic system which challenged Russian nationality. In poetry and travel impressions, Catholicism generally became a faith and an expression of inner spirituality from which Russian Orthodoxy could learn and which it could equal.

How many writers managed to step outside their own work in order to comment on the image of Catholicism in Russian literature and thought as a whole? Unsurprisingly perhaps, such a level of 'self-awareness' was surprisingly rare. In spite of the fact that thinkers such as the Slavophiles were forced to acknowledge some of the merits of the 'West', while denigrating it as an overall concept, few were able to admit

that it was precisely as a concept that it was so useful.<sup>5</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 6, Dostoevskii called Catholicism ‘the Catholic idea’, which suggests that he was aware of some distinction between the reality of Catholicism and the way he conceptualized it in his works; nevertheless, he still chose to promulgate this idea, for the most part, as though it were a matter of objective reality. Some pro-Catholic thinkers, such as Gagarin, seemed remarkably unaware of the stereotypes that Russian thinkers held, and certainly did little to offset or question these stereotypes. In some ways, Solov’ev achieved more than many nineteenth-century thinkers in questioning the preconceptions about Catholicism that existed, and therefore must have had some idea of the mismatch between image and reality. His own work touched little on the everyday realities of Catholicism. It was mainly Silver Age writers such as Rozanov, Ellis and Ivanov (following a trend set by Gogol’) who appear to have seen Catholicism with fresh eyes and been able to communicate this to their readers in a way which made their work very different from that of their contemporaries and predecessors.

A conflation of the personal with the social and national is characteristic of the image of Catholicism in Russian literary culture. Reactions to the fear that Chaadaev (in the 1830s), Gogol’ (in the 1840s), Gagarin (in the 1850s), Rozanov (in the 1900s) and Ivanov (in the 1930s and 1940s) had been ‘infected’ by Catholic ideas or converted to Catholicism were remarkably similar. An individual’s choice of faith was taken as a threat to the nation as a whole. For others, such as Solov’ev or Ivanov, an individual’s action would be seen to enrich the nation.

This thesis has demonstrated that negative preconceptions of Catholicism persist in Russian culture. However, over a hundred years, progress was made towards an ability to transcend polemics and division and highlight what the two faiths held in common and the riches of their different traditions, rather than concentrating on difference. Even if it did not happen in every case, it was generally in the more literary genres that a space opened up where this mutually enriching dialogue could happen.

More broadly this project has sought to show that where true universal concepts are discussed or true unity sought, particularly within the Christian family, the importance of another faith or culture’s learning and heritage should never be overlooked. Unity is not uniformity. Setting up Mary and Martha in opposition to each other, rather than as sisters working towards a common goal, is a profound mistake that

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<sup>5</sup> For the complicated relationship between Slavophiles and later thinkers and ‘The West’ see Vera Tolz, ‘The West’, in Offord and Leatherbarrow, *A History of Russian Thought*, pp. 201-204.

thinkers belonging to either nation or church could (and did) make. It ignores the value of ecumenism. It is only by assessing and evaluating, not discarding, the merits of the other branches of the Christian faith that members of the Christian family can really breathe with both lungs.

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